

June 2013 Newsletter

**TASMANIAN
ASSOCIATION OF
LABORATORY
MANAGERS**



HAPPY 40TH ANNIVERSARY



Hi Everyone

Well it is here: 2013 and our 40th Anniversary! Congratulations TALM! This issue is all about our history provided by some wonderful, experienced Laboratory Managers. I asked those people who I knew have been in the job for many years to provide us with a rundown of their careers and received some very insightful stories. I am certain there is more experience out there so if you have a story you would like to share please email me for inclusion in the November issue. Don't hesitate to send in anything else you think should be included in the newsletters.

The TALM Annual Conference is just a few weeks away. Its going to be a really busy one this year with lots of outings and tours around the Hobart area. Then there is the Celebratory Dinner at Wrest Point. You won't see anything like it for at least another decade! Hope to see you there!

Joy

Contents:

<u>Minutes of the 2012 TALM AGM</u>	Page 3
<u>Monica's Story by Monica Sianski</u>	Page 4
<u>Kris' Story by Kristine Szalai</u>	Page 5
<u>Mandy's Story by Mandy Jackson</u>	Page 7
<u>Another World by Rod Hutchins</u>	Page 9
<u>Mike Haass on the Origin of TALM by Joy Arnott</u>	Page 11

Minutes of the 2012 TALM Annual General Meeting

Monday 17th December 2012

At The Grange, Campbell Town

Meeting opened: 1PM by President: W. Hardman (Minutes Taker: M. Lawes)

Present: G. Veith, K. Joseph, M. Lawes, S. Johnson, A. Reid, W. Hardman, J. Brazier, L. Young, J. Cooper, A. Hull, J. Jarvis, A. Floyde, J. Drake, K. Szalai, T. Adams, D. Hamon, B. Peters, D. Lohrey, J. Arnott, L. Butler

Apologies: M. Jackson, M. McFarlane, A. Henry, J. Moss, M. Sianski, L. Lim, B. Stewart, A. Glasson, F. Hay, S. Harvey, N. Thorp, I. Jacobson, K. Friberg, J. McHenry, J. Wilton, G. Finnigan, M. King, C. Maya, H. Callister, K. Drysdale.

Minutes of 2011 AGM: A. Floyde moved that the minutes to be a true and accurate record, seconded J. Drake

Correspondence: Letter received from Ros Marsden AEU, regarding proposed changes to Bands 3 & 4. W. Hardman noted that a reply will be drafted and sent.

President's Report: W. Hardman presented his report (see attached) - W. Hardman moved that the report be accepted, seconded L. Young. W. Hardman expressed his thanks to the executive committee for their great work.

Treasurer's Report: M. Lawes presented the attached report, noting \$ 6,804.10 cash on hand. She also expressed her difficulty in setting up an interest-earning term deposit with some of the funds. L. Butler suggested ME Financial should be looked at as an option. M. Lawes moved that the Treasurer's Report be accepted, seconded S. Johnson.

Election of 2013 Officers: Returning officer- J. Drake

The following nominations were received for each of the five elected positions.

President –	<i>W. Hardman</i> nominated by A. Hull , seconded K. Szalai	<u>Accepted</u>
Vice President (S) -	<i>A. Floyde</i> , nominated by L. Young,	<i>Declined</i>
	<i>L. Young</i> , nominated by J. Arnott, seconded A. Floyde	<u>Accepted</u>
Vice President (NW) –	<i>T. Adams</i> , nominated by G. Veith , seconded L. Butler	<u>Accepted</u>
	(<i>G. Veith</i> to assist)	
Treasurer-	<i>M. Lawes</i> nominated by L. Young, seconded A. Floyde	<u>Accepted</u>
Editor-	<i>Joy Arnott</i> , nominated by W. Hardman , seconded L. Young	<u>Accepted</u>

The returning officer declared all candidates duly elected.

Close : 1.20PM



Bill at his best - demonstrating "It's a Gas" at Campbell Town District High School during the December 2012 Seminar.

