



Fairbridge Gazette

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE - Phil Field

December 1989

Fairbridge Alumni Association Executive 1989-1990

Well, its the start of a new term of office for your *New Executive*. As President I would ask all Old Fairbridgians to continue the excellent level of support they have shown in the past, to welcome those Old Fairbridgians who may not have been active in our Association in the past, and to earnestly and sincerely solicit our readers comments, suggestions and criticisms for our consideration.

Once again our approach within the executive will be through chairpersons of individual committees, who will bring their individual efforts to the executive as a whole for voting. However to make things easier for all concerned it would be appreciated if *ALL correspondence and monies* are sent through our Corresponding Secretary, Molly Harris (address appears elsewhere in this gazette). Molly will ensure that the info is properly brought forward, and replied to as required.

As I write this, I am lying flat on my back in hospital (nothing serious, just extremely disabling torn muscles in my back). So I will leave it to the Gazette Chairperson Ken Bennett, to advise you of the new committee Chairpersons.

Before I close however, I want to touch briefly on a Resolution passed at the last General Meeting regarding upping the fees to \$20.00 (from \$10.00) - with \$10.00 of the new fee structure going to the Chapel Society. Well, your Executive have checked into the logistics, and find that it is not feasible to implement that resolution, so what we are asking (and so urge), is that individuals contribute directly to the Chapel Fund, and they will issue a tax deduction receipt to you. The bottom line is that the annual fee for the Fairbridge Alumni Association remains at \$10.00.

We can't put the Alumni Association in the position of collecting for the Chapel Society, and for those who have already given us \$20.00 we have passed \$10.00 to the society from whom you will be receiving a tax receipt.

(Please note that the Fairbridge Alumni Association is separate and distinct from the Fairbridge Chapel Society. Another separate and distinct entity is the Fairbridge Alumni Bursary Society (recently incorporated but not yet registered) as a charitable organization.) There is more on these organizations under various reports in this and future Gazettes.

President:	Phil Field, 7050 Belcarra Drive, Burnaby, B.C.	299-5046 V5A 1A7
Vice-Pres.	John Hardy, 4588 West 1st Ave, Vancouver, B.C.	228-0442 V6R 1H8
Corr. Sec.-Treas.	Molly Harris 2143 William St., Vancouver, B.C.	255-8653 V5L 2S2
Rec. Sec.	Keith Hamblett, 5067 Old W Saanich Rd., Victoria, B.C.	479-8279 V8X 3X1

DIRECTORS:

Jean Conlon,	(604) 378-5683 2202 Charters St., Box 665, Merritt, B.C.	V0K 2B0
Ken Bennett,	6942 Gray Ave., Burnaby, B.C.	435-2834 V5J 3Y8
Brian Tibbles,	5-3622 E. Hastings St., Vancouver, B.C.	298-9271 V5K 2A9
Rab Jeffries,	3074 Allenby Rd., c/o Riverside Auto Parts, RR6 Duncan, B.C.	746-4074 V9L 4T8
Harry Sharp,	9616 47th. Ave., S.W. Seattle, Wash. U.S.A.	(206) 932-4625 98136
Margaret Phillips,	c/o Pat Webb, #66-15820 Fraser Hwy., Surrey, B.C.	597-8841 V3S 2W5
John Cowans,	4749 Fairbridge Drive, R.R.7, Duncan, B.C.	746-6009 V9L 4W4

Committees:

1. Heritage - Marg. Phillips, Brian Tibbles.
2. Newsletter - Ken Bennett.
3. Chapel Liaison - Harry Sharp.
4. Reunion - Rab Jeffries (Anderson)
5. Bursary - John Hardy, Jean Conlon.

Committee Reports:

Corresponding Sec.-Treasurer - Molly Harris

1. Don Morton wrote to say how successful he thought the reunion was and that he thoroughly enjoyed himself. He also gave his thanks to the reunion committee and to the committee in general for jobs well done. We can all use compliments - thanks Don. Don tells me he just celebrated his 83rd. birthday - you could have fooled us Don.

