



The Friendship Force of Southern New Jersey, USA  
to  
The Friendship Forces of Melbourne and Tweed Valley, Australia  
March 12 – March 26, 2007



Group Journal



## Pre-Exchange Tasmania Tour March 8-12, 2007

Mark & Roz Goldstein, Cindy & Bill Jones, Isabel Strasser, Gwendolyn Deas, Gladys Robinson, Larre & Sue Hoke

### Thursday, March 8

We got an early start and drove to Queenstown where we stopped for food and drink. Queenstown has the scars of a long-time mining center. The town has some nice old buildings and a series of sculptures depicting the history of the town. There is also a monument to the miner family and a huge miner statue with a piece of mining equipment. We got gas and continued on to Lake St. Clair National Park. We arrived about 11:30 AM. We walked out to the lake overlook and beach, had quiche at the Visitor Center, looked at the displays and were on the road again by 12:30 PM. We passed lots of cattle and sheep and beehives. Later we passed some wineries. There were some nice views of mountains, lakes, etc.



We got to the Hobart airport about 3:30 PM, turned in the car and waited for the group to arrive. Mark found our bus driver and took some of the luggage to the bus while we were waiting. The plane arrived a little late. We greeted the newcomers – Isabel Strasser, Gwen Deas, Gladys Robinson, and Cindy and Bill Jones. Then we collected luggage and boarded the bus. Our driver was Warren. We had a nice ride through beautiful countryside and got to Freycinet Lodge about 7:30 PM. We checked in and went to our rooms. The three couples - Mark and Roz, Cindy and Bill, and Larre and I – have beautiful cabins (a king-size bed, a large spa bath and a view of the lake). We had dinner in Richardson's Café with Gwen, Isabel and Mark and Roz. Came back to the room, looked at the park information and relaxed. *Sue Hoke*

Freycinet Lodge  
Freycinet National Park  
Coles Bay, Tasmania 7215  
Phone 03 6257 0101

### Friday, March 9

Had a nice breakfast in the Lodge. We decided to take the walk to Wineglass Bay Lookout. I showed Gladys and Isabel the room and walked over to the Lodge with Gladys where we found Larre, Gwen and Bill waiting for Mark and Roz to start the hike. Gwen talked to everyone who walked by or sat down near us. We finally left about 10:15 AM.

Isabel and Cindy didn't come. We walked 2 km to the Wineglass Bay car park then started the walk to the lookout. It was drizzling when we started out but it never really rained. There were about 600 steps. Everybody who passed us spoke to us.

The people coming back looked happier than those going up. Larre, Bill and Gwen were ahead of us. Roz, Gladys and I lagged behind. Mark stayed behind to keep an eye on us. We finally reached the lookout for a nice view of Wineglass Bay although not quite as impressive as the photos I've seen.

Larre, Gwen and Mark started off on the circuit walk (11 km) and the rest of us walked back to the car park and the 2 km back to the Lodge. When we had walked to the car park earlier, we had seen two wallabies on the way and 2 more in the car park – one of them very tame. It was begging for food. When we came back from the lookout, there was a man



sitting in a chair in the car park looking out at the scenery and a wallaby was leaning against him.

I was really tired and had a sore back when we got back about 2:20 PM. I took a shower and a rest. I was just ready to put on some shoes to walk to the beach when Isabel knocked at the door. She really enjoyed her tour. Larre returned at 4:50 PM. I took a walk on Henderson's Beach and took some photos. Everyone except Mark and Roz met at 6:15 PM to see the slide

presentation on Freycinet and then went to dinner in the café. We ate with Cindy, Bill and Isabel and saw a beautiful sunset. *Sue Hoke*



It is real bush here, quite beautiful with the sea and tall granite cliffs. Spent a day and a half at Freycinet National Park, which was quite beautiful except not too friendly for visitors who do not come with cars. The choices were a 5-hour hike to see Wineglass Bay, which is supposed to be one of the 10 most beautiful world beaches, and free to do, or a \$ 55 4-wheel drive tour to other remote parts of the park. Since I was not quite off my jet lag and there was a seat left on the vehicle I opted for that. The guide was wonderful giving

lots of history of the area as well as ecology and plant life which I like to learn about so I was glad I did it although sad that I missed Wineglass Bay. *Isabel Strasser*



### Saturday, March 10



We had breakfast and left at 8 AM. We stopped in Coles Beach for a photo. Later we stopped for a rest stop and talked to our driver Warren. We said he looked like Hugh Grant. We stopped in Richmond to view the bridge and the historic buildings. The bridge is the oldest bridge in Australia and was built by convicts from 1823-25.

We arrived in Hobart about noon. Hobart is a pretty city situated on the water. Our hotel is a historic building built in stages starting in 1874. The public rooms are all in the old wing. The bedroom wing was added in 1973. There was a message from Ken Roberts of FF of Hobart when we checked in. The desk called him and we

arranged to meet in half an hour. Ken and Helen are coming on the Melbourne exchange to Southern NJ in June. When I saw the ambassador list and noticed that they lived in Tasmania, I e-mailed them and asked if they'd like to get together when we were in Hobart. When Ken and Helen didn't arrive in that time, everyone else except Isabel, Larre and I left to go to the Salamanca Markets. Ken and Helen arrived and we walked down to the market and briefly wandered through it. Larre bought a hot dog



and milkshake there. They sell all kinds of food and crafts. We went down to the waterfront and had lunch at Mako's, a fish and chips place. Then we went to see a memorial to Antarctic explorers and walked back through Battery Point – a very old neighborhood with interesting buildings. They pointed out some good bakeries for breakfast, and then we walked through Arthur Circus and back to the hotel. They came up and we talked for a while before they had to leave. Isabel, Larre and I went out to an Indian restaurant called Anapurna for dinner. The food was quite good. We went back to the hotel and checked e-mail. *Sue Hoke*



Lenna of Hobart  
20 Runnymede Street  
Battery Point, Tasmania 7004  
Phone 03 6232 3900

### Sunday, March 11

We went to breakfast at the coffee shop/bakery that Ken and Helen recommended. After breakfast we walked back and met our bus driver Peter. We had an hour and a half drive to Port Arthur. Once there we received our tickets, a nice booklet and a playing card. Before our walking tour we went into the Interpretative Gallery where we matched our cards to actual convicts and followed their stories.



My boy was 16 when he was sent here for 14 years for a minor crime. He ended up at Port Arthur for reoffending but I lost his story after he was sent to detention. The whole area was very well done and gave you a good feel for what it was like. Next we had a private walking tour and heard the history of Port Arthur and some of the people. I went up to the museum that was in the Asylum complex and walked around the separate prison with its isolated cells and punishment cell where men could be locked in total silence and darkness for up to 30 days. There was also a chapel in that building. Mark and I walked down to the boat dock. We all had a 20-minute cruise in the bay and stopped at Point Puer where they had a separate boys' prison and the Isle of the Dead where they buried the dead. About 1100 people were buried there. After the boat returned we walked around the site and Isabel and I walked around the site and Isabel and I visited the Commandant's

House, the Penitentiary, the Church and St. David's Church then walked back through the Government Gardens to the Visitor's Center.

We had a 10-minute drive to the Tasmanian Devil Conservation Park. The Tasmanian devil is rapidly dying out because they are being attacked by some kind of cancer. This park has a breeding program. We saw some tiny Tasmanian devils asleep in a little rock cave. The next enclosure had some bigger Tasmanian devils that were scrapping with each other. We also saw some cockatoos and galahs, a brush-tailed possum curled up in a log and a long-nosed potoroo. We went into an enclosure with many kangaroos and wallabies. Several had babies in their pouches. There were many large gray birds called Cape Barren geese in with them. I missed some of the birds but we saw many of them in the Kings of the Wind flight area. There was a parrot, a wedge-tailed eagle with a missing wing, two tawny frogmouths, a Peregrine falcon and a bird that flew to various people who were holding gold coins, grabbed the coin and flew back to the trainer and dropped it in his shirt pocket. Later the bird returned all the coins.



Everyone was tired on the bus trip back. All of us except Mark and Roz walked down to the waterfront and had dinner at Murre's downstairs restaurant. The scallops were delicious. Mark and Roz came in when we were almost finished eating. We left them and walked back in the rain. *Sue*



## Friendship Force of Melbourne Homestay March 12-19, 2007

Mark & Roz Goldstein, Cindy & Bill Jones, Isabel Strasser, Gwendolyn Deas, Gladys Robinson, Barbara & Dennis Guilford, Jean Sedar, Mary Karen Horvath, Diane & David Wright, Larre & Sue Hoke

### Monday, March 12

After breakfast we checked out and our bus driver arrived early and took us to the airport. He dropped us at the Qantas terminal but went in and found we needed to check in at JetStar. He backed up the bus and waited until we were all inside before leaving. We checked in. Gwen was hit with a \$77 fee because her bag weighed too much for JetStar. We left at 11 AM and arrived in Melbourne about 12:15 PM.

When we walked through the gate, the Melbourne club was there with a sign. We hugged, shook hands, and met Diane and David Wright who had stayed at the airport hotel last night. We all collected our luggage and our hosts, Liz and Alan Cawsey, drove us to their home. We had lunch and unpacked and spent time talking. We had a welcome tea (that's Aussie for evening meal) at Valley Reserve, not far from Alan and Liz's house. They took photos of all the hosts and ambassadors. We met the Guilfords there. There was a covered pavilion with 2 tables. The hosts brought wine, appetizers, salads, etc. and bought pizza and roasted chicken with stuffing. They had a beautiful welcome cake and platters of fruit and cheese. After dinner we went home. Liz's car was dripping something. It turned out that one of the wine boxes had leaked and her trunk (or boot) was full of white wine. We cleaned up and talked until quite late. Sue



John and Val Ford's home is in Glen Waverley which is a suburb of Melbourne. You can take a train to downtown - about 20-30 minutes. Sort of like our Hi-Speedline to Philadelphia.

Their home was built about 40 years ago and is a brick rancher with a tile roof. Most of the homes in Melbourne are like this. As we walked around the block we noticed that there were lots of different types of fences - brick, wood, metal, and sort of twig with wire entwined for support. This created a different look to the homes. The trees here are both deciduous and fern or palm types. Lots of flowers still blooming, too, like roses and bougainvilleas.



Melbourne is experiencing a terrible drought, so the people can only water their garden 2 times a week for about 2 hours. They save the "gray water" from showers and clothes washing to pour on the plants as well. We are doing our part by having a bucket in the shower with us!

The Fords' home is furnished with a Danish Modern theme and they have many souvenirs from their trips. John likes to take photos of people from different countries. Some of his that are hanging up are portraits from Laos, Cambodia, and Japan to name a few. They are wonderful photos.

John also does beautiful counted cross-stitch and Val has done some quilting and cross-stitch, too. Many are hanging on their walls, as well as some family photos.

We called Craig to wish him a Happy 37<sup>th</sup> Birthday and also e-mailed him. We will have to buy him a special present while we are here.