Monica's Story by Monica Sianski

I started my career as a laboratory technician 45 years ago as a seed analyst in the Department of Agriculture in Launceston. I enrolled in a course at TAFE called Museum Laboratory Technology, but after a few subjects, discovered more attractive pursuits called boys so I never completed the requirements.

I moved to Hobart after a few years and was very fortunate to start a new job in the Government Analyst Laboratories and worked as a technician in the Pesticide section. Apart from Gas chromatography, nothing was automated as it is now and it was labour intensive in the extraction processes.

After a few years I met Eddy and we were soon married with three children under the age of 3. I had no intentions of returning to the workforce but after 12 years it became necessary for me to resume working and 26 years later I am still at Taroom High. Looking back over the years I am extremely grateful to be at Taroom High. It is an exceptional school and has taken on a different dimension for me as our grandson Kayden is attending Taroom and is in grade 9 this year.

I have wonderful memories of our seminars and conferences over the years especially the Museum Preparators Conference in 1986 and conferences in Gowrie Park and Queenstown. I never cease to be inspired by the dedication, resourcefulness and ingenuity of all our technicians. You are an incredible group of people.

Kris' Story by Kristine Szalai



I am a Tassie girl; born in Launceston and grew up in the beautiful suburb of Trevallyn surrounded by bush - in those days kids enjoyed a sense of freedom and could freely climb trees, go wattle grubbing, collect tadpoles, build billy carts etc. . In the 60's my family moved to Deviot on the Tamar river where I learned how to sail and later race in dinghy sailing at the Deviot yacht club.

Science, art and history were my favourite subjects at school. I attended Riverside High, and after Matric College I really wanted to work in the field of science. In 1972 I enrolled in the Biology Laboratory Technician course at Launceston Technical College, attending evening classes whilst working during the day. These classes were run by a larger than life character by the name of Roy Vogelpoel – who managed Ramsey's Science Supplies. It was a real hoot; we had some great field trips with a lot of fun and laughs!

In 1973 I landed a job as a Technical Assistant at Bradley's Pathology Laboratories – working in the Biochemistry Dept.; testing patients' blood and body fluids – this was before HIV, pipetting by mouth using rubber hose and cotton wool plugs was standard practice! In 1975 I enrolled in the 2 year full time Certificate in Laboratory Technology course – again at Launceston Tech. After completing the course I was appointed as T.A in the Biochemistry Dept. of the Armed Forces food Science Establishment at Scottsdale; working in quality control testing the freeze-dried ration packs.

I caught the travel bug a bit later and left for Europe mid 1977. I spent 6 months travelling (no swanky hotels just Hostels and camping..... lots of camping) I was lucky to have

German friends and their families to stay with though while in Germany, however Urban terrorism was alive and well – even back then with the disenchanting Baader-Meinhof Gang (a left-wing German terrorist group) causing the German establishment some grief, which in turn, called for a heightened security police presence – we soon became used to being scrutinised (if you were young and not conservative in appearance) not only at borders and airports but also at random. Yugoslavia was a bit dark and brooding as it was still a communist state - where Greece on the other hand, was my favourite destination – full of ancient history, friendly open people, and magnificent beaches great for snorkelling – and very cheap!

Upon my return to TAS in 1978 I was offered a part time position at Launceston Tech working with Tim Barber in Horticulture and Dennis Lisson in the Chemistry Department. Later a full time position came up as labTech at Scotch Oakburn College, where Geoff Stubbs and I worked as a team! In 1980 I was appointed to the position of technical officer in the Department of Medical Technology in the School of Applied Science at The Tas. Institute of Technology (UTAS) I worked with a great team of teachers, lectures and researchers in Haematology, Clinical Chemistry and Histopathology. Sports Science/Medicine was being developed along with the introduction of the School of Nursing and Aquaculture. I worked mainly with the med lab science students; it was so much fun and one of the most fascinating places I have worked in!