2. Surprise, surprise! After all these years, we have heard from Andy Buglass (a 1935 arrival) who now lives in Victoria, Australia. Andy & his wife decided to attend the Pinjarra's 60th Anniversary reunion and met Honourary Sec. Pam Wilson, and she gave him my address. Andy is now a paid up member of the F.A.A. and he also has ordered a copy of the booklet, "Fairbridge Glimpses". I understand he is saving his pennies in order to make the trip here in 1991 for our next reunion. It will be good to see Andy again. The Aussie O.F.'s really gave him a good friendly razzing when they found out that he was a Canadian OF.

3. Some of you were kind enough to give me photos of Ethel Riley that I have passed on to her husband, Owen Canfield. Sorry you were unable to attend the reunion Owen, as we looked forward to meeting you.

4. We are making up a video tape of the 1985 reunion for John Stocker in Korea as he was kind enough to send the same to us of the Australian Jubilee reunion that was played at our past reunion. Maybe some of you saw it.

5. Bill Garnett's son wrote from England to say that the family was having a get-together for their father's 80th birthday. He wondered if we would like to send a small memento of Fairbridge as his dad always thinks of the good times he spent as Principal of the school. Along with a birthday card with best wishes from all of us we sent a 5X7 photo of the cairn that is located at the entrance to the farm site. On the left side of the card we stamped the FFS crest and under it we typed the wording from the cairn.

6. The Fairbridge Drake Society has advised us that in the future they will be producing a new newsletter, "Drake's Drum," the first edition of which will be sent out soon. They intend to have a regular section of Old Fairbridgian news. "Drake's Drum" will be a less formal document than the annual report, and will be circulated to all their members and sponsors.

7. **REMINDER** Annual membership fees are due and a form is enclosed for you convenience. As reported at the last general meeting paid up membership has dropped to below 50% which is very disappointing. This means that less than half of you OF's have helped to cover alumni expenses which include printing and mailing of Gazettes and for reunion cost items that are over and above your banquet ticket price. I just want to remind you that everyone accepts and enjoys these extras - but many of you are not doing your share in helping out. So this year lets have a response from those of you who are in arrears or have ~~Never~~ paid a \$10.00 membership.

Bursary Fund

John Hardy

Bursary fund past one hurdle.

The Fairbridge Alumni Bursary Society became a legal entity on Oct. 17.

Jack Hicks, a Duncan lawyer engaged by the Alumni Assn. was successful in his efforts to get the society incorporated. Next step, now that the society is a legal entity, is for application to Revenue Canada for charitable organization status which will allow donations to the fund to be tax deductible.

Incorporation marks the end of a long series of actions undertaken by the Fairbridge Alumni Assn. executive. A proposed scholarship program was discussed and adopted at the 1987 General Meeting. But it was not until summer of 1988 that the Fairbridge Drake Society finally sent a cheque for \$18,694, money remaining from the Old Fairbridgians Grant and Loan Fund. Currently the fund has \$20,912.

It is intended that the fund should defray costs of fees, books and related items to needy students enrolled in recognized vocational schools, colleges and universities. In this way, the fund will serve to maintain the memory of the Fairbridge alumni in perpetuity. **Priority** goes to the issue of Fairbridgians.

Directors of the fund are John Hardy, chairperson, Eunice Nickolls, Jean Conlon, Keith Hamblett, Tom Speed, Dick Speed, and Phil Field.

Once the society has approval from the Revenue Canada to operate as a charitable organization, the directors will approach to Vancouver Foundation to have the fund vested with that organization. The foundation can if it chooses double the existing fund to ensure that it survives and meets its objectives. Interest from the fund will then form the bursaries.

We will keep you informed on the progress of the fund through the Gazette.

Heritage

Marg. Phillips, Brian Tibbles

It is our intention to carry on Pat Webb's efforts to gather the artifacts and memorabilia that are part of our history of Fairbridge, the fact that we ourselves, as Fairbridgians would be more content knowing that some of these Artifacts may come back to us in the future, knowing that some of these were part of our everyday living, and our lives, *someday* hopefully a realistic memory would be of us viewing this memorabilia in the Chapel at Fairbridge.

