



HELM



Heritage of East Lake Macquarie

June 2018

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TONI WEDDING
 MEMORIES HERITAGE
 VIEW MARKLE
 SHARE STEVENS
 HAT MOLLY MEGHAN
 CAPE AUNTY PRINCE
 HARRY GLOVES
 ROYAL CROWN



AUNTY MOLLY JOINS CAVES BEACH VIEW CLUB TO CELEBRATE THEIR 48TH BIRTHDAY AND THE MARRIAGE OF PRINCE HARRY TO MEGHAN MARKLE AT SWANSEA RSL



Many thanks to Toni Stevens for generously sharing her humour, experiences, memories and photos to make our community heritage so much richer.



May celebrations 1
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4972 1066 NOW AT SWANSEA!!!
 SWANSEA PLAZA ARCADE
 NEAR COLES, DARBY'S PIES AND BLONDIES!

Kindly supporting the community –
 including Caves Beach Surf Life Saving Club; this edition of HELM newsletter.

1964**A MEMORABLE YEAR FOR AUSTRALIA****1964**

This was a significant year in the history timeline. **Queen Elizabeth** gave birth to Prince Edward. HMAS Melbourne crashed into Voyager; **Tokyo Olympics** – Dawn Fraser won gold for 3rd time -100m freestyle. **The Beatles** toured Aust with crowds giving a huge welcome; **Top single:** I saw her standing there/ Love me do
Music: The Seekers; Louis Armstrong (Aust. tour); Bob Dylan; Beach Boys; Dinah Lee; Jerry Lee Lewis.
TV: Brian Henderson; Adams Family; Gilligan’s Island; Homicide; Flipper; Bewitched; Beverley Hillbillies; The man from UNCLE. **Gold Logie:** Bobby Limb. **Miss Australia:** Jan Taylor.
First official Surfboard Titles: Manly beach: Phyllis O’Donnell and 19 yr old “Midget” Farrelly – World Champs.
Schools: West Wallsend High School officially opened as a separate entity on new site in Appletree Rd. The first buildings at Swansea High School were ready for occupation on land offered cheaply by Mr Mawson in Caves Beach; on the proviso that a high school was built there. The Foundation Principal was Mr L Williams.

TONI STEVENS

Toni began performing at a young age, doing charity performances with her father in hospitals, nursing homes and prisons. In **1964** Toni Stevens joined the entertainment industry in England, having adopted this as her stage name. The mid 60’s was the hey-day of pop music. Toni, the multi-talented singer, guitarist, musician and comedienne shone as the support act to many of the favourite performers who shot to stardom at that time - The Seekers, Tom Jones, Englebert Humperdink, Gene Pitney, Diana Dors, Lulu, Bill Haley, Val Doonican, Morecomb and Wise, Dave Allen, Jose Feliciano, Danny La Rue -to name a few. Being a family person, Toni did not seek major stardom for herself, as she recognised it entailed many accompanying responsibilities. In 1972 Toni arrived in Australia, via South Africa, having successfully established herself on television, club and cabaret shows internationally. Feeling like she was going around in circles in England, she contacted P&O, and was placed on a Women’s Weekly world cruise, sailing to Cape Town from Southampton. Spending 4 months entertaining in South Africa, she continued to Australia, attaining a residency stamp; before immigration conditions were tightened up by Gough Whitlam. Toni continued to expand her diverse career, appearing in most major venues that presented music, live theatre, theatre restaurants; television commercials; movies and soapies (A Country Practice, Young Doctors, Sons and Daughters); TV talk shows (In Melbourne Tonight, Mike Walsh Show, Don Lane Show). Photographed with Gough and Margaret Whitlam; she was often in the company of our home-grown stars - Paul Hogan, John Paul Young, Kamahl, Normie Rowe, Col Joye, Lucky Starr, Little Patti, Sandy Scott.



