



The ALVA Buzz

AUSTRALIAN LADIES VARIETY ASSOCIATION INC.
Women in Entertainment

VOLUME 17, ISSUE 2

AUGUST 2017



Letter from the Editor...

Hi Everyone,

Thank you to all for your emails and letters of support for the first of our new BUZZ. It has been great fun, although sometimes challenging, putting it all together.

The joy has been in hearing of your pleasure in catching up with each other and staying united. Please keep that news coming through to the Buzz email address below. My apologies to those whose news I missed in the last issue but I hope to catch up in this one.

With love & blessings

Jacqui

Jacqui Alexander
BUZZ Editor & Committee Member
buzz@alva.org.au

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A Note from Our President



August 25, 2017

Hi Everyone,

As our new Editor said, thank you for your lovely replies and support of the latest incarnation of The Buzz. This one is a bumper issue so thank you also for all getting on board and sending your news.

As most of you know there are some members that are not online and rely on the paper version to keep up with all our news. And yes, we were well overdue to get back on-board with our newsletters. We have taken this feedback on and the results have been wonderful.

In our 12th year with myself as President, and most of the 2017 committee racking up this many years as well, we are grateful for all the support we have received. We are also excited to be taking on a fresh look at the year ahead. We have some new and different happenings coming up, and as your elected office bearers and committee we will continue to take on your comments and feedback.

A reminder to all of you who are online, please make sure you like our Facebook page - ALVA Women in Entertainment, and also our Instagram page @alvaassociation. Social media will keep us all connected instantly and we welcome your comments via these pages.

Take care of yourselves and those around you as we stay connected with the power of sisterhood, love and support.

Love & Light, *Susie x*



Lesley Rose & Dave Bridge

Date: 18 April 2017

Note from Pat.. Lesley was an early member of ALVA and everybody knows Dave and wishes him well. Love, Pat x

We had a 'leave pass' over the Easter weekend which Dave enjoyed but overdid it on Sunday but bounced back Monday. We are meeting with the team tomorrow to figure out where we are in respect to bringing him home & some instructions for me on his needs. All good even though we are taking each day as it comes, mostly he is content & pain free with such an INCREDIBLE determination. Dave is a beautiful man with such a good heart but an amazing foul mouth.....some things don't change. Thank you for your continued prayers, love & support it is appreciated. Best wishes to you all, Lesley & Dave p.s. My 2-1/2 year old granddaughter who loves Dave was a delight on Sunday morning. Sadly Dave lost his battle on 17 June, 2017. ALVA love and prayers to Lesley and their family and chosen showbiz family.



Kel-Anne Brandt

I thought that I would let you know about my new Single [All That Matters](#) . It has been on the [the Australian Country Music Top 40 Chart](#) for 17 weeks, with many of those weeks in the Top 10 and reaching #2 for a few weeks. It is from 'The Best So Far' Album. There are 19 tracks on the Album from various Albums & EPs that I have recorded in the last 20 years, including the track that got me on the **Bert Newton show**. They have all been digitally Re-Mastered. We realized that there were a few songs that had never been released. I felt that with all the turmoil around the world that we really needed more 'Love' based messages sent out to the World, so I decided to release '[All That Matters](#)'. There is also an [All That Matters Video Clip](#) which is on [Youtube](#).

On a personal note, I have become a Grandmother for the 8th time baby 'Hope' was born 3.26am on July 24th 2017...Love & Blessings, Kel-Anne xox



Claine Llewellyn

Date: 6/7/17

A note from Lisa.... Caught up with Claine Llewellyn today at my show. She sends the Alva girls all her love and if anyone needs a place to stay if they are up Newcastle way then just let her know. Cheers, Lisa



Olive Kermond

Date: 23/6/17

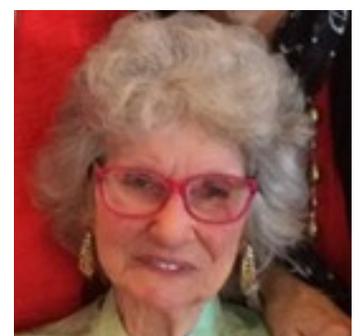
Just to let you know "Mother Olive" Olive Kermond, long time ALVA Member and Committee Member - at 91 years young - has had a hip replacement yesterday (22 June)! Daughter Sharon says everything went well with all the doctors being in awe of how well she has coped with the surgery at her young years! She was even up and about today for a short walk. Naturally Mother Olive is very tired (so is Sharon!) and surely in a bit of pain, but in very good spirits. Can't keep a Showgirl down as the saying goes!



Olive Johnson

Date: 23/6/17

Also more good news - Member and 2017 Committee Member Olive Johnston aka OJ Wagstaff - has completed the surgery on both her eyes now and is happily reporting to me she is now seeing like " the wizard of oz when it went from black and white to colour!" So at the next event OJ will be able to see who she is talking to again!



