

'Twas a Night to Remember as...

Sydney Bens & friends dance the night away!

September 11 may bring sad memories of man's inhumanity to man but the Sydney Bens made the point nevertheless that there's always reason to rejoice. After all it was the tenth anniversary of their existence and the occasion called for a celebration of gala proportions. What better time to do it than on their bi-annual dinner dance.

And what a dance it was! Two-hundred and sixty guests were welcomed by Jane Pereira and Selvaranee Machado at the reception. In addition to their warm smiles, the fetching duo lavished guests with cosmetics, glossy mags and a unique Benedictine souvenir in the form of a richly-produced calendar created and designed by our editor and ably printed by Michael Jason and his team at MBE, William Street.



• *Rex Foulstone (left) presents hamper to Ranjit Velayuthen.*

Guests were ushered in to the old-time tempo of Night Shift or the swinging beat of the Radio Bandits (depending on the time of their arrival) and into the ambience of Benedictine bon homie and hospitality. The bands were once again sponsored by HSBC Bank in Castle Hill and



• *Among the many of the guests who had a Night to Remember*

Branch Manager and Benedictine friend Arun Alagh, wife Carmen and his HSBC team and their partners graced the occasion.

And there's more. A sumptuous dinner was catered for by Sunils@Thornleigh and

refreshments of the amber, white and red varieties were enjoyed by all. There were copious prizes (a hefty13) donated by Old Bens and their numerous well-wishers. Among them a bar fridge (with Harry & Imelda de Sayrah the the lucky winners) a DVD player, a Breville kitchen appliance, case of wine, rich hamper and many others.

To record all the happenings on the night was Imtiaz Issadeen, the intrepid Ozlanka webmaster who, true to the dedication he is famous for, had the photographs up on the Ozlanka.com website by 2 am on Sunday.

The committee led by Razikin Dole with Tony Appathurai, Cedric Pereira, Michael Jason, Hysworth LaFaber, Lionel Machado, Robin Candappa, Upali Mallawaaratchy, Doug Jones and their very supportive wives contributed to the success of the night.

WANTED: Educational software

AN URGENT CALL for Educational software has been received from College to ALL Old Bens and benefactors.

Software on subjects such as English, Maths, Chemistry, Physics, Biology for beginners to advanced users will be appreciated.

While the computer lab staff will accept pre-loved programs, new software packages would be most preferable.

The injection of such software will assist the computer tutorial staff administering the Computer Lab (see story on Page 3) to forge ahead with getting our students into gear with their Information Technology (IT) curriculum.

Sydney Bens who can assist in this regard please contact President Razikin Dole on **(02) 9217 3075** or any other Committee member.

Maj. Chapman dies

With deep regret we record the passing of Major Douglas Chapman, teacher, mentor and friend, in Melbourne on Saturday November 6. He holds a special place in the hearts of many generations of Benedictines in Sri Lanka and all over the world. He was 85. His funeral took place on Friday November 11.

May the Lord grant him eternal rest.

(See Tribute on Page 4)



SYDNEY BENS' NEWS

Bulletin of the NSW OBA Inc.

*St Benedict's College OBA
(NSW) Inc.
Founded in 1993*

OUR MISSION

*Promote loyalty to and assist
our Alma Mater at all times,
foster social and sporting
interaction among Old Bens
everywhere*

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Secretary: Cedric Pereira
Asst Secretary: Upali
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Treasurer: Lionel Machado
Social Secretary: Hynsworth
LaFaber
Sports Secretary: Sri
Fernandopulle
Committee Members:
Doug Jones
Robin Candappa
Hon. Auditor: Max Perumal

CURRENT IN KOTAHENA

CLOSE OF OBU CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS

The Centenary celebrations of the parent OBU, inaugurated with the opening of the Brother Alexander Building by His Grace the Archbishop of Colombo, Rt. Rev. Dr Oswald Gomis, was fittingly concluded with a spectacular Benedictine Parade, grand musical show and fireworks display at the College quadrangle on August 7.

HUNDREDTH AGM

100th AGM was held on May 29 at the College Hall, preceded by Holy Mass and followed by a fellowship dinner. The following are members of the Council of Management for 2004-2005.

