



GESTA NON VERBA

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PRESIDENT'S NOTES.

When Michael Quinlan approached me with the proposition of stepping into Carmen Kong's shoes as president of the Union, the question that immediately popped into mind was, "Why ask me?"

Several possible answers rapidly followed. Was it:

- because my brother used to be president?
- because I was great at English at school?
- because I had just walked in the school gate?

After speaking with Michael it became apparent that a) was incorrect, due to Michael not realising that David and I are siblings, and upon further reflection I recalled that my English composition skills were outstandingly ordinary in comparison to my fellow classmates at Ruse, thus b) was also not the correct option. As Sherlock Holmes said, "Once you eliminate the impossible, whatever remains, no matter how improbable, must be the truth," accordingly I had the answer to my question. It was with delight that I accepted Michael's offer and I look forward to contributing to the upkeep of the Union.

You may wonder what strange series of coincidences led me to walk in the school gate just as Michael was patrolling for uniform checks on the day a new president was needed, so ponder no longer! I will proceed to alleviate your musings. I, like many souls before me, had decided to enter the teaching profession and was spending the term teaching Mathematics at our alma mater. Yes! Me! A Mathematics teacher! Sorry, I just could feel your reactions being akin to my old teachers (as in previous, not aged..!) when I appeared in their staffroom. Although in returning to the school I felt I had joined the dark side, my experiences teaching the "Ruse-ters" made me realise there is no sense of "students versus teachers", just a wonderful sense of community, the common goal of striving for excellence not as individuals, but as an invincible and unstoppable force. The company of people in which I found myself, composed of students, teachers, administrative and support staff, made me feel like after many years away I had

finally come home to the old stomping ground. And yes, I do have the cow pats on the soles of my shoes to prove it.

Alexandra Streeter (1997)

Thank you all who contributed to this year's "Gesta Non Verba". Your articles have been interesting and varied and I hope to receive many more next year.

I wish you all a safe and happy Christmas and the very best for 2006.

Robin Legge

Only a Ruse-ite would know the shame and embarrassment of getting a TER of 93. After not really applying myself through year 11 and 12, after my discovery of BOYS, I went from a potential 100 to 93. Not that I cared at the time. I only wanted to be a teacher, anyway, and at that stage I only needed 86 to get into teaching. I wanted to be an inspiration like so many of my teachers were to me.

Now I'm older and wiser, well I know how to pretend to be, anyway. My point is that I was walking down the street the other day. In Wagga Wagga (of all places, that happens to be where I live now) and I saw a fellow Ruseite. I identified him because he was wearing a jersey. A 2001 jersey, so it was exactly 10 years behind my time; but I wanted to stop him and chat to him. I felt a connection to the poor, young boy. This is a big step for me. Some one who has avoided most of my X-school mates because of a stupid inferiority complex is now really keen to interact. They always come back, I guess.

Now I am studying again. After a fairly unsuccessful stint as a teacher – I loved the kids and I loved my teaching areas (Maths and ESL – thanks Mr Canty, Mr Lowcock and Mrs Cannon) but I always felt under-utilised. I wanted to do so much more as a teacher but I could see that the public education system was not a place where one could readily

excel. I directed school plays and ran the peer mentoring programme (Mrs Yeates gets the credit here!) as coordinator and trainer for the students but I still wanted to do more.

I investigated ways to extend my learning to go into a career that I would find challenging and fulfilling and after many days in a career information centre, narrowed it down to pharmacy or chemical engineering (thanks Miss Jenns). I thought to myself that it was worth applying through UAC even with my not so hot academic record and found that I scraped into pharmacy and I love it! I absolutely love it. The second time around at Uni I got involved.

Being at a country university enabled me to get actively involved in the student association without having to be affiliated with any political party (unlike a few of the bigger metropolitan unis). They were just happy to have someone willing to get involved. It is kinda like being on the SRC but with much bigger and potentially even more important decisions being made. I am Vice President of the Student Association and editor of the student publications. I love it. I am looking at starting my honours year next year and at the ripe old age of 32, things are finally happening for me that could have happened 10 years ago if I had only known to grasp opportunities as they arose and not be scared.

I am now looking at working part-time as a pharmacist, once I graduate, and investigating science journalism and political lobbying and policy direction in the areas of Health Care and PBS, particularly addressing the inequities between the have and have-nots in society and representing the pharmacy industry. I guess a lot of this is my Ruse experiences coming to the fore. The only time that the rich and poor kids were ever possibly differentiated was waiting for the buses at 3.05. I was on the Parramatta bus and so obviously was one of the Westies. Teachers and students had no part in this. It was merely geographical. My opportunities were never limited by where I lived and how much money my single-parent-family-with-six-kids did not have.

Feeling like a failure is the stupidest thing I ever did. I remember being overseas on exchange when all my friends got their HSC results. I was heart broken that they were so smart and I felt so inferior.