The Fords also have a son Craig. He is 35. I think we will meet him this week. He is in the process of opening a medical clinic with his partner and girlfriend, somewhere in the countryside where there is a doctor shortage. They are the business people (not medical people). They will employ doctors from many countries. *Roz Goldstein*

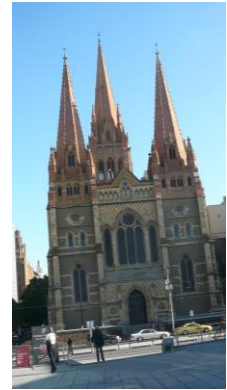


My Melbourne hostess, Heather, is just delightful. She is about 71 and loaded with energy. We were met at the airport by all our hosts/hostesses. Heather had packed a picnic lunch and drove us over a bridge to a small suburb called Williamstown where we had a nice little picnic lunch overlooking the city of Melbourne. It was a bit breezy so we didn't stay too long. She drove us around the area showing us these lovely quaint old houses, many with latticework sort of

reminiscent of New Orleans. Then we went to her lovely house where we unpacked and just chilled out a bit. There was a Friendship Force welcome picnic at a lovely park. A couple of magpies were perched in the trees above us; I am sure waiting for us to leave so they could grab any crumbs that were left over.  
*Isabel*

## Tuesday, March 13

We had breakfast and did a load of wash. The four of us hung up the wet clothes. Alan went to work and Liz, Larre and I walked to the train station. We got on the first car of the train and the Guilfords were there. Then Jean got on at the next stop and Mark, Roz and Val at the one after that. We rode the train all the way to Flinder Street Station and met the others at Federation Square Information Center. After a brief look around and a short visit to St. Paul's Church which was begun in 1880 and consecrated in 1891. Next we went to Melbourne Town Hall where we had a reception and tour. The Town Hall construction was begun in 1870. There was a brief talk and



question and answer session with Fiona Sneddon, a councilwoman. I presented her with the key to Cherry Hill, a book on New Jersey and a NJ state flag and she gave me a book on Melbourne. Then we had a guided tour through the building with a funny old man named Ray who had interesting comments about most of the people he talked about. Peter assisted him. We had a backstage tour of the concert hall of Town Hall and saw all the pipes of the organ. Dame Nellie Melba made her debut here in 1884. We saw the end of a rehearsal for a children's

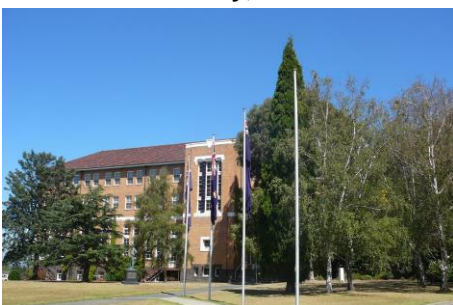
show and Bindi Irwin was just running off the stage. When we came down from a tour of the pipes there were 2000 screaming kids in the auditorium ready for the show. We had a chance to stand on the balcony where famous people like the Beatles (1964) have waved to the crowds. We left Town Hall and walked to Australia on Collins where we had lunch in the food court, which had a wide selection of cuisines. We walked into a few other historic buildings – Block Arcade and the Commercial Bank – and then we went to visit the



Observation Deck of Rialto Tower. We rode the elevator to the top and had a wonderful view of the city. It was a nice clear day – great for photos. Then we saw a film about Melbourne and Victoria on a big screen – an excellent promotion for the city. We had a brief ride on the loop bus, which gives commentary as you ride around the city. This bus is free. As we got on, two people who were sitting behind where we sat down noticed our Friendship Force badges and asked what club we were from. They were FF of Adelaide and were in Melbourne for a wedding. After the bus ride we stopped briefly at the art museum where we saw a display of aboriginal art and works of Australian artists then caught the train home. We had grilled steaks, sausages, potatoes and salad and talked all evening.  
*Sue*



## Wednesday, March 14



After breakfast we drove to the Victoria Police Academy in Glen Waverley. We had a wonderful presentation by Celia Holmes, a senior constable who has been on the force for 32 years. The Academy was originally the Corpus Christi Roman Catholic Seminary and was acquired in 1972 for \$2,232,000. Celia was in one of the early classes there when

there were only a few women. Now classes of 25 cadets start every few weeks and the majority of the recruits are women. The recruits first take an exam at a TAFE college (like our community college). Those who pass the test are given an application. Applicants are invited in for a physical and psychological testing. Successful candidates are brought back for interviews. The top 500 candidates are kept on a list and they are called in to train as new classes are formed. The top 125-200 people have a better chance if getting in. Recruit classes of 25 are trained at the academy for 20 weeks. The training is designed to assist recruits in gaining the knowledge, skills and confidence to enable them to undertake on-the-job



training while performing operational duties as probationary constables. The talk was in the beautiful chapel and we were also shown a video. We also saw the chapels honoring those Victoria police killed in the line of duty or by accident. There was a room with mannequins dressed in uniforms from various eras. We were taken to the cafeteria where we had a wonderful selection of foods for lunch. The cadets were eating at the same time. When we finished lunch, Celia called Gladys up and gave her the cake we had bought to celebrate her 80<sup>th</sup> birthday. The cadets sang Happy Birthday. Gladys was very surprised. Gwen found one of the students who was also had a birthday. We went to see the classroom building where they have a police station,



a courtroom, etc. for class scenarios. On our outside tour we saw that they had a fake gas station, store, and a few houses for other training scenarios and firearms requalifications. Then a helicopter landed in



the middle if the running track and we were invited to go down to talk to the crew. I think this was because David Wright is a helicopter pilot. People talked quite a long time.



Then we left and Alan drove Larre and me through Melbourne and the tunnel to the bay at Port Melbourne. We went through St. Kilda, stopped at Brighton to wander on the beach and see the colorful bathing boxes or beach shacks. We saw some starfish

and crabs. We drove on through Sandringham and to Mordialloc where we stopped and walked out on the pier.

We came home and got ready to go to John and Val Ford's for dinner. Liz brought appetizers- a pâté, a dip and cream cheese sitting in sweet chili sauce (delicious!), a beef curry and little cakes for dessert. John had made a Moroccan chicken dish and Val baked an apple pie. Everything was wonderful and we all talked until about 11 PM. Mark and Roz are staying with them. When we went outside, the stars were quite bright and John pointed out some constellations. *Sue*



After our tour and lunch at the Victorian Police Academy we went with my hostess to her holiday cottage in Dromana which is at the end of the Melbourne Bay. Her cottage was beautiful with a lovely view of the bay from the deck. We spent 2 hours dipping our feet in the water. Could have gone for a swim but decided just to sit instead. It was a really hot day. Had a lovely dinner on her deck watching the bay and then headed to bed. *Isabel*

Rising at 7 AM in the home of my hosts Heiner & Brigitte Jaehrling, I enjoy the view from my room, which overlooks a lovely garden dominated by a huge fig tree laden with fruit. I'm amused by the antics of a large black bird (similar to our starling only larger) trying, in vain, to secure figs from the very well netted tree. After breakfast Gladys Robinson, another ambassador, joins us and the four of us drive a short distance to the Police Academy in Mt. Waverley. The academy is situated in what was once a Catholic Seminary, and the

buildings, chapel and grounds are beautiful! Our guide is a lady constable who spent over twenty years in the force, and now works part time in public relations and conducting tours of the facilities. She is well acquainted with the rigors of the training session the cadets must



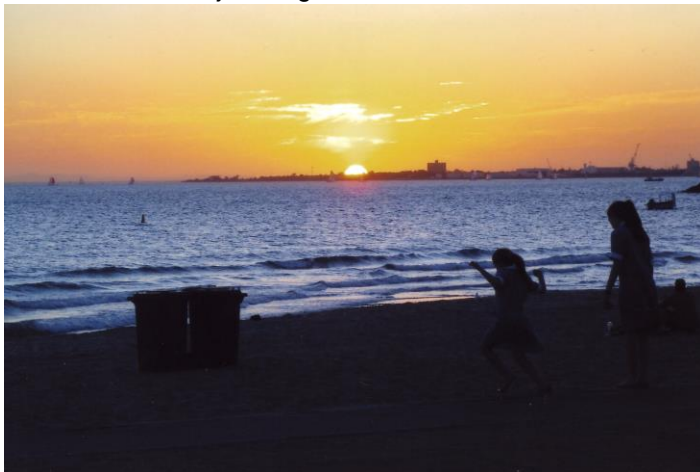
endure. At the conclusion of her talk, we join the cadets for an excellent buffet luncheon. Much to her amazement, Gladys is acknowledged and cheered by the entire assembly - it's her 80<sup>th</sup> birthday!! The expression of her face was priceless - definitely a birthday she'll never forget!

After lunch we drive to the Oriental Market which resembles a mammoth flea market with clothes,



toys, trinkets, food, & plants etc. from many parts of the Far East as well as Australia. We spend about two hours poking around the market, and making a few small purchases. Shortly after we arrive home, Ronnie Swayn arrives to pick up Gladys. Brigitte serves afternoon tea before they depart.

After adjourning for a short rest, we decide to drive to the beach, and we're off to St Kilda Beach



on Port Phillip Bay. We enjoy a leisure stroll along the beach, venturing out on a quay where we chat with fellow walkers and the fishermen who are not catching many fish. As we start back toward the car, the sun begins to set, and lights in the amusement park, hotels and restaurants flicker on. Caught in the spell of the evening, we decide to linger over a light supper in one of the outdoor cafes. Viewing the golden orb of the sun sinking into the sea in a vivid orange and purple panorama, it was a truly magic moment that we all sensed. The drive home through Melbourne watching the lights come on in the skyscrapers was lovely, and a wonderful end to a wonderful day! *Jean Sedar*

#### Thursday, March 15



Today after breakfast Alan drove us to Ballarat to visit Sovereign Hill. We were on limited access roads most of the way. The country is so dry. It took about 1½ hours to get there. Sovereign Hill is a reconstructed mining town depicting life in the 1850's following the discovery of gold in 1851. Many school groups were there ranging from elementary to high school. It looks like an authentic town of that era and



there are people dressed up in period costumes who tell about life in the time. Some school groups stay overnight and on the second day, they dress in costume and help populate the town. People could pan for gold. Alan (the ex-geologist) found a tiny sliver and gave it to a young child. We went into a house in One Eye Gully where a man talked about family life and we stopped to see two Chinese ladies who gave us paper cranes for luck. We went on a tour of Red Hill Mine. We climbed down into the mineshaft where a voice told us what to do and where to go. Doors opened and shut and we went from room to room. We were supposed to be new miners. In one area water was dripping. Another had holograms of miners





using a pickaxe to mine. They discovered a big nugget, which we later saw in another room, supposedly in a vault. It was very well done.

