



# GESTA NON VERBA

ISSUE 4 – 8<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2004

**Circulation: 1622**

**Next issues: 30<sup>th</sup> March 2005  
22<sup>nd</sup> June 2005  
14<sup>th</sup> September 2005**

## **PRESIDENT'S NOTES.**

Greetings and welcome to the final issue of Gesta non Verba for 2004.

This has been a year of quiet achievement for the Union. There have been several Year Reunions which were very successful. The Union has a new website and members are increasingly using it and contributing material to it. Several members have also offered to assist with career mentoring for current students of the school, giving the students the opportunity to find out more about their intended professions.

I'd like to thank all members for their support throughout the year, especially those who have contributed articles and stories to Gesta non Verba, and content for the website. In particular, I'd like to thank Michael Quinlan for his (and the school's) continuing support, Robin Legge for her excellent role in co-ordinating this newsletter and maintaining contact with all members, and Edward Yuen for designing and maintaining the new website.

In the coming year, I hope the mentoring role of Union members for current students of the school to continue, and to expand, so if members are interested in playing such a role, please contact Robin Legge. Also, the Year Contacts play an important part in maintaining contact between members and the Union, so I thank all the current Year Contacts and ask all members to support their own Year Contact person, and I also encourage others to volunteer to be Year Contacts.

There will also be a few Union organised events next year, such as an opportunity in March to tour the school and see how much it has changed since you were last there, and a sports day. Keep an eye on the website and GNV for details, and I look forward to the support and participation of members throughout next year.

Wishing you all the best for Christmas season, and I look forward to seeing many of you next year.

**Carmen Kong (1997)**

## **PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE.**

Your membership now stands at 1622 which is about 44% of all Ruse students who have graduated from 1959 to 2004. May I thank all 24 Union members for their support of our Mentor Program. Essentially this program will give current students a professional insight into the careers they wish to pursue. Also thank you to all who supported the David Kenny email sent recently – David was genuinely touched that someone really cared.

HSC results will be released this year on Friday 17<sup>th</sup> December. Our predictions suggest it will be our most successful year yet. We have 169 students in Year 12 2004 and we expect our median University Admission Index (UAI) to be above 99.3!! A breakfast BBQ will be held for all 2004 students on the front lawn at 10.00am – Bacon, Eggs, Sausages, Tomatoes and Rolls.

Our new Canteen Block is now officially open (from Monday 15<sup>th</sup> November). Mrs Bev Ferguson (Debra '87) is still the Manageress after 18 years and has turned the new canteen into a self serve system ..... no lines, not even the old "Seniors Line".

I wish all Union members a happy and festive Christmas Season and may 2005 bring even greater prosperity.

**Michael Quinlan**

I was delighted to read the piece about Major General Mark Kelly in our last Gesta Non Verba. Those who knew Mark at James Ruse and who have watched the development of his career always knew that he would rise to the highest levels of the Army and – watch this space – the Australian Defence Force and the Nation.

I had the great pleasure to dine with teacher Colin Anderson and (Class of '72 Scholar) Christopher Dent some months ago. During that wonderful evening we discussed years at James Ruse, the boss, former students and the recent '72 Reunion

(which I missed). Naturally, our reminiscences turned to the various Gilbert and Sullivan and other musicals including the various roles Mark played over the years. Of particular note was that Mark DID make a stunning Dianna in mini skirt (Orpheus in the Underworld) – but then I guess such things should not be mentioned about a Major General – and certainly not in front of the troops!

Nonetheless, my memories of Mark are inexorably linked to memories of his family. Mark's parents were both very much loved members of the greater school community and they were particularly supportive of the arts and our musicals. Probably like today, students travelled from all over Sydney to attend James Ruse. In my case I travelled from Scheyville (near Pitt Town) almost every day. So it was therefore not unusual for me to stay overnight at various boys' homes including Chris Dent, the Mottram family, Bruce Potts, Greg Cowell and of course, the very loving and welcoming Kelly family. Would readers believe that in those days I even stayed with some of our teachers – probably frowned upon nowadays but let me assure all it was much appreciated way back then.

After leaving James Ruse, we boys (as our school was then) went in our different directions; me into agro-politics, followed by agricultural, then mainstream journalism. In something of a brain snap, I joined the Army, became an officer and my path once again merged with the then Captain Mark Kelly. As much as Mark had evolved into a full-blown, stiff-upper-lip and starched infantry officer, I always enjoyed the thought that his sense of humour and wit from the days of James Ruse still lurked below the surface.

Just as I will continue to thoroughly enjoy basking in the reflected glory of Mark Kelly's advancement within the ADF and on the national horizon so I predict that we will see other "James Ruse boys and girls" contribute to the development of areas such as commerce, medicine, law and the arts. In concert with these traditional pursuits however, I hope that the influence of our school and the heritage we enjoy will have moulded students who have the inherent goodness to improve the lot of our neighbours and make our global community and physical environment so much the better for our being.

#### **PC (Pete) Smith (1972)**

##### ***Chips Of the Old Block!***

A couple of editions go, I told of James Ruse in the early days. This time, I thought I might share some reflections on illustrious teachers of that era. Forgive me if I omit names to protect the guilty! – some of these ancient fossils may still have meat on their bones.

My very first memory of a teacher was my Year 1 Math master. We all thought the world of him and I admired his style when correcting our mistakes:

"Stephens!" he would command after chalking up a math problem on the blackboard, "come out and solve this for the class."