Patron: Most Rev. Dr Oswald Gomis Archbishop of Colombo,
Vice-Patrons: Rev. Bro. Provincial Visitor & all past Directors of SBC, Dr ANS Kulasinghe, JP Perera, Michael Caderamanpulle, Gamini Edirisinghe, Elmo Perera, Gamini Kannangara, Dr Rienzie Pieris, D.Eswaran, RAP Gunethilake, Eric Motha, **President:** Rev. Bro. Granville Perera (Ex-Officio) Director SBC, **Vice-Presidents:** Rev. Bro. Niran Perera, Felix Dias, Melville Perera, Lalith Madupulli, Lal Wickramatunge, Dudley Thambinayagam, Ranjan Nadesapillai, **General Secretary:** Ravi Irugalbandara, **Asst Gen.**

Secretary: Lasantha Rodrigo,
Treasurer: Winclere Rodrigo,
Asst. Treasurer: R Valentine Fernando, **Asst. Sec. Overseas:** Patrick Rodrigo, **Asst. Sec. Membership:** Randolph Perera, **Asst. Sec. Social:** Angelo Canjemanadhen, **Asst. Sec. Sports:** Anton Carvalho and 25 **Council Members.**

HIGH ACHIEVERS


A total of 163 students (125 from the Sinhala medium and 38 from the Tamil Medium) sat for the GCE (O/L). Results showed great improvement by SBC students over 2002. In overall results there were (Sinhala Medium) 62 'A' grades for English, 38 for Maths, 37 for Social Studies, 31 for Commerce and 27 for Religion. In the Tamil Medium, 19 had 'A' grades for English, 18 for Religion, 16 for Social Studies and 8 for Maths.


While in the GCE (A/L) there was a noteworthy improvement in the Commerce section, results in the Science section declined in both Sinhala and Tamil Mediums.

BRO. ALBAN PAVILION

The pavilion at Bloemendhal Road grounds is to be named in honour of Bro. Alban, the Director at the time, who had it constructed after the Bens emerged unofficial school cricket champions under Lovellyn Rayen in 1957 and Neville Casie Chetty in 1958.

A word about our souvenir





A Night to Remember

presented by
St Benedict's College OBA
(NSW) Inc.

at Bowman Hall
Blacktown

Saturday 11th September

**SOUVENIR
CALENDAR
2004-2005**

Acknowledgement is due for photographs on the cover of our dance souvenir calendar.

Two photos: (top) installation of the statue of Patron St. John Baptist de La Salle in its new place of prominence at the entrance to College and that of the refurbished Brothers' quarters under floodlights (right) are reproduced by courtesy of BENEWS obtained for us by former General Secretary of the Colombo OBU Ranjan Nadesapillai.

The picture (below left) of a class assembly in the shade of lush greenery with the clock tower as a backdrop was shot on a visit to College in 2003.

– Editor

While the banyan tree 'Junior' is growing well...

Education at SBC is geared to meet country's needs

During my visit to Sri Lanka in September, I had the privilege of visiting College. This was made possible by arrangements made by Felix Dias in Colombo.

The first thing that struck me on entering the quadrangle was the nature and quantity of the physical changes that have taken place these past decades. New, multi-storey buildings have replaced the line of single classrooms that stretched from the tuckshop to the tennis court side of the lower and upper quadrangles.

Trees that provide both shade and colour also enhance these new buildings and the college environment. Oh yes, banyan tree *junior* appears to be growing well.

Rev. Bro. Granville Perera, the current director of the college, generously gave of his time to make me feel welcome. Because of my association with youth movements, Bro Director arranged for me to meet the office bearers of the Young Christian Students Movement (a student organization I pioneered in the early fifties).

What particularly impressed me was not only the number of active groups in the college but also the wide range

writes Old Ben RIENZIE RUPESINGHE. Rienzie is first Sri Lankan to be International President of the YCS and the YCW movements.



• *New multi-storey buildings have replaced single classrooms from tuckshop to tennis courts.*

of social issues they were seriously involved in. Much of the credit for this dynamism goes to Malcolm Candappa, a member of the college staff, who is moderator of the YCS groups.

Educational trends

In terms of educational trends, there appear to be a shift from the science stream to the commercial and business sectors. I guess this reflects the economy and employment prospects in the country at present.

Successive administrations have contributed much to the visible and important improvements to the College. These administrations have been well served and supported by a loyal and energetic band of Old

Bens in Sri Lanka and overseas.

A classic example of this "Old Ben genre" is Felix Dias. His devotedness and commitment to the college is well known. I am grateful to him for the time and kindly manner he extended in arranging and accompanying me on my visit to my school.

Overall the visit was also personally rewarding. It enabled me to reflect on earlier years and be happy and thankful to the college community of my time.

The college motto *religio, mores, cultura* influenced us. The college motto has served me well these many years. My hope is that the meaning and challenge of the college motto will shape and influence the Bens of today and tomorrow.

College gets Second Computer Lab



Students at St Benedict's now have the benefit of a second Computer Lab opened on August 30 by Professor Lakshman Watawela, Chairman of Singapore Informatics.

The new computer equipment was purchased at a cost of Two Million Rupees, part of which was raised from proceeds of the Annual Dinner Dance of the OBU and a generous

donation from Old Ben Cosmas Mahagama, now residing in USA. **Responsible**

Felix Dias, a Vice-President of the SBC Council of Management, ably assisted by Lasantha Peiris were responsible for making this project a reality.