When we left the mine we went to the Gold Smelting Works where we saw a man pour a gold ingot, went to the Bowling Saloon, then into several shops, the hotel and finally went to have lunch. Then we saw a group of Redcoats march down the street and fire their guns. We wandered a bit longer then went to see the film in the building we entered through and saw the small museum there. Next we went across the way to the Gold Museum and walked through that. We finished there and drove through Ballarat and saw the lake, which was the Olympic rowing venue for the 1956 games and is now completely dry. We drove to Liz's sister Robyn's house and saw Robyn, her daughter and the daughter's 6-week-old baby girl. We had a short visit and drove back to Melbourne. We had spaghetti and meat sauce and talked for a while before going to bed after a long but wonderful day. *Sue*



This morning we slept in and then several other hosts and their ambassadors drove down. We are about 1 hour from the city. We took a lovely tour of the area. The mountain called Arthurs Seat had beautiful views of the Pacific and of all the bays. There was lots of kangaroo scat but we couldn't see any kangaroos. Darn! We had a lovely potluck lunch at her house and the others then headed out to see other sites and we just sat around a bit and chatted before heading into the city. We passed a couple of emus on the way. It was really hot today. Probably high 90s but is supposed to be cooler the rest of the week. It is very dry as they are in a major drought. Last year at this time they had 142 inches of rain, this year only



42 so everything is looking rather brown. We took the tram into the city for a couple of hours for a quick bite and to see the city at night. Gwen bet \$20 in blackjack and won \$40. Not my luck. Decided not to gamble. *Isabel*

### Friday, March 16



We got up and left for Healesville after breakfast. We were a little early and went to check out the facilities at Badger Creek, where we were going to have a barbecue lunch. Liz was happy there were tables under cover since it was a bit rainy. We drove back to Healesville and met the rest of the group. We went in and met our two guides. We went to the koala area but most of them were sleeping or high up in trees. We visited the animal hospital and saw a wombat brought in because it was injured. We also saw rock wallabies and some birds there and a woman told us about the hospital. People have to bring the injured or sick animals through the



back gate. We went through the rest of the sanctuary and saw kangaroos and wallabies, platypus, snakes, other reptiles, some dingoes, emus and some other birds. Then we went to the bird show. After that we went to the gift shop for a short time and on to Badger Creek. Several of the hosts had been there cooking while we were in the sanctuary. They had all the tables set and a nice selection of salads, fruits, cooked sausages and rissoles. Then there were desserts and coffee and tea. After lunch we took a hike to the weir. We came back and saw more crimson rosella. We had seen many of them and some kookaburras while we were eating. There was a lost dog that hung around us for a while. One of the hosts called the number on the dog's tag. We stopped at a winery to look for Brigitta but she wasn't there, then we drove home. We changed and stopped at a bottle shop then drove to the restaurant



called Shanikas where we were meeting Val, John, Mark and Roz for dinner. I had a delicious steak and Larre had curried chicken. The food was excellent. We had a leisurely meal and got home about 11 PM. *Sue*





Today we drove out to the Yarra Valley and went to Healesville Sanctuary where we saw lots of Australian wildlife including two sleepy koalas and a sleepy wombat. Luckily we saw the Tasmanian devil in Tasmania because the one they had here was hiding somewhere. Petted a few roos and saw a nice bird show. Then we had a lovely picnic barbecue at Badger Creek, a lovely state park and there were several kookaburras sitting in the tree above us waiting for our scraps. There were also some lovely parrot-like birds looking for remnants of our lunch. We then took an hour hike up some hills to a weir, which I guess is sort of a dam. *Isabel*

**Saturday, March 17**



On our way to Phillip Island, we stopped at Rye Beach to see Sand Sculpting Australia 2007. This was the seventh year of this event to be held at Rye Beach. The theme was Myths and Legends. The exhibit took 18 sculptors, 19 days to complete working daily from 7 AM through to 6 PM as described in the brochure. It was very impressive.

Continuing on to Phillip Island, we stopped at Cowes to have dinner at a restaurant overlooking the water. We arrived at the Penguin center around 8 and walked on a wooden path to the beach where we sat in bleachers, a short distance from the water edge. When it



became dark, we started to concentrate on the water and eventually saw a group of penguins coming out and walking into the bush. We decided to count them, since we heard that the amount of penguins coming ashore has diminished. We counted around 65. It was exciting to see them even though the amount was small in comparison to 200 in past years. On our way back to the Administration Building, we had a close-up look at them as they walked on the sand alongside the wooden path. *Gladys Robinson*



After breakfast Alan and Liz dropped us at John and Sue Van West's house. All the ambassadors or couples were day hosted for the day in the Dandenongs. John drove us to a reservoir, which was very low, where we had tea. We stopped in an arty town where we visited a candle shop, an art gallery, another small town that had an interesting old hotel - the Yarra Glen Grand Hotel built in 1888 - and a shop that sold tea, coffee and tea and coffee pots and cups. We had lunch in a pizza place. We visited a place that had more crimson rosellas. We stopped at a tower that Larre climbed for a view. It was also a war memorial. We stopped at a few other places including the same winery we were at yesterday but this time we went on a self-guided tour.

The Van Wests drove us home. We changed and Liz and Alan drove us to Mick and Maria Smith's home where we joined the Dennis and Barbara Guilford (the Smiths' ambassadors), Ken and Bev Kennedy (the Guilfords' day hosts whom they had hosted in Wyoming) and the Van Wests for dinner. There was a nice selection of appetizers, then



desserts and lively conversation. *Sue Hoke*

A lady I had written to on the Internet for 9 years entertained me. Her brother and sister-in-law had come to New York in 1999 and I had gotten brave and met them and took them all around NYC so now Sylvia decided to reciprocate. She and her husband picked me up at 9 AM and we took a 200 km ride around the Melbourne Bay. I had seen a bit of it when Heather took us to her summerhouse but this was the whole trip. I passed a fantastic sand art exhibit contest, more elaborate than the ones they have at Point Pleasant. Had coffee at a friend of theirs who have a magnificent house in a town called Rosebud and then went to lunch at a



beautiful restaurant overlooking the bay in a town called Sorrento. Afterwards we explored the beach areas a bit and then took a ferry across the bay at the land ends of both sides and there is a gap between the two sides where all the boats have to be piloted in as there are big rips there. You could see the difference between the bay and I guess the sea is the Bass Sea and the pilot boat was just bobbing all over the place. While on the ferry there were about 20 dolphins doing their thing, which happens sometime but not often. We drove back to Melbourne on the other side of the bay and stopped at a grocery store to pick up a few things Sylvia still needed for dinner. All the products are the same things we find in our supermarkets. Had a lovely dinner, fresh mussels from the sea (I had never eaten them before) lasagna and salad. Her parents were there who were about my age and the brother and sister-in-law I had taken around and their three kids. Sylvia will be 40 in September and has an 18-year-old son and is 3 1/2 months pregnant! But she and her husband are so lovely and it was just a great experience to meet them after 9 years of IMs. Got home about 11:45 PM! *Isabel*

Rhonda Fleming, my day hostess, arrives at 9:30 AM to drive me to the Yarra Valley to visit a vineyard. With Rhonda is her friend Judy, a Canadian from the Ottawa Friendship Force Club.

Strangely enough Judy once lived in Moorestown, NJ and taught English for two years in Woodbury High School prior to moving to Australia, and finally settling in Canada. Judy's friends, Wally and Judy Zuk, are the owners of the Five Oaks Vineyard which we are going to visit. Setting off in the general direction of the Healesville Sanctuary, there is a slight problem, neither Rhonda nor Judy knows exactly where the winery is. After asking directions a few times, we arrive at our destination about 11 AM. Rhonda discovers that the winery is only a few miles from her former home - a ranch with 45,000 chickens, which she sold when her husband died.



Judy and Wally Zuk are delightful and welcome us into their lovely home. Following the Australian tradition we partake of morning tea with them. Afterwards Judy takes us on a tour of her house which is under renovation. We take some pictures of the grounds and the five huge oak trees which surround the house, hence the name, Five Oaks Vineyard. Wally invites us into the processing building, and explains that they have seven acres of vines planted in very rich volcanic soil. Originally 80 tons of grapes were processed, but now they do about 20 tons which is much less demanding. He shows the gigantic stainless steel vats, costing about \$80,000 apiece, in which the grapes are processed. The oak holding barrels are replaced every three years and they cost \$12,000 apiece. The Zuks hold tastings on weekends or by appointment, they also attend wine conferences and have begun to build a fine reputation in the field. We try several of the wines, I buy a Reisling, 2004 for the Jaehrlings and Judy purchases several Cabernets.



After saying goodbye to the Zuks we drive deeper into the Dandenong Mountains, the scenery is spectacular - huge trees and many kinds of ferns. About 1:30 PM we stop for lunch in a lovely old house which has been converted into a restaurant. We linger over the meal and then go to Olinda, a nearby village consisting of little shops where artists and craftspeople display their wares. We amble through the shops and make a few small purchases, before starting home. As we're driving along the road we come upon an amazing sight, people are feeding flocks of large, white, sulfur-crested cockatoos which are roosting in the huge gum trees. Reluctantly we take our leave, Rhonda and Judy have a fair distance to drive after leaving me at the Jaehrlings. It's been an eventful day & I'm exhausted - fall into bed at 9 PM!!! *Jean Sedar*



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### Sunday, March 18



Alan and Liz drove us down the Mornington Peninsula to the very end. We stopped for a view one or two times on the way to Point Nepean National Park. We bought a quick lunch and tractor transport tickets. We drove to the Gunner's Carpark and boarded the transport there. We rode to Cheviot Hill and got off to walk out to Point Nepean where we had a great view. We ate our lunch and walked all around the fort. We saw Cheviot Beach where the vessel Cheviot was wrecked in 1887 and PM



Harold Holt disappeared in 1967. We took the Fort Pearce and Eagles Nest Heritage Trail. Fort Pearce and Eagles Nest, once an important part of Port Phillip's defenses are now abandoned, wild and windswept vantage points. We could see the fort, Port Phillip and ocean beaches at the Battery Observation Post. There were interesting displays in some of the buildings. We walked around Fort Nepean, saw the Engine House, gun emplacements, the guns that were the first allied shots fired in World War I and World War II. There were many good audio presentations. Fort Nepean was a vital part of Victoria's defenses for more than 20 years from the 1880's to 1945. The stories of the past were interesting in the Bomb Proof Room. We walked through the tunnels. We caught the transport back to the cemetery, which we visited. Then we went to Visitor's Center where we saw a film. Next we drove to see London Bridge on the



Bass Strait and drove home to change for the Farewell Dinner at Mulgrave Country Club. We had munchies on the balcony and an open bar then a delicious buffet. We sat with Liz and Alan, John and Sue Van West, Alan and Judy Fraser and Brenda and Roger Smith. Liz gave out the photos taken at the welcome tea and people talked about the exchange highlights. The Australians sang a few songs. After desert I presented the exchange gift – a



donation of \$250 in honor of the exchange to the Tweed Valley Tanzania School Project. We asked the Melbourne club what charity they wanted to support and they chose Tweed Valley's charity. We went home and packed. *Sue*



This morning I was going to sleep in but I woke up about 8 so went to church with Gwen and Heather. Then we got in the car and drove all over Melbourne. The Grand Prix was going on this weekend so we could hear the noise of all the racing cars. We drove through the Jewish area, some lovely residential neighborhoods. Saw their amusement park, strolled through the Botanical Gardens, and went to a couple of markets. Now I am back using the computer as I don't know when I will again see one so.... Tonight we have our farewell dinner. I invited



George and Sylvia so that they can meet some of my American friends as well as the Australian friends. I have seen a side of Melbourne that most Americans never get to see and it has been great. Even though I have vowed this will be my last Australian trip, who knows? If I can turn my frequent flyer miles into a free first class trip I might well come back. *Isabel*

### **Friendship Force of Tweed Valley Homestay March 19-26, 2007**

Mark & Roz Goldstein, Cindy & Bill Jones, Isabel Strasser, Gwendolyn Deas, Gladys Robinson, Jean Sedar, Mary Karen Horvath, Diane & David Wright, Larre & Sue Hoke

### **Monday, March 19**

We had breakfast, finished packing and left for the airport. We all checked in and went to the departure lounge with our hosts. Gwen was happy that she didn't have to pay excess baggage. We all



talked until the plane was announced and the hosts left. We boarded the plane and I sat next to a chatty man. We talked most of the trip. We landed about 12:35 PM at Gold Coast Airport –also called Coolangatta. The Tweed Valley club met us as we came into the terminal. Jan Davis, the ED, was working but Leo met us. After we got our luggage, he drove us home. Jan's father Col and stepmother Heather were at the house. They've been visiting for three weeks. Heather and Leo made us lunch. Then we unpacked and went downstairs and talked to Leo and Col. Jan came home and we exchanged gifts. I received a nice cookbook and Larre got a book, too. At 4:30 PM we left for Hazel and Brian Tree's house. They had a nice yard next to the river. Everyone brought a dish or two to share. There was a

young woman there who said she was with the hosts' son. She is a Canadian. Later she called herself a tree hugger. I told her that I had a bracelet for her. Hazel said she was a tree hugger, too. The mosquitoes came out when it got dark. *Sue Hoke*