After performing at the Golden Garter Theatre Restaurant in the early 80’s, Toni introduced the concept of theatre restaurants to registered clubs, with the “Best of Bloomin British”: and “Oktoberfest” shows. 1987-1989 she ran her own theatre restaurant on Sydney Harbour – the Port Jackson Showboat. This success was followed in 1991 by becoming the producer and performer of The Jolly Swagman Show at The Argyle Tavern; and a German show at the Lowenbrau Keller at The Rocks, running for 5 years, 7 nights a week; being the premier theatre restaurants for Australian and international audiences.

1987 saw a new direction emerge. Toni and her husband bought the old Morisset bakery, at first selling old furniture and antiques, as they had in Sydney. This meant nightly commutes to Sydney for 6 years to perform at The Rocks.

A couple of years later, renovating along the way, they opened a small 24 seat tea shop to complement their antique business, originally called the Second Hand Rose. No advertising signage was permitted, so this was a way of promoting and expanding the business. This venture grew and developed into the award-winning theatre restaurant – becoming the renowned Aunty Mollys at The Olde Bakehouse Restaurant, winning the Hunter tourism award in 1993 and 1999; and numerous other awards of distinction. Toni had always wanted a stage persona that reminded you of a benevolent female Santa Claus. Her mother's friend, Molly, was such a larger than life, jolly lady. And so the name, which also conjured up an Irish sounding connection, became a dedication to her. For Toni, who often incorporates Irish humour, comedy is her favourite medium. It creates an atmosphere where happy people can enjoy & laugh, triggering that positive, joyful mood. Not one to stagnate, Toni has diversified to conducting testimonial nights, such as the one for Reg Lindsay; cruise ship entertainment; corporate functions and specialising in seniors entertainment. Not to mention venturing into community radio - Lake Macquarie FM 97.3 with her own program on Thursday mornings.



A passion for charity work and helping others stayed with Toni from her early days, often organising fundraisers. In 1978 she detected a void in her own industry. The 1970's were still a time of male dominance. Female performers were few and isolated without much contact with each other; also, the wives of male performers were often left on their own at functions. There was a real need for a women's support group. Toni initiated and began to coordinate, with the help of a few others, an organisation. Their first meeting included performers like Bunny Gibson and Margaret Flanagan. A unanimous decision was made on the name to become A.L.V.A. – The Australian Ladies Variety Association; with an insignia in red and gold colours; featuring the emblem of the waratah, the botanical name of which translates to: "beautiful; seen from afar". An early objective was to raise money for a nursing home for variety performers, as in England. Toni hoped to secure The Queen and Princess Margaret as patrons; but protocol decreed that the charities needed to be well established to be considered. Not one to be discouraged by this road-block, Toni approached Dame Vera Lynn, who was making visits to Australia each year. She accepted, and so began a relationship and friendship which lasts to this day. Margaret Whitlam and Lady Sonia MacMahon have also acted as patrons. An ever increasing and successful membership now incorporated retired performers, to extend the camaraderie, companionship, and friendship. However, changing legislation made the concept of establishing an aged care facility too difficult. Instead, help is provided to any performers who fall on hard times, and need financial, physical or psychological assistance.

Fundraisers have taken many forms. – Art Unions, Gala Balls, Christmas picnics, carnivals. Toni has produced many charity shows and events for many worthwhile organisations, often being able to call on her wide range of contacts in the industry. A relay team pushed a bed from Perth to the Children's Oncology Unit at Camperdown, followed by a show that included Jackie and Tony Trent, Barry Crocker and Ian Turpie. Other charity nights have been organised to benefit Father Chris Riley's Youth Off the Streets (YOTS) program; Southlakes refuge; and the Stars in their Eyes night, held in April 2012 at the 16 Footers, Belmont, for The Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children in the Hunter, which featured John Paul Young; to name a few. Rotary International and her local Rotary club, Morisset are also beneficiaries of Toni's expertise, energy and resourcefulness in fund raising and giving a helping hand.