Happy 100th Dame Vera

The first singer in history to release a new album at age 100



B: Wendy, Shirley, Gayle & Ron

F: Susie, Di, Julie, Barb Cohen



Rita & Bonny Raybon



Susie & Colleen Star

Fabulous day for ALVA Patron Dame Vera Lyn! Congratulations to Toni Stevens & her team for a great day. ALVA girls onstage strutting 'their stuff'. Yes that's you too @markkristian45 !

Maria's New Chair...

News from Pat Scroope... ALVA made the primary donation towards this wonderful chair for Our Patron, Maria, who has, along with Kathy Watson, raised the largest amount of money for ALVA during our 38 years. To say nothing of the prizes obtained by her for Art Unions, Race Days, Ball Tombolas & Raffles. Irene did a good job with the photos.



Membership

ALVA is always very excited to welcome new members to our association. Together we are strong! Congratulations to our latest new , associate & life members

New Member - Sally Hare – Girls on Tap

New Associate Member - Colleen Starr

New Life Member - Kel-Anne Brandt – "I was thrilled to get my Life Membership badge...I am so honoured to be part of such an amazing group of woman...it is very cool that I got the old style badge..."

*“We’ll meet again, don’t know where don’t know when,
but I know we’ll meet again some sunny day.....”*

Vale Geoff Mack

A note from Diane Lindsay.... I have a small account of Geoff Mack's Life Celebration on the Gold Coast recently. Hope this is ok. I flew up to Brisbane recently for the Life Celebration of Geoff Mack on the Gold Coast along with my sister, Sandra Lindsay. Miss Tabbi was there for the entire afternoon and it was simply wonderful to see her and, of course, dressed beautifully and colourfully, as always. A number of people flew in for the afternoon and I met several Alva Ladies there as well. Geoff and Tabbi Mack have always been very special to our family, Geoff being a very close mate of my Dad's, Reg Lindsay. Although a sad occasion, it was a lovely afternoon with many people attending the Shark's Club and many happy memories being shared of Geoff and Tabbi's life together. We watched a beautiful slide show of Geoff's family and friends and there were also some photos from their impressive career in the entertainment field and Geoff's nephew gave a lovely account of Geoff's life. Geoff and Tabbi Mack are very special people and loved by so many.



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A note from Roxanne.... We say goodbye to our dear friend. The wonderful, the kind, the incredibly talented - Mr Geoff Mack Roxanne Paladin-Kiely

I am very lucky to be able to call the late Geoff Mack a very dear and close friend, whom I will miss very much. I first met the gorgeous Geoff and Tabbi Mack when I joined ALVA, (Australian Ladies Variety Association), in 1986 and shortly after I was lucky to join their travelling pantomime show as a singer-guitarist/actor. A really nervous girl joining this group of excellent veteran performers, but it didn't take long for me to fit in and feel completely at home. I was excited to be a part of this group of talented musicians, magicians, dancers, singers, sight acts. We performed the pantomime for the children during the day then entertained the adults in the evenings. Geoff and Tabbi and Nina Raye were the regulars on this tour. We travelled on a bus from town to town. Geoff drove the bus and on all of the trips I would jump on to the bus as quickly as I could to sit up the front next to Geoff. I just loved to listen to his stories. Geoff's unforgettable stories of his time before arriving in Australia, when he worked as an aircraft engineer. How he and his beautiful Tabbi met. The variety shows he and Tabbi performed at together, as well as many tales of the other wonderfully talented artists they had both worked alongside. My favourite story of all was of how he wrote that famous song "I've Been Everywhere", and the unexpected success of his song. One year, my daughter Bianka, who was 15 at the time, joined the show and played the lead in Aladdin. In every pantomime show, Geoff played the villain, and the little children were scared of him. In real life Geoff was a gentle giant, and he was loved by everyone.

In 1998, Stephen and I invited his dad, Brian Kiely and Geoff to perform at one of our Songsalve! Songwriter showcase nights. Brian Kiely was a talented pianist/singer and parody writer who had written a parody called "I've Had Everything, Nurse" to the melody of Geoff's song "I've been everywhere". Geoff and Brian were able to compare diseases, as Geoff had also written a medical parody of his own hit, called "I've Had Everything, Doc". Brian and Geoff had met years earlier when they performed in variety shows. So it was very special to have Geoff and Brian perform these two songs on the same night.