During this time I bought and renovated my first house, married and in 1984 fell pregnant. My husband and I decided to take a road trip for 6 months up the East Coast of Aus. to see and camp at the Daintree Rainforest in far North Queensland. We returned to Tassie and I had my daughter Katie. I then embarked on a creative bent, completing a 2 year part time visual exploration and weaving course at Launceston TAFE. My creations from that time still adorn my house!

By 1987 I had a hankering to get back to work, I contacted Peter Brooker; Northern Regional Director, who immediately put me in touch with the Principal of Deloraine High, they needed a full time lab tech. I was appointed; the position was permanent leading to my career with the DOE, thus bringing me into contact with the technicians association, and my involvement over the years. From there; I went to Ravenswood High in 1988(divorced and remarried a couple of years later) , on to Kings Meadows High in 1993 and Newstead College in 2003 – with a few trips to Bali in between and a move back to Deviot – just couldn't keep away. In 2006 Bill and I arranged a mutual transfer, thus my placement at Exeter High which suited us both being able to work closer to our respective homes.

Since then I have squeezed in a few more trips around Australia and to Hawaii – absolutely no camping though! My beautiful daughter Katie is now 28 and I am still married to my gorgeous husband Craig – who is a Chef and music buff. In my spare time I love; gardening, walking, kayaking, boating, fishing, tennis, cooking, and reading.

Mandy's Story by Mandy Jackson

Born and raised at Latrobe I attended Latrobe High School and The Don College. Although I matriculated in Grade 11 I decided at the end of term 1 grade 12 that I was over school and applied for a position as a School Laboratory Technician at Wynyard High School.

Until only a few years ago that was the only job interview I had ever had.

I commenced work as a Junior School Laboratory Technician at Wynyard High School in June 1977 as a 17 year old.

I remember grades 7 & 8 worked through the Junior Secondary Science Project (JSSP) and ASEP (Australian Science Education Project??). These were a very good basic grounding across all disciplines.

Grade 9 & 10 were in streamed classes and extension science was an option also. This was science at a level similar to grade 11 & 12 today.

Shortly after starting work I began studying the Certificate of Laboratory Technology for School/College Technicians part-time through Burnie Technical College and by distance education. Usually this meant studying units from other science & engineering courses and applying for credit.

I gained some recognition for my matriculation subjects and did HSC Geology as one of my first subjects. This was delivered after hours at the Burnie Community College which had been Hellyer College and of course after some short term changes along the way, is once again. The late Eila Karkkainen, Gaynor Ralph and I were star pupils with some other bods from various mines and related industries around Burnie & the west coast.

After having returned to work at WHS in 1987 when our second child was 13 months old I resigned in not so pleasant circumstances (long story) in 1989 having gained all but 2 of the necessary units required to achieve my certificate. Thinking I would perhaps never work in a school again this didn't bother me terribly much at that stage but now on reflection was rather a waste of time, effort and good results and quite disappointing. With baby number 3 on the way I didn't really think much on the subject for another 6 years or so until I was asked to do a 6 week stint at Hellyer College as the late June Whiteroad was suffering ill-health. I have been here ever since. Almost 17 years.

Our children are now nearly 29, 26 and nearly 23.

As a family we have survived:

- Almost 32 years of marriage
- Me travelling to Launceston every Thursday for 2.5 years to complete my Cert 4 and then my Diploma.
- the hectic teenage years with 2 working parents. Surprisingly, the kids have all turned out to be normal, caring, intelligent and resilient adults.
- 2 Bachelor Degrees, a Masters and an apprenticeship.
- Kids leaving home
- Kids returning home with pets.

- Kids leaving again (without) the pets
- And then coming back again with more!!!
- My husband's quintuple bypass surgery 2007
- My holiday knee injury and subsequent surgery

We are currently going through:

- Supporting both lots of elderly parents
- Learning about our own short comings thanks to the above
- Yet another period of mine being the only full-time income. Although now my hubby says he's practising being retired!!
- Wishing I could retire.
- Wondering if I can afford to retire.
- Enjoying holidays on our own.
- Enjoying most weekends to ourselves.
- Enjoying our step-granddaughter

As a lab tech I have survived:

- The days when it was ok to smoke in schools and so many did one could barely see the other side of the staffroom.
- The mature-aged male teacher who used to pinch me on the behind every chance he got. Oh boy what a different response he would get now!!
- The embarrassment at 18 of having to tell the Principal what a grade 10 boy had called me.
- Being a mum who worked away from home
- Being a mum who worked at college when her kids were students there
- The retirement of so many of my colleagues.
- Tasmania Tomorrow
- Winding back Tasmania Tomorrow
- Several Senior Masters and AST3s
- 5 Principals

Not sure if I will survive:

- ACARA
- Another new principal
- Too many more year 11 cohorts with scant if any, science background.