Arrived at Coolangata Airport today and met my new host Evelyn. She has an interesting life history having migrated to Australia in the early 1960s when Australia was desperate for workers from England. It was 10 pounds a person then and she came with her husband and 5 children. We had a lovely potluck dinner at one of the member's house which was located on the beautiful Tweed River. Everything was lovely except for the beautiful Australian mossies or mosquitos. *Isabel Strasser*



## Tuesday, March 20

We met at the Tweed Valley Council. They had a big display case with gifts from various Friendship Force exchanges. There were some interesting pieces of art in the building. We went into the Council Room. Max Boyd gave us the official welcome. Then there was a performance of Australian songs by the Murwillumbah Primary School 6<sup>th</sup> Form Choir. All of the singers were girls except for a boy in an electric wheelchair. He had a beautiful voice but he was very impatient with the mistakes of the others. After the performance I gave them stickers and presented Max Boyd with the key to Cherry Hill. The kids spoke to the ambassadors then we all went into the foyer for tea. Next we went to the Wood



Turning Club where we saw the beautiful things they made including tables, chests, a hobby horse, bowls, plates and art pieces. I really liked a pair of hands holding a globe. We chatted with the wood turners. Then we went to Tyalgum for lunch. We had time for a short walk around the little



town then went to the hotel for our meal. I had a delicious chicken Caesar salad. After lunch we went to Chillingham for the tree planting. We planted 30 trees at the Community Center. They are trying to restore the native plants. We took a photo in front of the black bean pod statue. We stopped at a fruit stand/garden to see some Australian fruits and plants. We went back to Budd Park and stopped at the Murwillumbah Tourist Information Center which had a film and a small museum.



The Tweed Valley area is beautiful. It is the caldera of an extinct volcano and is surrounded by a ring of mountains including Mt. Warning. The whole place is very green with lots of tropical plants. There are river views and ocean views. We drove home, had a cold dinner of salad and corned beef and watched TV all evening. *Sue*

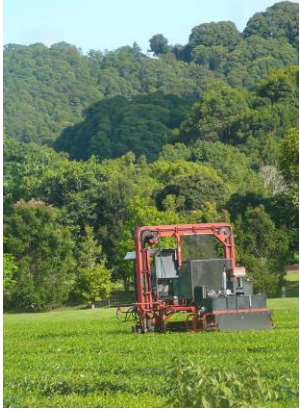
This morning we went to the town hall and met the major who told us about the history of the area. Then a children's choir from the local school entertained us. The star of the choir was this horribly crippled boy who had a beautiful voice. We then went to a wood turning place, which is a workshop where all these retired men gather and make



these exquisite things out of wood. They have tons of machines and make beautiful things. A lot of the profits from the things that they sell are used to donate to charity. And it gives the men lots to do in their spare time. After lunch we went to this environmental place where they are trying to reforest an area with natural trees and get rid of all the exotic things that are growing. Two of Evelyn's daughters and one of the daughter's partners came over for dinner, which was nice, and we had a great conversation about our lives. *Isabel*



## Wednesday, March 21



We went first to the Madura Tea Plantation. I never knew that Australia was a major tea producer and it was interesting to watch the process of making tea. They import tea from some of the Asian countries that they mix with their blend and send some of their tea to Asia to be mixed with the Asian blend. It was quite interesting to see and a huge place. The tea plants live for 130 years so they don't have to do much planting! Then we went to a patchwork store where we watched some women who were quilting. There were some beautiful quilts on display and also lovely dolls that the women had made. The store had just opened up so they were still organizing. Wish I could find a place like that near us. We had lunch at the Innam Estate Winery in Carool and then had a tour of the winery plus a wine tasting. I went to the car to get some money to buy a bottle of wine for Evelyn as she commented she liked a particular kind



and I dropped her car keys in the trunk and locked the trunk! What a disaster that was. Everyone left to go to the beach-, which I was really looking forward to doing and instead, because of my carelessness, we had to wait for her daughter to drive out and bring the spare keys. Luckily she was home and could go get the keys and I felt so bad because it was a 40 minute drive but they were very understanding even though I was in tears. We got to Rainbow Beach in time for barbecued sausages and I even had a time for a swim. The water was just delicious and the outside temp was in the low 90s so I was so glad I got to get in the water. *Isabel*



Leo cooked sausages for the group on the nice gas grill right near Rainbow Beach. These grills are available at most parks and are free. It was a pleasant afternoon. Jan drove us to the lighthouse and we walked down to see the green frog (rock) that Larre had seen when he walked there earlier. We also saw a gray crane and talked to a lady about Friendship Force. Jan stopped so I could take a picture of sunset and we came home. *Sue*



In re-living the Australian Exchange, my experience of going to the "cattle farm" for one night in the Tweed Valley Exchange was a highlight for me. I thought I would be staying in the Gold Coast area of Currumbin the whole time. The cattle were being inoculated the next AM so we had to be up there overnight, for that early AM. This was a pleasant total departure for me, to be in the farm house, exploring the fields by a great 20 year old Land Rover, (myself straddling the stick shift while Lorrene Brown drove us to check on the fences in the fields), hearing the native birds as the sun set on this magnificent scenery of Mt. Warning in the backyard, having dinner on the veranda by lantern, NO TV, just wonderful conversation with bottles of wine for dessert, and waking up to the mooing of the cows the next morning (great preparation for the MOO MOO Cafe), all contributed to a real AUSSIE RANCH experience- A Friendship Force Experience - for me. And I shared these experiences with Gladys from Santa Barbara as my FF housemate. *Mary Karen Horvath*



Thursday, March 22

Doug (Lorene's husband) came up to the ranch in the antique 1964 Holden car and then took us into town (in style) for our FF group meet up, to visit the Munjumbal Aboriginal Centre. Quite an experience. *Mary Karen Horvath*

This morning we went to an aboriginal center and Mark, a half caste, I guess, part aborigine and part Polynesian, took us for an hour's walk through the bush pointing out all the plants that one could eat. Part of the walk was over a mangrove area where the tides emptied out two times a day so there was always tons of fish and crabs to eat also. He showed us how they used the bark of a cork tree to make the fish come up to the top of the water and all they had to do was scoop them out with their hands. These aborigines were much stronger and harder than those who lived in the outback since



they had such abundant food supplies available all the time. There was a lovely museum, too, which gave a history of the natives of that area. Our next stop was the Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary. This was much nicer than the other two that we had visited and again I had a great time playing with the roos and watching them hop along. The highlight here was the \$12 I spent to have my picture taken with a koala. When I was last in Australia I did this but the koala was placed on a pillow and I really didn't get a chance to touch him. This one was put in my arms with his arms around my neck and I spent several minutes hugging and kissing him. He was so so cute. I also got to see my other favorite Aussie animal the wombat going in and out of logs. They had one in Melbourne but he was fast asleep so it was great to see one in action. By the way, the wine bottle that I had brought for Evelyn and had locked her keys in the car for fell out of the frig tonight and broke into a thousand pieces. Guess it wasn't meant to be! *Isabel*



We were driven to the Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary. Larre, Isabel and I started toward the Snakes Alive Show. Larre thought we were going to be late so he went off on his own.



Isabel and I got there a little late and sat in an area with a bunch of young boys. A little boy in the stage area was having his arm wrapped to show how to treat snakebites. Then the keepers showed three of Australia's most venomous snakes – the red-bellied black snake, another variety of black snake which didn't look black and the puff adder. Then they brought out a few non-poisonous snakes – some constrictors. They wrapped one around the neck of the same little boy they "treated" for snakebite. Some others in our group came at the end of the show and we went to see the Echidna Encounter. The echidna had a very long tongue and a good appetite. Next we spent some time with the koalas and then went to the kangaroo area where we could pet red kangaroos and gray kangaroos. I saw Isabel there and she said she had seen a wombat near the koalas. I went to the crocodile wetlands where I saw some freshwater crocodiles and a huge saltwater croc. I met Gladys and Gwen there and we walked back to the wombat enclosure but didn't see anything. We passed a huge wedge-tailed eagle sitting on a man's arm. We caught the train back to the meeting place but only the hosts were there. Gwen and Gladys went off to see the Aboriginal Dance Show but my back was bothering me and I hadn't eaten so I had an ice cream with Ruth and sat and talked with a few of the hosts. The others returned and we took some photos at the lorikeet feeding but



there weren't many birds. When I was here in 1968, the sky was dark when the birds flew in – there were so many of them!

Ruth Nott, our day host, drove us home and came inside leaving the Joneses in the car. Leo's daughter Helen was there. Jan got her dad to agree to play his guitar and yodel so she went out to get Cindy and Bill. Col is completely self-taught. He sang three songs, and then played the piano. Ruth and her guests left and we had dinner. Later Leo's son dropped by and then Helen's husband who teaches tae kwon do. *Sue*

### Friday, March 23

Jan was at work today so Leo dropped us at Budd Park and we went with Hazel Tree for the day. First we drove to Mooball (pronounced like Mobil) and had morning tea at the Moo Moo Café. The



telephone poles in the town are painted white with black blotches and the café itself has a cow theme and has funny cow sayings all around. The gas tanks outside have a cow pattern. They sell all kinds of pottery cows and have a room where they sell antiques. I had an iced café – coffee, cream and ice cream. Delicious! The owner who was wearing a cow print apron took pictures of us all lined up in front of the place.

We left Mooball and went on to Byron Bay. Hazel

drove us up to the lighthouse and we looked around there and walked down. Byron Bay is the most easterly point in continental Australia. There were some great views on the way down. Hazel came looking for us since everyone else had already come down. We went back to the car past lots of surfers. Hazel drove us to the Brunswick Heads Hotel Beer Garden where we had lunch. Roz and I treated Hazel. We visited a gallery/shop that sold Aboriginal art. Some people bought some things there. Then we went back to Murwillumbah to the Tweed Art Gallery. We saw the portraits and the special exhibit – three rooms plus a photo exhibition on Gallipoli that was



very interesting. Jan came to pick us up and we went home. I did some wash and got ready for the Farewell Dinner. We left about 6 for the Tumblegum Hotel – a 1908 building right across from the river. Leo and Jan bought me a drink and we bought them dinner. We sat across from Wendy Watson – the moving force behind the Tanzanian School project. Dinner was good but serving was erratic and the place was very noisy. After dinner, Wendy and Narelle gave a talk about the school. I presented the gift of \$250 in honor of the Tweed Valley club exchange plus \$250 in honor of the Melbourne club. Then we moved outside and Neville East, a bush poet, had Gwen, then Roz, then his wife Janet try to draw a map of Australia.



Janet's map was the best (she had traced it earlier) but it didn't include Tasmania. Neville recited a long funny poem he had written which ended when they slapped a stick-on Tasmania in it. Then they wanted us to do something. So I read my Ode to New Jersey, which was well received. The party broke up after that and we hugged everyone good-bye. Leo drove us home but stopped at a development being



built high on a hill to see the lights of Surfers Paradise. We came home and had a cup of tea and a piece of cake that Heather had baked. *Sue*

### Saturday, March 24

Had breakfast and then Col took us to the local elementary school where we saw the voting procedure. Jan is at a different polling place working from 6 AM to after 8 PM. Voting is compulsory. You get fined if you don't vote. There were lots of posters and people handing out ballots showing them how to vote for the candidates the



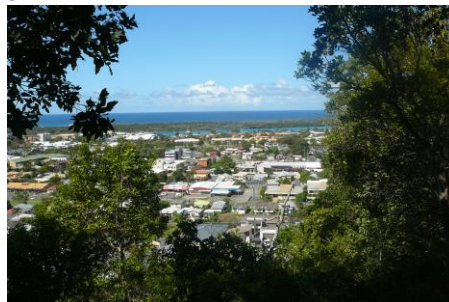


various parties supported. You can vote at any polling place in your area. They cross your name off and they give you your ballot. You fill out the ballot and drop it in the proper box.