The call is still out to help our "Fairbridge Chapel" Society, I am sure John Cowans would be pleased to hear from you, in any way you feel you can help.

Pat Webb has been in contact with Wilma Wood a local (Duncan) Heritage Society of B.C. director, who reports that the owners of the Farm site will assist in the landscaping of the Memorial Cairn dedicated to the "Fairbridge Children," they will also help to maintain it on an ongoing basis, which is a very generous offer on their part and is very much appreciated.

This project will be started as soon as funds become available and suitable weather condition prevail.

Thank you for your information Pat! We will keep you posted on the progress of this Project.

(late word from Pat - The owner of the property where the cairn is situated is Mr. Bill Vanden Dungen 4766 Koksilah Rd. and word is he is very co-operative as to any land-scaping etc.)

Fairbridge 1938-1940

If you were at Fairbridge during this period you may have *unknowingly* been captured by Alf Lincoln's movie camera. I have processed these 8mm silent movies on video tape (VHS only) with music and narration which should give you a very pleasant hour and a half of nostalgia and entertainment. Let your children see you as you were, growing in a most important period of your lives. Even if you don't show up on the video and I would estimate that there are 150 of you who do and can be recognized somewhere throughout, you may enjoy seeing Fairbridge brothers and sisters you had forgotten. Subjects covered by the tape include, clearing land and building of the chapel, sports day, cross-country run, swimming at the river, picnic at the old stone church, brownies, cubs and scouts, field work and much more, but it would be better to see them for yourself.

The material cost to produce this tape is \$12.00 (Cassette, mailing, etc.). I feel most privileged to be able to donate \$13.00 of each tape to the Fairbridge Chapel Heritage Society therefore the full cost is \$25.00, payable by cheque or money order to T.W.Turner.

The Chapel Society is desperately in need of funds for restoration so please be generous in any donations you make and please persuade your friends to buy a copy of the tape rather than copy it for them.

The address is - Tom Turner
38 Otterbury Ave.,
Red Deer, Alta. T4N 5A1

(Ed. A fine worthwhile gesture Tom, hope you get lots of response.)

John Hunter is reported to be very sick, his wife Hazel has recovered after her sickness during the summer. We all wish them well.

*

We regret the passing of
George Turner late August
Art Plows Nov. 5th 1989
Art, was Principal at the school and later with the Department of Education.

Both will be missed, heartfelt condolences to the families and friends.

Past events

In October, an auction, the proceeds from which were to go to the Chapel Society was called off due to the response of only 7 people.

Coming events

Well, little to report this time, but, your committee is already looking ahead to the next reunion, so keep your eyes peeled for further developments.

(Ed. corner)

Didn't you always want to do this, put little comments here and there and have this freedom of the press?

As this is my first issue hope I haven't made too many mistakes, after Eunice doing such a great job for so long, she is, as they say, a hard act to follow. So if I get stuck I'll have to give her a call. I of course can already see some of the trials and tribulations she went thru. Anyway thanks again Eunice.

As this is our Gazette, was thinking it would be nice to hear how we're all doing, if everyone, whenever you get the inclination, could send me a thumbnail sketch about how and what your'e doing, whenever we have space I could put them in. Of course I may have to edit them if they're over 1000 words, and as to what order they go in I can't promise. So what do you say!! Let me hear from you.

I can just see the bags and bags of mail I'll be getting from now on, my dog will go crazy barking at the mailman.

K.B.

and before I forget --

Merry Xmas and a

Happy New Year

to all

from your executive.

Today is Founder's Day and we are here to honour him and his staunch supporters and helpers who made a new life possible for many under-privileged children from the poorer districts of England's large towns and cities and also to celebrate the 60th anniversary of our Association.