The course material is supplied by Singapore Informatics and there is a dedicated staff to run the Lab consisting of Miss Shahara Pereira, Tyronne and Sanaka Perera. Bro. Niran Perera is the academic administrator and implements the computer education programme for students.

(Software wanted - see Page 1)



• *Guests at the opening (above top) and trying out the new gear (above).*

OBITUARIES REV. BRO. JUSTINIAN THOMPSON FSC

An appreciation by CAMILLE GONSAL (nee CRAMER)

Reverend Brother Justinian Thompson passed away on Thursday September 16. He had moved to Australia from Sri Lanka and retired to Queensland. We last visited him at La Villa Salle on the Gold Coast on the August 10.

Brother Thompson was a fine gentleman and in close contact with our family. His sister was married to my uncle, my mother's youngest brother, but they had both passed away many years ago.

We knew Brother Thompson when we were kids and when he joined the Novitiate in Mutwal. When we met with a motor accident in Australia on September 23, 1973, Brother Thompson was teaching at St James' Dandenong and he used to visit us often.

Most of his time was spent teaching and cooking for the Aboriginal kids and the community in Balgo near Alice Springs.

We attended the celebrations to mark his 50 years' as a Christian Brother in Melbourne. It was a grand affair. Brother Thompson was very humble in his words of thanks to those present and he recited the



• *FINAL TRIBUTE: Some of the Sydney Bens who attended the funeral service for Bro. Justinian at the De La Salle Brothers Private Cemetery in Oakhill College, Castle Hill.*

(Photo: Harold Christie-David)

Hail Mary in Sinhalese. He also taught Sinhalese to the Aboriginal kids in Balgo.

I remember his dad Mr. Thompson. He always had his whistle and used to ride his bike decorated with flags with his dog running beside him.

I am glad we visited Brother Thompson in August. I took him a tin of *muruku* and *ulundu vadais*. He loved his Sri Lankan food but it was clear at this time that his health was

deteriorating. Although he had bowel cancer, he never complained.

The Brothers at the Brother's House told me that he was in pain and on morphine. They told me he was given the last rites a week before he died.

May he rest in peace.

BEN (TOTO) ABEYDEERA

who passed away in Kent, England, was laid to rest on July 14. Toto was captain of the unbeaten College cricket XI and lived in Wall Street, prior to his migration to England in the 60s.

BLOSSOM PRINS, wife of distinguished pianist and Old Benedictine Peter Prins, passed away in Sri Lanka on July 24.

The death occurred in Sri Lanka **OF RONNIE GOONETILEKE**, Vice-Patron of the Colombo OBU and past member of the SBC Development Fund, on July 26. Ronnie had been ailing for sometime.

JOSEPH RANJIT MOTH

Beloved husband of Josephine and brother Eric (President OBU British Columbia) Funeral took place on Thursday 21st October at General Cemetery Kanatte

Major Douglas Chapman

A tribute to a teacher, briefly

Chappie is dead.

To some of us students who remember Major Chapman from the halcyon days at St Benedict's, that's a reality that couldn't happen. And it's all because he always wore an aura of indestructibility about him.

My teacher

I was in his class at various times in the 1950s. I can still picture him make that stately walk up from his home in St Lucia's Street, step in to the Cathedral for a brief discourse with his God and march out through the College gates, past the tuckshop – erect of stature, head held high, chin up, shoulders firmly back in a measured step of military precision.

And he brought in his trust in God into the classroom and fanned a sense of the spiritual in his students.

At no time did he tolerate sloppiness. He accepted weakness gladly and tried to mould any drawback into strength. Indeed, he chiselled a few chunks of coarse material into praiseworthy specimens.

Disciplined

Chappie had a disciplined mind and body, traits many of his protégés emulated later in their lives.

He was tough, often scathing and brooked no nonsense from any quarter. Methinks, however, he secretly admired the occasional parry and thrust of a honest exchange between tutor and pupil and often encouraged it.

Major Chapman was not only a gifted teacher; he was a trusty

mentor, counsellor and friend to hundreds of students who went to him.

One-to-one

"Sir" – as I liked to address him but "Chappie" as he always referred to himself – and I corresponded from time to time in recent years. We wrote about school times, 'the seven ages of man' as it applied today and lots more. He saw to it that it was a one-to-one exchange – no longer the teacher to pupil conversation.

Chappie had never met my wife. Whenever he wrote to me, he always started off with: "Dear Hyacinth and Doug." That was the kind of man he was.

Farewell Chappie! May a chorus of angels sing you to your slumber.

– DOUG JONES