We came back and had some tea and cake, and then Leo took us on a tour. First we went to Natural Bridge where we walked on a



trail to the waterfall and cave – very interesting. Then Leo took us to a few other lookouts. We went to Springbrook and walked down to Purling Brook Falls. We stopped for photos at Wunburra Lookout and then at a community center that had a beautiful mural on the wall, Leo drove back through Mudgeeraba and Tweed City. Leo, who injured his back when he fell



off a tractor when he was 35, stayed in the car during most of our excursions but he took us to Razorback Lookout where we had a great view of Coolangatta Airport and the mountains in one direction and Tweed Heads and the coast in the other. It is his favorite place and he said he was saving himself so he could do the walk up there. We stopped at Woolworths which is a grocery chain here. Then we visited Jan's mother Marvene and her husband Jim and Jan's brother Lyle, who lives in Brisbane but came down to wash his car as Brisbane is under water restrictions. Jan's

mother gave us tea and biscuits. Sue

This morning I went with Evelyn and her husband to vote. What an experience that was. For starters there were at least 15 parties running and they all had representatives electioneering by the polls- definitely a no-no at home. Their ballots, which were paper, were at least two feet by one foot long and you could either vote the party or you had to rank the candidates in order. And you did this in booths that were just huge cardboard boxes and then handed your ballot to a person who took them and put them in another paper box. And you voted in pencil so I can't believe there isn't fraud. I sort of commented to one of the poll workers that this seemed like a weird way to run an election but I don't think she was pleased with my comment, as she seemed to think they did it the right way. Evelyn and her husband agreed with me as did her kids. And if you don't vote you are fined \$100 for not voting! We then went to Surfers Paradise because I was looking for a Ken



Done store. He is a famous artist and I had bought some beautiful shirts by him the last time I was there but they closed down most of his stores and luckily I was able to find one open store in Surfers Paradise- but his designs had changed over the years. I bought a shirt because I had made Evelyn schlep me all over the place to find this store, but I wish he hadn't changed his style. We then took a lovely 2-hour boat ride and passed the lovely Versace hotel, which is the only one in existence and saw many natural islands made by sand being brought down by the sea from the barrier reef. The houses along the inlet were just beautiful. All many millions of dollars each. Isabel



It's Election Day in Australia and Marion Roberts, my hostess, must drive to Uki where she is registered to vote. In Australia voting is compulsory, it's always held on Saturday and people are fined for not voting. Uki is a small village located a few miles from Marion's 200 acre ancestral farm which she sold 3 months ago, prior to moving to her house in Murwillumbah. On the way to Uki we stop to pick up Bill & Cindy Jones at Ruth and John Nott's house. While Marion goes to vote at the Uki elementary school, Cindy, Bill and I poke around in the little shops and farmer's market. The town reminds me very much of the small villages on the west coast of England.



Marion rejoins us and as we're walking along we bump into Michael (a Tweed Valley FF member) who had been with us earlier in the week. Since it's a hot day, we decide to

stop for a cold drink and Michael joins us. We decide it would be nice to see Marion's former home on the ancestral farm which is not far away, whereupon Michael asks us to drop by his yurt which is close to the farm. Nestled in a valley, backing into the mountains with Mt. Warning in the background, the farm is in



a lovely area. It must have been very difficult for Marion to leave. We take a few pictures and follow Michael to his yurt. His structure is a monument to recycling. Over a seven year period he has used recycled materials to assemble the building and make everything in it such as cabinets and all furniture. I'm very impressed by the determination and skill of the builder. His carpentry abilities seem to rival those of Norm Abrams, the master carpenter of This Old House TV fame. The area under the yurt, which is elevated on used telephone poles, serves as a garage. He has a huge catchment basin to provide water and uses a composting toilet.



Considering that Michael is alone, apparently his wife decided it was not the life for her, the place is basically clean - a little cluttered but otherwise OK. Marion tells us later that FF club used to bring exchange people out here, but finally decided that having wrenches, screwdrivers, sanders and hammers with tea was a little much!! Altogether a very interesting morning!

*Jean*

### Sunday, March 25

Evelyn took me to her local club where they had a wonderful singer, over 70 years old with a magnificent voice who sang many old Broadway hits. I got to meet her at the end and bought her CD.



She was lovely and we talked a bit. She was part of a threesome that was considered the Aussie Peter Paul and Mary. Then we went to a place called Tropical World, which was a scientific plantation where they grew over 500 varieties of tropical fruits. It was quite interesting. Never knew there were so many varieties of avocados and tasted a fruit that tasted just like chocolate and from which they made chocolate syrup. And they are just discovering that the substance between the skin of a papaya and the pulp is a major cancer fighter. It doesn't cure cancer but keeps the tumor from growing and the guide says they are going to make a major announcement soon about this. Also a slice of star fruit a day seems to be as effective as blood pressure medication. And I never knew that Australia was now the major producer of macadamia nuts, taking over from Hawaii. Two of Evelyn's daughters came over for dinner and I also got to meet her son. Oh yes on the way home from tropical fruit world we stopped at her granddaughter's house where we met the new baby that had arrived the week before. So I got a great picture of 4 generations. And Evelyn is only 74 so it is nice already to have 4 great grandchildren. These are the kinds of experiences you don't get on a tour. Anyway that was the end of my trip. *Isabel Strasser*



### Post-Exchange Tour to Brisbane and Cairns March 25-March 29, 2007

Jean Sedar, Gwendolyn Deas, Roz Goldstein, Larre & Sue Hoke, Mark Goldstein

### Sunday, March 25

We assemble at Jan Davis' house because she and her father have offered to drive us from Murwillumbah to Brisbane. During the drive, Jan's father amuses us with stories of the changes and the development of the Gold Coast. We arrive at the Quality Inn at the Brisbane Airport before noon. Checking into the motel we immediately head for the nearest ferry stop because the city seems to be centered on the Brisbane River. For a few dollars we purchase a ticket for the ferry - it's a long ride to the center of the city. Gwen, Roz and I get off at the South Bank which has a warren of small shops, and cafes and a marvelous public swimming pool.



This pool resembles a beach with sand and rocks and many smaller connecting pools, it looks nothing like any other pool I've ever encountered. Fantastic!

Roz, Gwen and I poke our noses into the small shops, and finally stop to eat lunch and enjoy the passing scene. After eating we decide to take the ferry across the river to the North Bank. There we

Roz, Gwen and I poke our noses into the small shops, and finally stop to eat lunch and enjoy the passing scene. After eating we decide to take the ferry across the river to the North Bank. There we

discover Brisbane Square and a display of sculpture consisting of huge metal balls. We meandered across the square and on down Queen Street which is thronged with people. Stopping in a fabric shop to admire the materials, we ask the owner what bus we should take to cross back to the South Bank. He



tells us that our ferry ticket is good for the bus fare and he also explains how to go to the new Gallery of Modern Art, GOMA. It is a beautiful gallery featuring contemporary paintings, kinetic sculptures and many unusual exhibits. Later we spot a small cafe in the building and decide to have a drink, but once the dessert cart appears all resolve is lost. Roz and Gwen purchase meringues and I succumb to a thumbnail sized chocolate confection which literally melts in the mouth. As we emerge from GOMA we find it's raining, but it stops soon and we decide to stay in the North Bank area for dinner. We plod along looking for the best restaurant and scanning the posted menus to locate the most appealing. Finally we retrace our

steps and return to the first restaurant we saw as we stepped off the ferry. Feasting on blackened tuna in a bed of watercress, we enjoy an excellent meal.

Catching the ferry to return to the motel we have a dazzling view of the city at night. A young Dutch couple joins us on the walk back to the motel, they are staying in a nearby motel. After retrieving our bags from Sue and Larre's room, we fall into bed by 9:30 PM - what a day!!

*Jean*

Leo made eggs for breakfast. Jan and Heather are driving the seven in our group who are going to Brisbane. Everyone arrived on time; we got all the bags in and left a little after 8 AM. Diane and David rode with Jan and Larre and me. Jean, Roz and Gwen rode with Heather and Col. We arrived at the hotel in Brisbane before 10 AM. The Wrights' room and our room were ready but the other room wasn't. They left their luggage in our room and we all walked to the river to catch a CityCat catamaran to Brisbane. Our tickets cost \$3.90 each. Jean and Gwen got senior rates for \$2. They are good for unlimited rides on the buses and boats all day. We rode down the Brisbane River.



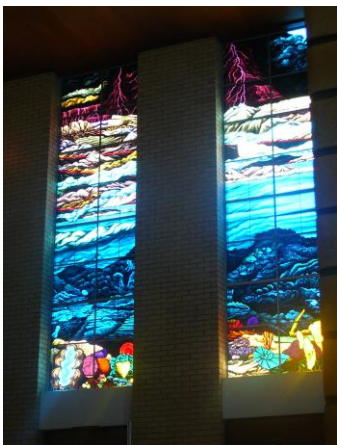
Larre and I rode to the end of the line and then got off when we reached North Quay. We walked to see City Hall, Windmill Observatory, had lunch in the Central Railway Station, saw St. Stephen's Cathedral, and went past the Botanic Gardens, Parliament House and Queensland University of Technology. We caught a CityCat at QUT to South Bank Parkland and visited a temple built for the World Expo held in Brisbane many years ago, then went to the Art Gallery and the Museum at the Queensland Cultural Centre. The art museum was interesting, especially the elephant. The museum had dinosaurs, animals, aboriginal displays, a special zoo, a large collection of birds, butterflies, insects, etc. We caught the CityCat back to our stop, went to a 7/11 to buy Larre's breakfast and got back to the hotel a little after 6 PM. We ate dinner in the hotel dining room – a nice Chicken Cordon Bleu and talked to Diane and David who were eating at the same time. They told us about the exhibition at the Modern Art Museum on Vietnam. Sue

Quality Inn Airport Heritage  
620 Kingsford Smith Drive  
Hamilton, Queensland 4007  
07 3268 5866



### Monday, March 26

We were driven to the airport – quite a long way for a hotel called Quality Inn Airport Heritage. It was about a two-hour flight and we arrived in Cairns about noon. We took the shuttle to our hotel, put our luggage in our rooms and set off to see the town and find food. We went down to the beach – definitely not a swimming beach, and then walked along the Esplanade and down to the CBD – Central Business District. We stopped at St. Monica's Cathedral, which has beautiful stained glass windows including the Peace Windows that celebrate the fifty years of peace in the Pacific region since the end of World War II. The cathedral itself was built as a war memorial commemorating the decisive Battle of the Coral Sea that was fought due east of Cairns May 4-8, 1942. Jean, Larre and I had lunch in a small restaurant. Gwen and Roz had disappeared but we were hot and hungry so we stayed where we were. After lunch we found an ATM, visited the Cairns Regional Gallery – some interesting displays – and



walked back to the hotel. It was very hot. We found Roz and Gwen at the pool.