I have been asked to talk to you as a member of the Old Fairbridgians' Association and I accepted this offer with gratitude. I was given a free choice of subject material. At first I thought of recounting the story of the O.F.A. but recent articles in the 'West Australian' made me change my mind. I know I am talking to those who knew and loved Kingsley Fairbridge, to those who benefitted from his vision and dedication to those who are family and friends of all Old Fairbridgians who, if the Press would allow them, would willingly speak up against the vicious denigration of his and others work, most of such attacks being implied by generalization, innuendo and association.

In the 'West Australian' of June 16th 1989, Senator Jean Jenkins of W.A. is reported under a Canberra dateline as saying, among other statements: 'West Australians have been urged to supply information about thousands of English child migrants said to have suffered cruel treatment in W.A. hostels and farm schools'. She told the Senate that the migrants were forced to work as child labour and many were sexually assaulted. Many were now homeless living on Perth streets or rough hostels. They came to hostels run by Anglican and Catholic groups in Perth, Bindoon, Geraldton and Pinjarra. Many of them have a history of being in and out of jail because, having been brought up in institutions, they found it very hard to adapt to life outside the institutions. Many have no identity which leads to psychological problems. Without birth certificates these people were struggling to get Australian citizenship.

These comments provoked an angry reaction from many former English child migrants. This, too, was reported from Canberra and not from the 'West Australian', which preferred to quote an English paper's story of one man's story. Our local callers were emphatic in their denials of Senator Jenkins and full of praise for their life at Fairbridge.

Two years ago the same sort of allegations were raised by an English newspaper, the 'Observer', with the same story but covering all Australian migrant institutions. It was copied by one of our local newspapers and produced the same sort of outraged reaction. The broad statements were that, if you were sent to an institution in W.A. as a child migrant, you suffered physically and mentally from the 'presumed care' you received; your future life was impaired; you automatically became a misfit. Whatever failings you had were due to your miserable childhood.

I can only speak of the years from 1926 to 1934 when Fairbridge was my home and speak of them with pride and gratitude. Like many of the children of the time from 1912 to 1939 we came from homes or institutions run by people like Dr. Berardo or the Sisters of the Church. Some of us had parents some had parents whom they never knew; some were orphans but all were very lucky for they were given a better chance than being left on the streets or under appalling home conditions. Discipline was firm and fair as I knew it. Good behaviour was the norm. We were taught respect for God, King and Country.

When we came to F.F.S. the overall plan, as you know, was to give us a chance of a better life in a new country. We would not have to fight for existence in the crowded cities of England. We would help the populate the open spaces of the Empire. The boys would learn to become farmers and the girls would be taught domestic service. Our future in England was precarious. Here in the West we were guaranteed a better start.

We lived a lot better than many children in their own homes in West Australia. We lived a great deal better than Prince Charles when he was sent to Gordonstoun. We ate wholesome, fresh food and although we expressed dislike of some of the meals, our meals were almost as good as those eaten by our Royal Family today. Our schooling was the same as that in all the state schools and we were fortunate in our teachers.

Our cottages were adequate and comfortable; our household chores were shared by all. Our sports were taught by teachers and sport-masters. Their free time was willingly given to training the school teams and supervising Saturday matches whether at home or away. After school unless we were on a duty detail our time was our own; to go for a walk, play games, swim or learn to swim in the fairly primitive pool in the river.

We planted gardens to beautify the cottages; we kept the surrounds neat and tidy. It was our home and most of us were proud of it. At weekends we occasionally had sports fixtures, picnics in the hills and dances and concerts in the dining Hall. Our clothes, food, education were all made secure by the wellwishers of the Fairbridge Society with limited help from the State Govt. Occasionally we were punished unfairly. These occasions and the individuals concerned were few and far between. A family of 350 is bound to have a few misfits. By being here today you honour our Founder, Kingsley Fairbridge; you honour our Association by your continued interest and support and only you can ensure the the good name of the school is kept alive by telling the story of your lives to your children, grandchildren and friends Be proud of the start given you by such a man and in such surroundings.

Julian Hay.