Out I would trot and with trembling sweaty paws and scrawl my best effort at a solution on the board. Should I be correct, the duster was my reward to remove the puzzle from the board. Should I err in my grasp of arithmetic, a strong hand

would lift me by the back of the collar, calmly propelling my face towards the board, where my nose would be used to erase my feeble attempt at a solution. Although slightly calcified, I gained a very good grounding in Math that year – a basis that has served me well, thereafter.

Then there was our short, stout and fiery History master whom, as you will comprehend, we nick-named Zorro. – Zorro's forte was a long cane which somehow, without apparent discomfort, he concealed down his trouser leg. When provoked (and there were some in the class who excelled in this area) he would suddenly draw his trusty sword from its hiding place and deliver a telling blow around the culprit's legs. Alas, one day, our entertainment was permanently terminated by the headmaster when one of Zorro's victims took exception to the red marks on his legs, wrestled the cane from his hands, and proceeded to exact a telling retribution on a bewildered Zorro's buttocks. The bloodier side of history has held a fascination for me ever since!

Next, my memory turns to PE. For many of us, a welcome break from classroom activities but, for some, a dreaded interlude where a fog behind the toilet block seemed the only plausible alternative. Enter our energetic sports master of small but wiry physique. His constant companion was his whistle with chord: the chord heavily knotted at the other end into a formidable weapon which he swung with great aplomb at the heads of sprung smokers and the retreating behinds of boys he thought to be too slow in their circumnavigation of the oval. At least once or twice a week, whistle and chord would mysteriously find its way into the school incinerator to be reduced to ashes; but each time, a new knotted chord and whistle would appear the next day without a word of caution or retribution being uttered. I added several yards to my speed that year and made the state sprint championships!

I think, too, of how unknowing teachers were in those days. Our science teacher – a man of impeccable principles and the very model of a safe practitioner, must have known little of the poisonous nature of mercury. One day, a classmate stole a barometer from the science lab then accidentally dropped it in the playground. His punishment, to begin, was to recover, bare-fingered, every drop of mercury that had been spilt. On leaving James Ruse I opted for science rather than crime!

Histosterone became a favourite of mine in Years 4 and 5. How else could the school capture the attention of a classroom of pimply adolescent boys than to deliver them a young female teacher with a liking for history, a short skirt, and a penchant for sitting on a desk rather than a chair. Panty-hose had not yet replaced suspender-belts in those days! Boys fought to sit near the front of the class, slouching in their chairs as low as they were able. I had the fortune to have permanent residence in row two and the audacity to not infrequently pester the lad in front to the point of retaliation. Whereupon, he would turn around to strike me a blow, be caught in the act and made to stand in the corner for the remainder of the lesson. This left his desk empty and invariably a lure to our leggy history ma'am intent on holding our attention. My auditory faculties must have taken second place in my ocular senses at the time, for I only matriculated with a pass level in History but a strong preference for the fairer sex!

In those halcyon days there were far fewer descriptors for a man's sexuality. Gay and camp had noble connotations, poof was a puff of air, and an immaculately groomed teacher of Agriculture with trimmed eyebrows, manicured nails and a soft cultured resonance to his voice was merely regarded as dapper. His teaching skills were excellent and, without the distraction of prejudice, the class gained a swag of Honours under his guidance.

French lessons from a good-natured but plumpish mother figure were bearable to the point of being un-noteworthy. An open text book concealed under the desk got me through most periods without too much trouble and it was only at exam time that my grasp of the language seemed to suddenly desert me. However, her foray into dance lessons, bent on preparing us for the end of year social, were far more traumatic. A young boy's arm is just not made nor meant to stretch around the sizeable love handles of a portly woman as she vibrates like jelly to the strains of a quickstep. French is now my favourite language, though I still struggle with gender. My dancing tends to be of the 'free-expression' style – likened by some to a convulsing man on a pogo stick!

Ah! Yes – these were great teachers who instructed us well for the life ahead. I wonder, though, ..... How many would be acceptable under today's rules and societal expectations?

Bring back the cane, I say ..... **Z**

**Alan Stephens (1963)**

## **CLASS OF 1979 REUNION**

The class of 1979 recently held a 25 year reunion which was a huge success. This was our first get together since schooldays and eventually we tracked down 85 of the original 121 students. Thanks to everyone for spreading the word around and especially for making the effort to come. With some hesitation each of us entered the room and then found ourselves engulfed with semi-familiar faces and a flood of memories. Friendships which had been neglected over time were instantly rekindled. Differences we may have had at school were long forgotten and as 'mature adults' we had a caring interest in each other. What stood out clearly was the diverse paths our lives have taken after a similar background of education. Many of our year are contributing to the community in a variety of ways. We realise how privileged we were to attend James Ruse with a truly special group of people. For those who couldn't make it, you were missed and hope to catch up at the 30<sup>th</sup>, if not before. It was like a time warp but one we were not ashamed to revisit. Stories of Muck Up day, jokes about teachers, nicknames long forgotten, photos and laughs. By 3am we were reluctant to leave and say farewell to our 'old' friends. Here's to RUSE for giving us the best education, the best memories and the best friendships! To anyone else contemplating a reunion it is a very rewarding experience and so much FUN.

**Kathy Docker**

## **40 YEARS OF MUSICALS AT JAMES RUSE**

The publication "Musicals at James Ruse 1963-2002", is still available for you to purchase from the school.

The cost of the publication has been reduced to \$6 (postage included). Please contact the school Accounts Office if you are interested. Money raised will contribute towards the Music Department's quest to purchase a new Piano.