We were picked up at 6:20 for our evening at the Cairns Night Zoo - a uniquely Australian night out. We were greeted at the bus and taken to the dining area where we sat at picnic tables and had unlimited drinks and an Aussie barbecue. During dinner a man played the didgeridoo. After dinner we were given flashlights and taken to see some of the animals including kangaroos, koalas, crocodiles and snakes. Then we meet with a genuine 'Swaggie' by his campfire – where we were offered some billy tea and damper while he told stories about life in the slow lane. We were joined at the campfire by kangaroos and wallabies that shared our damper – Australian bread – and golden syrup. They licked it



right out of our hands. We returned to the stage area for singing and dancing and were then taken to the exit which- surprise, surprise – led into the gift shop. Before we left we got to see and pet a huge wombat that our bush guide held on his lap. Sue



Bay Village Tropical Retreat  
Corner Lake Street & Gatton Street  
Cairns, Queensland 4870  
Phone: 074051 4622

**Tuesday, March 27**

We're picked up around 7:30 AM from the Bay Village Tropical Retreat and driven to the Cairns Harbor where we board a huge catamaran, Ocean Spirit, which will take us to Michaelmas Cay. The boat is foil - probably over 100 people on board - many different nationalities are represented with French, English, Japanese and a large contingent of champagne- loving Lithuanians (hearing what I assumed to be Russian I misidentified them initially). The captain makes good time, and we have a brisk motor sail out to the cay. Once we arrive and are moored, we're given wet suits and snorkeling gear. Those who wish to scuba dive, or learn to do so, are put in a separate division. Gwen and I climb into one of the glass-bottomed boats



for a leisurely ride over the reef, which affords us an excellent view of huge corals, sea fans, clams, moray eels, and large schools of brightly colored tropical fish.

Upon return to the catamaran we partake of an excellent lunch, and decide to catch one of the shuttle boats to the cay and do a little snorkeling. Gwen is unhappy when she learns that there are no chairs or umbrellas on the island, and that it truly belongs to the birds! Michaelmas Cay is a small, sandy atoll which is a protected bird sanctuary. A short time later we return to the boat, and we cast off from the mooring at 2:15 PM. The return voyage is a little rough - the wind has picked up & it's tossing the boat about- finally the crew raises the main to give us a little stability. The captain is a huge bear of a man, but he has a very deft hand on the wheel and brings the boat to the pier with ease.



This cruise represents the fulfillment of one of my oldest resolutions and I enjoyed every moment of the sail. Unfortunately my companions were not so fortunate, their discomfort ranged from fear of seasickness to general malaise and vomiting! *Jean*

We were picked up at 7:30 and driven to the wharf where we boarded our Ocean Spirit Cruise. I wasn't feeling very well when I got up this morning and didn't have breakfast or the nice lunch provided.

We sailed by catamaran to Michaelmas Cay, a unique sand cay, which is a protected sanctuary for more than 28,000 migratory sea birds of 14 species. The surrounding outer reef is a spectacular garden of exotic marine life, magnificent coral and giant clams, boasting more varieties of tropical fish than the entire Atlantic Ocean. The semi-submersible wasn't there so we



went out in a glass bottom boat. I didn't think the views were great and we didn't see that many fish. I think with a glass bottom boat it is a matter of luck – you see what happens to be right under the boat. Everyone else went to the cay but I stayed on the catamaran. When we got back to the hotel in the late afternoon, Mark was back from his dive trip. He'd left Tweed Valley on Friday and spent 4 days on a dive boat. We all walked to town and had dinner at a Greek restaurant we'd found earlier. After dinner we wandered through the Cairns Night Market where we lost Mark and Roz. Gwen, Jean and I walked back to the hotel. Sue

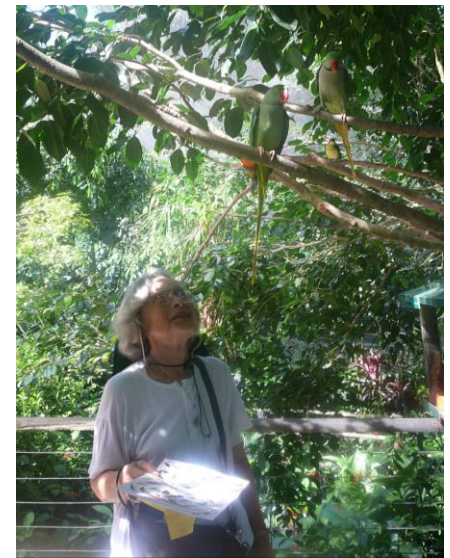


### Wednesday, March 28

This morning we were taken to the Skyrail Rainforest Cableway Caravonica Lakes Terminal. We were supposed to ride the cableway in one direction and take the Kuranda Scenic Railway in the other but a mudslide covered the tracks and train wasn't operating. The Skyrail is a 7.5 km cableway that glides just above the rainforest canopy in the Barron Gorge National Park. We boarded the Skyrail and took the cableway to Red Peak Station – the highest point on the cableway (1788 ft.) We changed to the next cableway and went up to Kuranda Station. We got off, spent a few minutes in the gift shop and then walked to the little town. We arrived



before most places were open. We wandered around and briefly visited the Heritage Markets. Jean wanted to visit Birdworld and Larre and I decided to join her since the other entertainment in town was shopping. We purchased combination tickets to Birdworld and the Australian Butterfly Sanctuary. Birdworld was great! It is a free flight aviary and there are so many colorful birds there. A walkway winds through the aviary and there are poles with feeder platforms right next to the path so the birds are very close to you. We spent quite a while there just enjoying the beautiful birds and the peaceful atmosphere. It was also pleasantly cool inside. We visited the butterfly sanctuary next, where we had an interesting and informative guided tour but the beautiful butterflies couldn't compete with the birds. Butterflies are so small and move so quickly you can't see them so well and many look completely different when they land – the one time you might be able to get a good photo.



We walked back through the little town of Kuranda and had some lunch. Larre went on by himself to take a short trip on the Kuranda Scenic Railway which was open as far as Barron Falls. Jean and I did some shopping (I did more looking) and visited an Aboriginal Art Gallery, which had beautiful and expensive things. We went back to the Skyrail Station and took the cableway down to Barron Falls Station where we got off and walked to the lookouts and then visited the CSIRO Rainforest Interpretive Centre which was very cool and had had interesting displays. Then we boarded the cableway again and took it to Red Peak Station where we went on a guided rainforest walk on a boardwalk led by a ranger who had many stories to tell. We rushed to catch the other cableway down to Caravonica Lakes Station and walked over to the Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park. First we visited the cultural village where we saw the didgeridoo, bush foods and medicine demonstrations. Next we had a



chance to throw boomerangs and spears. Then we went to the Creation Theatre where the spiritual and traditional beliefs of the Tjapukai people were portrayed. The story was told in their traditional language and we wore headsets to hear it in the language of our choice. We went to the dance theater to experience a traditional corroboree. Several men, one woman and a toddler sang and danced on a stage set that looked the land itself. Lastly we went to the History Theater that told the story of what happened when the modern world descended upon a 40,000 year old





culture. The whole place and all the presentations were very well done and I came away with a much better understanding of the life of the Aborigines. We caught the bus back to the hotel. After a swim we all had dinner together in the hotel's restaurant to celebrate our last night together.  
Sue

**Post-Exchange Sydney Tour - March 26 – March 29**

Mary Karen Horvath, Gladys Robinson, Cindy & Bill Jones



One of the things we found interesting was the bat situation at the Sydney Royal Botanic Gardens. There were thousands of them hanging from most every tree that they had not yet stripped of vegetation. It was so sad. I have no idea what is being done about them; but it looks like the survival of the gardens is in jeopardy. We really enjoyed the section with the succulent plants since we had never



been to a desert. They were very interesting and there was quite a variety. Bill's favorite part was the special area devoted to ferns. He is a fern fan from years ago. I do not care about ferns, as I think they all look too much alike. *Cindy Jones*

**Monday, March 26**

Sydney is a vibrant exciting city. Our hotel was centrally located; and therefore, we walked everywhere. The day we arrived, after settling in at the hotel, Mary and I set out to the Opera House—we



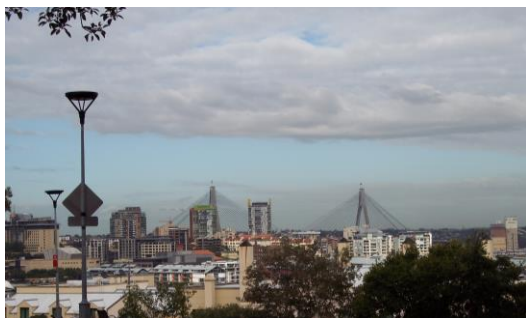
thought we would get a bus, but everyone we approached, told us it was walkable and indeed it was. We took a tour of the Opera House and the guide plied us with a lot of information. 233 architects entered the competition in 1950. A Danish architect, Jorje Utzon, won the contest. In 1973, it opened. It has a magnificent concert hall with a seating capacity of 2690, and has an organ of 10,500 pipes. The acoustics are perfect and there is no need for amplification for the orchestra. The opera theater was not that impressive. There are plans to remodel it. It only has 1540 seats. After walking around outside



admiring the architecture, we took a ferry ride to Darling Harbor going under the Sydney Harbor Bridge with the Opera House in the background. Darling Harbor has many restaurants, shops and attractions. It was very pleasant walking around the Harbor on a balmy night. *Gladys Robinson*

**Tuesday, March 27**

Today was our scheduled tour to the Blue Mountains. The tour guide was late picking us up. The large van had broken down, so she had a substitute van, and until it was ready, she took us to the



Rocks, the historic area, and then picked up four more passengers at their hotels and by then the big van showed up. She amused us with her banter, full of amusing stories, as well as pointing out important things along the way. The Blue Mountains are only an hour way over the Anzac Bridge which we were told is called Madonna's bra (definitely



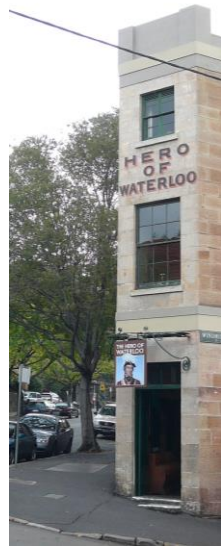
Australian humor). Before we got there, we stopped at a little park where she provided us with Lamington cake and tea. We saw the

famous Three Sisters rock formation which is based on an Aboriginal dream-time legend - a didgeridoo tree which termites hollow out.