I have for all but a few minor exceptions thoroughly enjoyed being a labbie. I have been lucky in that all my working life I have been allowed to work unencumbered by over eager management which allowed me the scope to develop my own unique style and flair for a vocation which allows one to work closely with students and teachers but also gives many a chance and indeed necessitates one to work alone unsupervised.

I was Treasurer of TALT, now TALM, for two very long periods of time. The collegiality, mentoring and support offered by a group of people who work alone as usually the only person in their school who has any idea what it is they actually do has always and still astounds me.

I have gained many wonderful friends through this job even though we don't see each other in person as often as perhaps we should.

The TALT/TALM holiday workshops were always a great learning environment with the fun times and catch-ups interspersed with much valuable knowledge and many skills shared generously between the participants.

While I'm umming and ahing about when and if to retire I will still be here for at least another 2 years as I'm not as old as I sometimes feel.

My belated best wishes for a great and adventurous year in science at your school or college.

ANOTHER WORLD by Rod Hutchins

Joy's email asking if I would like to submit a few paragraphs for the TALM news-letter relating a little of my personal history, initially seemed like a good idea. Her second sentence recalling that I was one of the longest serving members really started me thinking about a lifetime, or was that two lifetimes, as a Lab. Assistant/Technician/Manager. Wow where does one start? Such a long time, so many events, where does one stop? Perhaps this could develop into an ongoing series, so I can relate just some of the many incidents, serious and comical!

It was just on half a century ago, that I received a telegram (email equivalent) asking me if I would like an interview for the position as Laboratory Assistant at Queechy High school. It was the end of the Christmas break and I was actually waiting for a response to my application to be taken on by the Education Department as a science teacher trainee. I was to be notified if my Schools Board results were satisfactory.

By the end of January it appeared that I had been unsuccessful in my teaching aims so I duly attended the interview and apparently impressed the Headmaster (Principal) and S.M. of Science (AST3) as I was asked to commence duties when school returned the next week. That was 1963. Having spent the previous two years as a student at Queechy, I was ignorant and thankfully oblivious to the situations that would confront me. Thinking back, I'm sure it all took place on another planet, one that took a further thirty five years to even begin aligning itself to the work environment we enjoy today.

First day rolled around quick enough, new clothes, nerves and anticipation, none of which distracted from the feeling that I was simply going back to school. Mr Westwater, my science teacher from B4 (grade 10) greeted me in the Prep room where I was waiting for instructions.

"Good morning Rod, so you're the new Lab assistant?"

"Yes Sir."

“No need to call me Sir anymore, you can call me Wal from now on.”

“Yes Sir.” Was my habitual reply and so began my six month battle to refer to my colleagues by their first names.

Two other events come to mind on that somewhat memorial-day. The first involved me trying to be proactive while waiting in the Prep room. It was the first day for students and class allocations meant that I was left to my own devices for most of the morning so I decided to wash up several pieces of glassware that had been left on the bench from the year before. Filling the oversize sink with hot water and a liberal sprinkling of Rinso detergent powder until the suds hid the water level, I plunged the first beaker and the dirty grey blob it contained beneath the surface. I had no immediate idea as to what happened next, but it was intriguing and exciting. The suds instantly disappeared and a large silvery blob shot around on the surface of the hot water, bouncing off the sides like something possessed. Wow! I thought to myself, this is good. Even better little sparks began spitting from this crazy blob.