I didn't stop that guy walking down the street and I guess I regret not doing so: but next time, watch out because I have come to terms with the fact that I am just me and James Ruse and the teachers there played a big part in who I am and where I am now. If only I had learnt the lesson that they probably tired to teach me but I was too insecure to learn – take every opportunity while you can.

If you have gotten this far, thanks for reading my ramblings...

Does anyone need an organiser for our 15 year reunion next year? If no one answers, I'll just organise it myself!

Heidi Barnes (1991)

PS Life does not end at 30....!

I completed the HSC at James Ruse in 2001, and moved to Canberra to undertake a Bachelor of Technology (Aviation) at the Australian Defence Force Academy in Canberra. This degree was composed of two years academic study at the Academy, followed by two years of pilot training. Upon finishing the academic side, I moved to Tamworth and was posted to the Australian Defence Force's Basic Flying Training School flying the CT4; a basic training aircraft, for 8 months. Upon successful completion of basic flying training, I was posted to Number 2 Flying Training School in Perth, where I completed the RAAF Advanced Pilot Training course in November of this year, flying the Pilatus PC-9/A aircraft. Successful completion of this course meant that I had earned my "wings", my degree, and a commission in the Royal Australian Air Force as a "Pilot Officer". Three days after graduation I was posted to 79 Squadron, also in Perth, to begin Lead In Fighter conversion to the British Aerospace Hawk, where I am presently. Future career prospects will most likely result in me living in either Newcastle or Brisbane, flying the F/A-18 or F-111 aircraft respectively.

Chris Baker (2001)

Where has forty years gone???

The class of 1965 sat for our Leaving Certificate in the warming months October and November. The exams were mostly held in the then brand new auditorium of the new school down the road.

We formed a little group outside after the last exam and all promised to stay in touch as we wished each other well. Well that was forty years ago this year and where has the time gone and what has happened to over sixty students. I personally have only seen a handful of ex-students since that very last day and it has bothered me that I don't know the outcomes of so many people that I had spent a full five years in their company.

Ours was a significant Leaving Certificate exam as it was the last regular Leaving Certificate as the Department of Education was introducing a six year secondary school system (ours a five year system) and a markedly different exam called the Higher School Certificate. Factually there was another much smaller Leaving Certificate exam in 1966 for those students who felt they needed a better exam result for university entrance purposes.

What was 1965 like???. The Beatles were everyone's favourite group. The Mini Cooper was the fastest volume production car on the road and Prime Minister Menzies had just introduced conscription into the army for males turning twenty. We were facing a threat from Indonesia and it was felt an increased military force was needed. Australia had also just sent a battalion of regular soldiers to Vietnam at the supposed request of the American government. Employment was booming and being long-term unemployed was almost unheard of. Surf board riding was the sport of the moment and the coolest of the cool were those who had surf boards strapped to the roof of their cars.

What was James Ruse like in 1965? Mr Hoskins was very firmly "the boss" and was an enormous patriarch. He also had the gift of being able to remember the names of all his students. I did accidentally meet him in the middle 1980's

and he knew me right away even though I was twenty years older and bearded. He even asked about my younger brother who was also a James Ruse student. There was also Mr Cameron who was the deputy and I am led to believe that he passed away very soon after we left school. There was a myriad of teachers, some were notable and some were not. Amongst the notable was Mrs Lino, who has just recently passed away, and of course Colin Anderson.

We, as students, learnt to drive the tractor helping to construct the oval. We did agriculture lessons in "the loft". It was a tiny room with a tin roof, freezing in winter and unbearably hot in summer. We cheered wildly in the red rattler train on those cold frosty mornings as the train wheels were spinning on that last steep climb into Carlingford station. However, the train always did manage the climb and always got us to school. We wore our hats and blazers everyday although many ditched the traditional school case in favour of the very cool duffel bags. Something that "the boss" was not very happy about.

At about 3.00pm on a November week day afternoon in 1965, our time at James Ruse came to an end. I very quickly became involved in work, cars, girls (they were a novelty for the then students of the all male James Ruse AHS) and, of course, study towards a career. I also quickly lost touch with the greater majority of my classmates.

After forty years have gone past, I began to wonder what has happened to all those who were in the class of 65. Forty years is a significant milestone. I contacted the JRAHS ex-student coordinator who told me that she only had details of one other from our year. I contacted that person who was actually a friend back then and we have begun the rewarding job of tracking down old classmates. While speaking to them as we find them, there are some real successes, some sad stories as a few have passed away and a few had led fairly unhappy lives. Most have gone onto rewarding lives.

At least six of the class of '65 served in Vietnam as either national servicemen or as regular soldiers. I was one of them. Many of us had our first taste of military in the school cadet corps.

Now we are in the process of organising a reunion for March 2006. We would desperately like to hear from anyone who was in our class in the early years, right up to and beyond the leaving.



Mike Byron (1965)
PO Box 172
Gulgong NSW 2852
Email: byron@hwy.com.au
Phone: 02 6374 2005