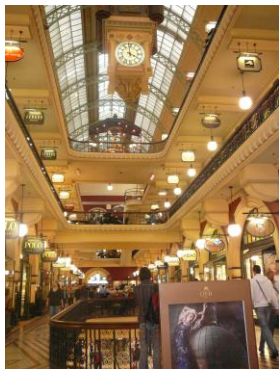
We passed lovely little towns. Had lunch at an Eco Lodge that we had all to ourselves. Our guide had brought cheese, crackers, grapes and wine (many bottles), which we had around a fireplace. Outside, she barbequed steaks and corn on the cob, and in addition we had salad and baked potatoes. We also went to a natural park where we saw kangaroos, and a spot where the cliffs were very high. Before reaching Sydney on the return, we stopped at the Olympic Village where the stadium is located. We asked to be dropped off at the Rocks where we went inside the oldest pub in Sydney, then walked to the Pier for a light dinner and back to the hotel

around 9:30 exhausted after a very long day. *Gladys*



### Wednesday. March 28

Today was beautiful and sunny, Mary got up early to do her Bridge walk, and I had a late start for my exploration of the city. I first went to the QVC building which we had visited our first evening, but nothing was opened except the restaurants. This building was completed in 1898. It replaced the original Sydney Markets and was built as a monument to the long reigning Queen Victoria. It fills an entire city block and is absolutely breathtaking. I went to the art gallery where I saw amusing portraits of politicians, sports figures, and political figures. Then, after a little window shopping, I went outside and walked to Hyde Park, St. Mary's Cathedral, the Mint, passed the hospital and through to the Domain—a large grassy area- where I saw joggers, lots of schoolchildren, and adults playing Frisbee. At the end of the Domain is the NSW gallery, which is beautiful and spacious. It had all types of art. Two stories down on the escalator there was a beautiful café, and more art rooms. I decided to take a break and saw a Japanese animated film called *Whisper of the Heart* that was just delightful. Afterwards, I walked to the Botanical Gardens, which is immense. Found my way out eventually and walked back to the hotel and at one point, bumped into the two English ladies who were on our Blue Mountain tour! Mary returned from her day's excursion about the same time and said that she saw me walking towards the Botanical Gardens while she was on the excursion bus! After freshening up, we dined at an Italian restaurant close to the hotel to celebrate our last night and Mary's birthday. It was a lovely meal and a good finale. *Gladys*



### Post-Exchange Uluru and Alice Springs Tour March 29- April 3, 2007

Jean Sedar, Gwendolyn Deas, Mary Karen Horvath, Larre and Sue Hoke

#### THE OUTBACK

Nothing could have prepared me for the psychological impact of the Outback, excursions in the deserts of Mexico and southwestern USA were a short prelude to this! The vast, strange red landscape with no sign of life or habitation was mesmerizing. How the aboriginals managed to survive for at least 70,000 years in this arid sea of nothingness, one of the harshest environments on earth, is a tribute to the stamina and ingenuity of the human race. The pioneers who elected to explore and settle this area must have possessed extraordinary courage and determination, or they were desperate men with no foreseeable future in civilized society.



I was more impressed by the Olgas, Kata Tjuta, than Uluru, probably because there were throngs of people around Ayers Rock while we were virtually alone in Kata Tjuta. On the hike into canyon, the guide set a rapid pace, and I learned that Gwen Deas was the fastest hiker in our group. I silently cursed my wobbly sneakers and longed for sturdy hiking boots, as I struggled to keep up! A bit more time to really stop and appreciate the gorge would have been nice, but the guide (who had done it all before) seemed to be intent on getting us back to the van before nightfall. Dusk was

settling around us on our return, but we had drinks and snacks as we contemplated the sun declining over the Olgas.

The drive, by motor coach, from Uluru to Alice Springs took us through nearly 200 miles of tortured landscape. During the 4-hour ride we saw 4 or 5 cars, but no other signs of life until we came to Ebenezer's Roadhouse, an aboriginal outpost, about halfway to our destination. The bus driver informed us that the average station (ranch) in this area consisted of more than one million acres. *Jean Sedar*



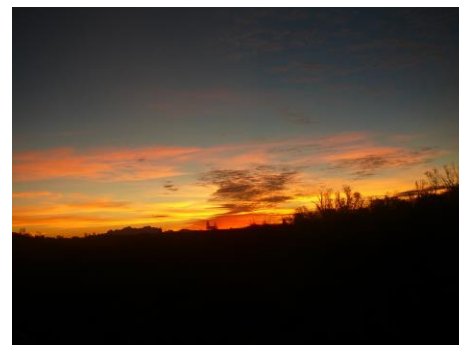
### Thursday, March 29

Today Gwen, Jean, Larre and I said goodbye to Mark and Roz and flew to Ayers Rock. When we left the terminal and went outside to catch the hotel shuttle, I saw the rock and was totally disconcerted. It looked so much smaller than I had remembered it. I kept wondering how it could have shrunk. We were driven out to the Voyagers Ayres Rock Resort in Yulara – a complex of hotels, campgrounds, apartments and a small shopping center. We are staying at the Outback Pioneer Resort. This is one of the lower cost options out here. The main reception is kind of spartan but the rooms are nice. There is a snack bar, picnic tables and a large bar area where you can also buy your choice of meat or fish and grill it yourself. They have entertainment in the evening and this is the place to be after dark. We checked in, went to our rooms, and then went to the bus stop to wait for Mary to come from the airport. We had some

lunch and Larre went off to check out the lookouts. I waited in a long line at the tour desk to make sure our arrangements were made. Jean, Gwen and I took the shuttle to the visitor center and museum. Then we walked to the shopping center where we checked out the few shops and bought some breakfast foods and a cake for Mary's birthday. Then we caught the shuttle and rode the rest of the loop past the other hotels back to our hotel. About 5 PM we celebrated Mary's birthday.



Then we were picked up for our evening tour - the "Sounds of Silence" - the quietest restaurant on earth. We were taken to a desert dune where we sipped champagne or soda and listened to the haunting sounds of the didgeridoo as we watched a magnificent sunset



over Kata Tjuta and saw the way the light and sky changed at Ayres Rock. When the sun finally set, lanterns were lit and we had a Northern Territory gourmet barbecue. There are usually about 60 people at these dinners but it had rained the previous two nights forcing the cancellation of the dinner so we had many more people, which made everything take much longer. Our table was on the outer edge of the tables so we were more exposed to the wind and it was very cold. By the time they started the astronomy talk, it was quite late and frigid. The sky was amazing – the stars were so bright - and the astronomer had a deep resonant voice, but it was cold and we were tired and in the middle of nowhere so we didn't enjoy the talk as much as we would have under different conditions. Finally we had dessert and coffee and caught the first bus back to the hotel. *Sue*



Outback Pioneer Hotel  
Ayers Rock Resort  
Yulara Drive, Northern Territory 0872  
Phone: 0889577605

### Friday, March 30

We met our Anangu tour representative in front of the hotel before 6 AM and were driven out to Uluru which is about 12 miles from Yulara, the village where the hotel is located. As we got closer to the national park, Uluru began to look more like I remembered it. It turns out the airport





was moved. When I was here in 1968 the small plane landed right near the rock so, of course, it seemed much bigger. The biggest difference now is the huge crowds that troop out for sunrise and sunset. When I was there before, there were very few tourists. Uluru is the summit of a massive underground chunk of sandstone believed to be 600 million years old. Erosion has slowly exposed the rock and revealed its characteristic red color. The rock is almost 1150 feet high and is a holy site to the Aborigines. After the sun rose, we had a brief drive to see some of the features of the Uluru and then had breakfast in the magnificent Cultural Centre and enjoyed the view from the second floor before joining our Aboriginal guide Wally Jacobs for the famous Liru Walk. Wally and his assistant Chris took us on a meander through bushland near the base of Uluru. The creation stories shown to us in the scars and features of Uluru are thousands of generations old! You will see how traditional tools, weapons and implements are made and used in daily life and learned how to make the oldest glue in the world and practice throwing a spear.



We went back to the hotel. I had lunch in the snack bar, walked up to the scenic lookout behind the hotel before taking a nap. At 4 PM we were picked up by Discovery Ecotours and driven to a dune lookout where we had a wonderful view of Kata Tjuta – a very sacred place to the Aboriginal people. We went to Walpa Gorge and took a hike. When we came back the colors of the rock were fantastic. We saw the moon rise over the Olgas. We went to the sunset viewing area and had champagne and hors d'oeuvres. We returned to Yulara. Jean, Mary and Gwen had dinner at Sails in the Sunset. Larre and I ate at the snack bar and sat



with the young English couple that had been on our tour. Sue

### Saturday, March 31



We checked out of the room at 10 AM and sat by the pool working on plans for the June Melbourne Exchange. We shared some sandwiches and caught our bus to Alice Springs. The bus stopped briefly so we could photograph Mt. Conner, the third great monolith of the region. We went on the Lasseter Highway. We stopped in the middle of nowhere on the side of the road and another bus came and took the passengers going to Kings Canyon. We continued on, stopped at the Mt. Ebenezer Roadhouse and then turned onto the Stuart



Highway which we rode on for about 200 km to Alice Springs. On our long drive several of the usually dry rivers had water in them. In Alice a few days ago some of the roads were underwater. There is a boat race held in Alice Springs every September called the Henley on Todd Regatta in which teams hold their bottomless boats and run along the dry river – think Flintstones. It has been canceled three times because there has been water in the river. Today the Todd had water in it and when we arrived at our hotel there was a message saying that our tour to Palm Valley and Hermannsburg for tomorrow has been canceled because of flooding on

the road to Palm Valley. We arrive about 6:30 PM, had dinner in the hotel dining room and had an early night. Sue

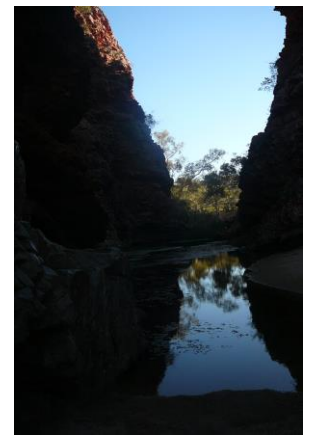
Novotel Outback Alice Springs  
46 Stephens Road  
Alice Springs, Northern Territory 0870  
Phone: 0889526100

### Sunday, April 1

We were picked up early this morning for our substitute tour to the West MacDonnell Ranges and Gorges. This travels out along the magnificent Ranges



with several stops to appreciate this beautiful region including Simpsons Gap, Standley Chasm, Ellery Creek Big Hole, Ormiston Gorge and Glen Helen Gorge. Our first stop was the John Flynn Memorial – a large rock sitting on a pedestal – dedicated to the man who started the Royal Flying Doctor Service. Next we visited the spectacular Simpsons Gap – a deep cleft cut in the reddish quartzite walls next to tiny Roe Creek. It was made famous by the paintings of Albert Namatjira. It is known as a place to see Black-footed Rock Wallabies but we didn't see any. It has lovely red river gums. We stopped briefly to photograph the twin ghost gums then went on to Standley Chasm. We walked through a gully lush with a variety of delicate ferns, tall gums and cycad palms, acacias and cypress pines. Standley Chasm is an



incredibly narrow gap with nearly vertical walls. We went to Glen Helen Gorge, a large permanent waterhole that is part of the Finke River. Then we went to a lookout followed by Ormiston Gorge. Ormiston Gorge is a beautiful gorge with sheer red walls and a permanent waterhole and a small Visitor Center. We ate our lunch there and had some time to take walks and check out the displays. Then we went to Ellery Creek Big Hole where a few of the people went for a swim. I've failed to mention the flies! They are extremely annoying and love to fly around your head and face but they don't bite. Nets attached to hats are sold everywhere but we haven't gotten any.



We got back to the hotel in the late afternoon and we all walked to Hanuaman Restaurant at the Crowne Plaza – good Thai and Indian food in a lovely setting. On the way back to our hotel we stop briefly at the Casino across from our hotel. Sue



## Monday, April 2

This morning we are transferred to the Alice Springs Desert Park - the essential introduction to Central Australia. It is a world-leader that showcases the natural and cultural environment of the Centre in three stunning habitats. Professional guides, including local Aboriginal people, share stories of the region with visitors who also enjoy displays of free-flying birds of prey, close viewing of unique and rare animals in the nocturnal house and innovative interpretation of the plants, animals and people of the Australian deserts. One of the



first things we saw was the 20-minute film called *The Changing Heart*. When the film ended, the screen went up and revealed floor to ceiling windows looking out on the Western MacDonald Ranges. The whole place was very well done but we really needed more time to fully appreciate it.



In the afternoon our TailorMade Tour representative picked us up for our Alice Springs Town tour.

We first visited Anzac Hill overlook where we had a view of Alice, the MacDonnell Ranges and saw the Ghan Train arrive. Then we visited the Royal Flying Doctor Base where we saw a film (which outlines the dream of John Flynn) and had a tour. The RFDS opened in 1939 in what is now one of Alice's finest heritage buildings. It provides routine medical services and evacuations to isolated outback areas – towns, communities and homesteads.