The explosion was very loud, probably sounded a lot louder to me because my head was directly over the sink and not being able to see anything immediately afterwards was of some concern. However the haze soon disappeared and apart from some minor burns, I realized I hadn't blinded myself on my very first day.

The third event was my induction into the inner sanctum of the science staff room, this small, narrow room, not only served as a staff room for six teachers, but also was a gathering place for them and myself, for morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea. It felt incredible, here I was, a wet behind the ears 17 year old (actually I was a probably wet in more places than one after that first morning) rubbing shoulders with many of my old teachers now my colleagues. I was elated and felt important so much so, that I overlooked the thick blue haze that filled the room. They all smoked and several, literally chain smoked, but who cared these were people that a young lad could really look up to. Within a year I also became a smoker and was soon addicted to the habit that would take me twenty four years to break.

Settling in to my new Prep room domain did not take long at all and within a short time I began organising the room and four attached storerooms. Across the corridor there existed a duplicate Prep room and stores however as they contained mostly Physics and Geology equipment there was less to bother about. It seemed logical to set up my desk in the “main” prep room where most of the work took place. Also, for this wide eyed, wet behind the ears kid, it was definitely far more interesting to spend my long working hours in that windowless, airless neon lit dungeon where, on the rare occasions of boredom, I could play with the beads of mercury often discovered rolling around the back of draws.

Regardless of my love of science, my knowledge of the subject and scientific procedures was extremely limited and for this reason I faced a very steep learning curve, one that was often peppered with dangerous incidents. Perhaps the most incredible fact and one that still has

me pondering, is how I was shown into the prep room and left to my own devices with no safety of procedural instructions what so ever. Granted very little was understood regarding the toxic or carcinogenic nature of chemicals in those days. But there was not even a warning about the winchester bottles of concentrated sulphuric acid located in the bench cupboard right above the shelf holding four ½ lb. bottles of potassium cyanide.

Simple things delighted me as when I was given a rather large and even for those days, antique looking typewriter (obvious reject from the typing room). Now I would be able to type out labels for the reagent bottles, which I thought would be an improvement. So began my love affair with technology and adaptation, as simple as it was. Soon I had figured out how to temporarily attach blank labels to sheets of paper so as I could type on them. When finished the label was licked (just like a postage stamp) and attached to the bottle preheated with hot water to enable a final coating of paraffin wax to cover and protect the label. Perhaps, such past experiences are why I occasionally sit here at my desk and gaze lovingly at my shiny new Dymo LabelWriter 450.

Mike Haass on the Origin of TALT by Joy Arnott

I interviewed Mike Haass because as Founding President of TALT he was sure to have some valuable information on the origin of our 40 year old Association.

Mike believes he was at Rosetta High School in 1968 when TALT started to become an association. Brian Hortle, Principal of Rosny College, and possibly the last of the Superintendants of Science, suggested an association was needed.

The first meeting was held in Launceston and attended by about 32 people. Main topics of interest were the constitution and tenure with the Department of Education as well as the need for in-service training.

Mike thinks he was president for about eight years and made a life member afterwards. He thinks he was followed by Gaynor Ralph and Patricia Stranger.

Mike recalls there was some nastiness in the form of one member having to be banished from the Association. Apparently they had pilfered money – instead of putting the \$4 memberships into the TALT bank account they put it into their own bank account!

A very influential person in the early days was Erroy (Roy) Vogelpoel, a teacher at Launceston TAFE and manager of a biology supply company (Ramsays Science Supply). He helped morph the original Museum Laboratory Technology course into the Laboratory Technician course. He was quite a party animal who made sure the social side of being a Labbie was taken care of – in fact Roy usually started off his lessons by asking “when are we having our next party?” ‘Roy De Lover Boy’ was Roy’s nickname and he was known to ask “Why?” a lot and always answer this himself with “Because we love you!” One of the ladies

of the group was so taken with this that she somehow stole Roy's underpants (or maybe just bought a new pair?) and embroidered this on them and someone ran them up the flag pole!

Another influential person who took the TALT under his wing and helped it along was Harry Leach, General Secretary of the Teachers Association.