Nominated four times for the prestigious 'Mo' awards; in 1998 Toni was granted the coveted John Campbell Fellowship 'Mo' award for services given above and beyond to the Australian Entertainment Industry. These awards recognise performers in the Variety Industry particularly in clubs; just as the Logies recognise excellence in the Australian television industry. The awards honour Roy Rene, known on the stage as 'Mo' McCackie, one of Australia's greatest Australian vaudeville and comedy performers in the 20th century. In the mid 80's Toni was also nominated for inclusion in the Australian Who's Who of Women; World Who's Who of Women; and The International Directory of Distinguished Leadership; celebrating her achievements and acknowledging her contributions to her industry and our society.

Aunty Molly's News Update

No 24

From Aunty Molly's Seniors Entertainment Events, Morisset

2018

Bakehouse Lane (PO Box 220) Morisset NSW 2264 Web: www.auntymollys.com.au Email: info@auntymollys.com.au

After more than 30 years at the Olde Bakehouse, our charming comedienne, who can sing in six languages, has recently relocated to larger premises for her shows. The Olde Bakehouse at Morisset continues to operate as an Italian restaurant which is leased out.

The new venue for Toni's Seniors Entertainment is Wyong Golf Club. Here she has recently presented Christmas Crackers; her St Patrick's Festival; Highlands, heather and haggis; and a li'l bit o' country. The 2018 planned schedule promises to be exciting: featuring Winterfest – Christmas in July; an Italian affair in August; followed by nostalgic Magic Moments in September; great fun and oom pah-pah-ing at the Oktoberfest; rounding out the year with a Real Bush Christmas in Nov/Dec. The format consists of a morning tea followed by a 2 course meal and show, encouraging sing-alongs and laughter. The shows are popular with touring bus groups, clubs such as Probus and VIEW, and social groups and groups of friends. Bookings need to be made directly with Toni, not the club. Ph: 4970 5105.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY CAVES BEACH VIEW CLUB - 48 YEARS!

Back in 1960, George Forbes of the Smith Family recognised the potential for an organisation which would encourage women from all walks of life to develop interests beyond the home, provide friendship, education and mental stimulation; and help those less fortunate than others through the Smith Family. Quite revolutionary for the time, he saw that there was a need for women to have a greater voice in the community, create supportive networks, exchange ideas, increase their knowledge and self-confidence.

The early 1960's were a time of political and social change. A time known as the generation of the baby boomers; of increasing feminism with women beginning to question the traditional concept of "a woman's place is in the home", carrying out the roles of wives and mothers, without expanding their horizons.

The very first club was established in Balgowlah. Growth was rapid as it promised women there is more to life than just domestic duties. VIEW was established to represent "Voice, Interests and Education of Women".

1970 saw the inauguration of the Caves Beach VIEW club. The early 70's in the Whitlam era, echoed striving for equal opportunity, equal pay, and equal jobs. The VIEW clubs grew rapidly and supported the Smith Family by fund raising and supporting the winter appeal with clothing and blankets. In the 80's, with increasing prosperity, many women began to take on careers; and there was a great increase in women's rights backed by anti-discrimination; and equal opportunity legislation. Evening VIEW clubs emerged for women who worked; and clubs were opening up in various states beyond NSW. Increasing communication and decreasing isolation being fostered by the rise of computers, the internet and technology. The Smith family began to shift its focus from welfare assistance to education; from hand-out to hand-up; "Learning for Life" to encourage and enable independence, aiming to break the cycle of disadvantage. VIEW clubs now sponsor over 1,150 students through the Learning for Life program and raise over \$1 million each year to help fund Smith Family learning and mentoring programs. The members of Caves Beach VIEW are very dedicated and proud to be part of this program. New members are welcomed; meetings are held on the 3rd Wednesday of the month at the RSL.



VIEW CLUBS OF AUSTRALIA
Voice, Interests and Education of Women



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