Next we went to the School of the Air, which provides lessons for children living in places not big enough to have schools. In earlier days the children used two-way radios and rarely saw their teacher or classmates. Now they mostly use computers and web cams and have a much less isolated life plus the computer gives them access to a much larger world and a better education. The Alice Springs school broadcasts to an



area of 1,300,000 km<sup>2</sup> and has been educating Central Australian children for over 50 years. I had taken my pictures of Sameer and Tommy into the school and our guide took them into the studio so I could photograph the boys, and the kids on the cattle stations could see the visitors from America. One week a year the children who study with the School of the Air come to Alice to meet their teachers and see their classmates. The School of the Air has made it possible for the children in the outback to remain at home with their families for a longer time before having to go to boarding school. Next we went to the Alice Springs Telegraph Station and the site of the "Alice Spring". This station was midway along the Overland Telegraph Line from Darwin to Adelaide and played a key role in Australia's development. Opened in 1872 the line



suddenly reduced the isolation of Australia from the rest of the world. Personal and business communication now took hours instead of the months it previously took by sea. We had a tour of the station and saw the Alice Spring – a permanent water hole in the normally dry bed of the Todd River. The river was named for Charles Todd, the superintendent of telegraphs in Adelaide and the springs were named for his wife, Alice.



After the Telegraph Station we were taken to town where we visited Mbantua Australian Aboriginal Art Gallery which is home to a large collection of aboriginal artwork including dot paintings, symbols, aboriginal drawings and indigenous sculpture from the Central Desert region of Australia. The gallery showcases paintings from over 250

aboriginal artists. The museum has a large collection of old and new landscape paintings by Aboriginal artists including the famous Albert Namatjira, Australia's first Aboriginal artist and Aboriginal Australian citizen, Gabriella Wallace and Wenten Rubuntja. A bush tucker display, with real bush food samples, is a highlight educating the importance of these plants in traditional medicine, ceremony, diet and Dreamtime. There is also a collection of old traditionally used artifacts such as spears, blood stained woomeras, shields, bowls, hair belts and kadaicha shoes, feather boots worn by those who are feared for carrying out punishment. To learn more about Aboriginal art go to: <http://www.mbantua.com.au/museum.htm>

We wandered around town a bit and had dinner at Bojangles Saloon & Restaurant – an Alice Springs landmark that has been feeding Central Australia since the 1930's. Bojangles has been decorated with an historical theme. A life-size replica of Ned Kelly guards the front bar wing Saloon doors. Eighteenth century memorabilia such as guns, motorbikes, cars, pioneering artifacts and photos line the walls. "Reggie", the Wedge-Tailed Eagle is suspended with wings spread over the Jarrah recycled Ghan railway sleeper bar. Jangles, the Cape York carpet python, measures 8 feet long and is a permanent live attraction in the bar. We sat in the bar right next to Reggie at a table made from a Ghan Railway sleeper bench on chairs with cowhide seats. The food was plentiful and reasonably priced. We invited a single lady who had been on our tour to join us. After dinner we took a cab back to the hotel and packed. Sue



## Post-Exchange Sydney Tour April 3-6, 2007

Jean Sedar and Gwendolyn Deas

### Tuesday, April 3

Gwen and I fly from Alice Springs to Sydney arriving at 4:30 PM, and because of a delay in getting baggage we're stuck in rush hour traffic! What an



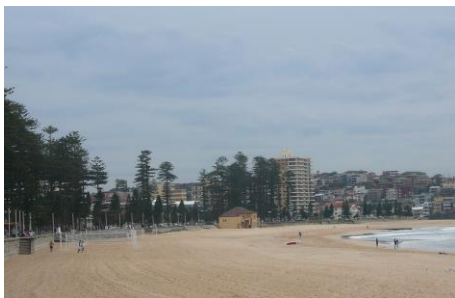
introduction - zooming from the vast nothingness of the Outback to jam-packed streets and the cacophony of a big city in a few hours is a little unnerving! The Hotel Menzies is a pleasant surprise, we have a very nice spacious room - very comfortable - reminds me of English hotels. We drop our bags and set out on foot to explore the city. Within a few blocks we're at the ferry terminal, the Sydney Harbor Bridge, the Opera House area - our



hotel is in a great location. We make several unsuccessful attempts to get on the bridge; finally we're on the proper approach. As we walk over the bridge we meet many other strollers, and are struck by the number of security people we encounter. Actually the bridge is not very long, and it's an easy trek. Later we scout out the many restaurants in the harbor area, and select one which allows us to watch the chefs preparing our meal. The drinking and volume of noise are at an all time high when we notice that nobody has food. But the chefs work their magic and soon everyone is enjoying dinner. Return to the hotel around 11 PM and find a message from Joan London telling us that her friend, Helen Hutson, will escort us around Sydney tomorrow. *Jean*

### Wednesday, April 4

Helen Hutson meets us at the hotel on Wednesday morning and we stroll to the Opera House. Gwen and I go on the opera house tour which lasts about two hours and is very worthwhile. Meanwhile



Helen has found out about the ferry schedule, and after a light lunch we embark from the Circular Quay on a commuter ferry to Manly Beach. Once at the beach we leave the ferry, and ride a bus up a steep embankment where we get out to enjoy the spectacular view and take a leisurely walk back to the ferry. After we return to the city, Helen leads us to the Old Customs House where a model of Sydney has been created below the floor. Large squares of tempered glass have replaced the floor which allows people to walk on the glass and view the model from above. Since we promised to meet Joan London at 5 PM at our hotel, we can't linger!!

We rush back to the Menzies, shower and change since we're off to the Opera House tonight. Joan London meets us promptly at 5pm and we agree to eat dinner before going to the ballet. Actually I wanted to eat in the Opera House, but Joan suggests a more modest restaurant, probably because we're treating her, and we enjoy a light repast. As we arrive at the Opera House, Joan's friend, a Dutch lady who has lived in Sydney many years, joins us. We are seated in the ballet theatre hall with a capacity of 1600 people plus excellent seats and acoustics. Just before the overture begins, Joan's daughter arrives, and we settle back to enjoy Don Quixote. This is not an actual performance, but the dress rehearsal, which, in many ways, is better than the performance! *Jean*



**Thursday, April 5** This is my last day in Sydney so Gwen and I elect to do the tourist thing and take the Sydney Explorer to see the city. Later in the day we cross to the Bondi Explorer and get off at the famous Bondi Beach where we take a long walk along the beach and have lunch while observing the surfers. We rejoin the Explorer and complete the tour through the city exiting at the Queen Victoria area. Strolling through the fancy shops we stop to check out some restaurants, but feel it might be nicer to dine in the Menzies and I trudge back to the hotel.



Upon returning we spot the concierge and ask him about dining in the Sydney Tower. He suggests the Summit Restaurant instead, telling us it's closer, less crowded, less expensive and much the same ambiance. We think this is good advice and he makes the reservation for us.



What a great suggestion, we have a great meal, sitting 47 stories above the street watching the lights come on as the city revolves around us, we toast each other - it's a grand conclusion to an excellent exchange!! *Jean*

## Reminiscences from Barbara Guilford

Our Melbourne Exchange gave my husband and me a close-up look at environmental problems-- particularly in the area of water conservation.

Coming from Wyoming where a 5-year drought has affected rural and city dwellers alike, the issue is of critical importance and we are beginning to pay attention to what can be done.

Camping out in a caravan we saw lots of the country between Sydney and Melbourne. Our first camp sight, Lane Cove River Tourist Park, showed us that the National Parks and Wildlife Service had implemented a water conservation strategy--and we began to see the rain water tanks and water recycling that would be evident throughout our travel experience but especially in Melbourne, Victoria.

Old friends, Ken and Bev Kennedy, picked us up at the Dandenong Train Station and we had hot-cross buns and coffee at their home before making it to our Melbourne Hosts, Mick and Marie Smith. We saw that all water is saved in water containers in sinks, transferred to larger containers in

the showers and applied to the trees. Our friends are trying to save their trees. The same procedures were followed at the Smith home. I took many walks that revealed dead lawns and flowers. I saw the urgency.

Australia is the second hottest continent in the world--and they are leading the way. Melbourne had many embankments and special watering devices to help bring recycled water to their beautiful gardens. Thanks to everyone who participated and especially you, Sue. *Barbara Guilford*

## Impressions from David and Diane Wright

The Australian trip was our first outgoing FF exchange. We were playing it safe since we had lived in Australia and we were able to combine it with visits to our son in Japan and friends we had made when we lived in Victoria. An extra adventure was our chance to meet new friends from the Southern New Jersey FF.

We met at the Melbourne Airport and were introduced to our first hosts, Graeme & Shelley Wilson. It was a perfect match. We were able to see Melbourne and the surrounds from new angles and found that Victoria and its people are all that we remembered. The wine is great too!

Our second visit in Tweed Valley was equally enjoyable. The pace was, fittingly, a bit more relaxed and our hosts, Keith and Frances Wright were gracious and fun companions. We especially enjoyed the visit with the wood turners and the party at the pub.

We had one extra pleasure when one of the Tweed Valley

group, Lorrene and Doug Brown, said that he was a pilot and asked if we would like a brief aerial tour of the area in his airplane, the oldest Cessna 172 in Australia – said so right on the side of the aircraft. We happily accepted and when the iffy weather broke we were treated to a lovely view of the entire Tweed Valley, Surfer's Paradise, Gold Coast area.

At trip's end we were exhausted but it was all we had hoped and then some and we look forward to more.

Diane and Dave Wright



Friendship Force of Southern NJ to FF of Melbourne

March 12-19, 2007



Brigitta Jaehrling Jean Sedar Heinrich Jaehrling



Alan Cawsey Liz Cawsey, ED Sue Hoke, ED Larre Hoke



Bill Jones Jan Davis Cindy Jones



Mark Goldstein Val Ford, ED John Ford Roz Goldstein



Isabel Strasser Heather Francis Gwendolyn Deas



Graeme Wilson Diane Wright Shelley Wilson David Wright



Gladys Robinson Ronnie Swayn Helene Stuart Mary Karen Horvath Mick Smith Barbara Guilford Dennis Guilford Maria Smith

Friendship Force of Southern NJ to FF of Tweed Valley

March 19-26, 2007



Lorrene Brown Gladys Robinson Mary Horvath Doug Brown



Frances Wright



Keith Wright



David Wright



Diane Wright



Gwenda Shoobridge Gwendolyn Deas



Evelyn Bass

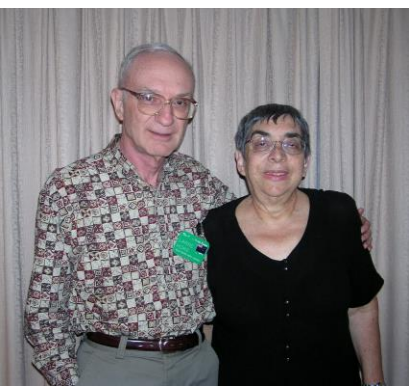
Mick Bass



Isabel Strasser



Jan Davis, ED Leo Potts



Larre Hoke Sue Hoke, ED



Jean Sedar Marion Roberts



Brian Tree Hazel Tree, Asst. ED



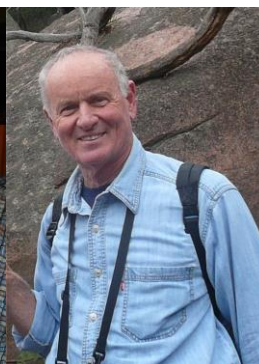
Ruth Nott John Nott



Cindy Jones Bill Jones



Narelle Formica Roz Goldstein Vince Formica



Mark Goldstein