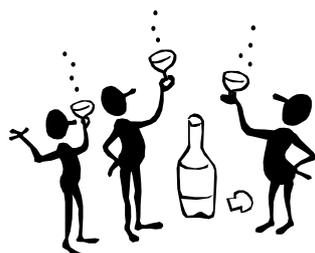
TALT meetings played an important part of procuring the 17% pay increase which brought Laboratory Technicians in close parity to Teachers. They also helped people with old qualifications or in some instances qualifications from overseas to gain recognition and have their qualifications documented. Launceston TAFE played an important part in making this official. It was however known that some people misused this recognition.

TALT Executive would meet two or three times per year often in members homes. Functions were always fun and there were many excursions and camping trips that lasted 2 or 3 days. Mike recalls a time when the group was camping at a school (possibly Rosny College) and one night the school caretaker, who lived onsite, rolled up in a most unhappy state because every light in the whole school had been turned on. It was lit up like a Christmas tree! This happened because someone turned on a light that created some sort of mood light but unbeknownst to them every other light in the school as well!

Another time there was a seven day camping trip to the British Tobacco Company Farm. It was a lot of fun. A particularly funny story of John Bantreel who was peed on by a possum ended up in the newsletter.

Well it is clear TALT members in the early days were close knit and had a lot of fun.

Many of you know Mike Haass retired last year after 49 years in the job. As far as we know this record number of years is only surpassed by one person who has just clocked up 50 years. When asked how Mike is enjoying his retirement I got the classic answer "Should have done it 20 years ago!" He is having a ball. Unfortunately he won't be able to make it to our 40 year celebrator dinner as he and his wife will be on a large ship floating around somewhere in the South Pacific! Mike expressed his wish for me to pass on his regards to you all.





Tasmanian Association of Laboratory Managers (TALM)
www.talm.org.au

PROGRAM FOR 'TALM 40' MID-YEAR CONFERENCE IN HOBART MONDAY 15TH JULY TO WEDNESDAY 17TH JULY.

DETAILED PROGRAM AVAILABLE MID JUNE.

DAY ONE, MONDAY 15TH JULY

Sustainable Learning Centre, Mt Nelson, talk and tour

Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens for guided educational tour

Forestry Learning Centre, talk and tour

Happy Hour at New Sydney Hotel.

DAY TWO, TUESDAY 16TH JULY

Robotics at Elizabeth College with Samantha 'Robogal' from the University of Tasmania

Woodbridge Marine Discovery Centre for workshop and tour

Grandveve Cheeses tour, tastings, viewings

Channel Heritage Centre, Margate, to see history of photography to the present
 amongst other exhibits

Dinner at Wrest Point Casino revolving restaurant, 'The Point', including TALM 40th
 anniversary celebrations.

DAY THREE, WEDNESDAY 17TH JULY

Ferry to and from Museum of Old and New Art, 'MONA', for self-guided tour and
 morning tea. It is **essential to bring photo ID for free entry.**

Lunch at Waratah Hotel (conference conclusion).

Tasmanian Association of Laboratory Managers (TALM)
2013 July Conference Registration Form and Invoice

ABN: 11 061 706 754

Delegate's Name _____

Special dietary requirements _____

School/College _____

Amount being paid - please tick the appropriate boxes

- \$120 TALM member registration
- \$140 Non-member registration
- \$20 TALM annual subscription to December 2013
- \$60 Conference dinner at **Wrestpoint Revolving Restaurant**
- \$50 per day part registration

Please state day/s you shall attend _____

TOTAL: \$ _____

If you are not currently a financial member and are paying the 2013 subscription please select the \$120 conference fee option.

Please forward completed registration form with cheque or money order to:

Maree Lawes
 TALM Treasurer
 Launceston Christian School
 PO Box 32
 RIVERSIDE TAS 7250

Or by direct deposit to: **Tasmanian Association of Laboratory Managers**

BSB: 807-009 Account Number 12129978

Please use your name as reference and email receipt page to LawesM@lcs.tas.edu.au