In 1944, while serving in Borneo, Geoff's ability to play the guitar and sing was noticed and he was asked to entertain the troops with visiting guest stars. In May 1946, as an ex-serviceman performer in a theatre concert, Geoff was credited for being "responsible for most of the laughs with his vocal gymnastics, in his number, *In Der Fuhrer's*, which had the audience in hysterics." From then he was known as; Geoff 'TANGLETONGUE' Mack. When the fabulous Mark Kristian told me about the book he was writing on the "Golden Years of Australian Variety", I immediately suggested that he interview Geoff and Tabbi Mack for his book.

In February 2017, Mark visited Geoff and Tabbi in the Gold Coast, where they had been living with their niece, Jan Salmi and her husband Leo, for two and half years.



I am very pleased that Mark was able to record those precious stories that will now go down in history. The very same stories, I heard all those years ago, travelling on a bus with Geoff and Tabbi Mack. Our beautiful friendship, the pantomime shows



News from Stephen...Geoff Mack – Stephen Kiely

Geoff was always very humble and self-effacing about his career, painting it as a series of well-intentioned flukes, blunders and serendipity, and often underplaying his natural talent for bringing people together and drawing their own talents out. Even his introduction to the concept of “show business” came about as a side show to his army efforts during WW2. A natural ham, he enjoyed putting together skits to entertain his fellow soldiers. An officer became aware of these bouts of entertainment and enlisted Geoff as a participant in an Army show that toured in a morale-boosting effort at the time.

Included in his repertoire of gags, was a funny parody of the Austrian Corporal, which told me in a conversation just weeks ago, that he eventually performed in a gesture of comedic closure, on the balcony of the Berchtesgaden HQ which Hitler had once occupied. While the performance was only witnessed by one person, the adjutant with whom he was travelling at the time, Geoff assured me that one hundred percent of the audience were entertained by his short parody sketch. And soldiers were the sort of audience he enjoyed entertaining the most. Geoff said that it took a while to get used to the idea of entertaining civilians as a profession, as it didn't hold the same sense of enjoyment that “mucking around” with his soldier mates had brought him. It was his personality and seeming lack of sophistication that would endear Geoff to audiences over the decades following the war. His humility would shine through, even when relating the story of his most famous musical achievement, the success of “I've Been Everywhere”.

“It was just a throwaway thing”, he said. “The last song I thought of pulling out of the bag, when I visited my publisher. ‘What else do you have’, he asked, after I'd played just about every song I'd written. “Just this little ‘list song’ I threw together. Nothing really...” But, as soon as he finished singing it, accompanied by guitar, in the publisher's office, the immediate reply came, “That's the one. That's the one.” Geoff's talent also extended to the world of engineering and mechanics, which was illustrated by his innovative approach to his live performance equipment. Wishing to be able to move freely around the room he was entertaining, while singing and playing guitar, Geoff needed to overcome the one obstacle singing guitarists face, namely, the mic stand doesn't move around with you.

After a bit of applied physics was introduced, Geoff designed and built a small microphone stand, which he attached to the body of his guitar. By use of a special cable, which took the vocal signal, as well as the guitar signal, via the same cable to the PA system, Geoff successfully became a free-moving entertainer. When we visited him last year, Geoff produced the prototype version, which really did look like it was made from war surplus parts. Then he brought out the updated, modern, streamlined version that he'd used when touring with Tabbi, Roxanne and the other members of the troupe. A lot of thought had gone into the design and it looked quite professional. Geoff employed a small-headed mic, which he would sometimes completely envelop with his mouth, so as to produce the weird and wacky sounds which comprised many of his show songs.

Roxanne and I felt very honoured and touched when Geoff asked us to take his guitar home with us for safe keeping. It's now a treasured item at our place, and a beautiful memory of Geoff's mechanical prowess, innovative thinking and desire to get close to his audience. I knew about Geoff many years before I met him, due to the fact that my father, Brian Kiely, being an entertainer and parody writer, had taken it upon himself to write a parody of Geoff's song, targeting ailments, and naming it, “I've Had Everything, Nurse”. As a boy, I thought Dad had written the song, not having heard the original hit, so was surprised to hear Lucky Starr's hit one day on the radio, but not as surprised as when I found out that Geoff had written his own parody of his hit, which he called, “I've Had Everything, Doc”. Brian and Geoff had a few laughs comparing diseases in their respective “lists”.

While he became physically debilitated in his later years, Geoff's keen mind never let him down. Up until a couple of days prior to passing, he was still regaling us with anecdotes about his travels on the road, stars he'd worked with and met, and of course, the wonderful journeys he shared with his beautiful wife, Tabbi. A true gentleman, a real friend and great ambassador for his country, Geoff will be greatly missed by his family, friends and fans.



Geoff had this guitar especially made by Alan Tomkins. He gave this guitar to Stephen and me, January this year. We will treasure for always.

Vale Janice Breen

Date: 17/6/17

With deep sadness we must inform you that Janice Breen, our beloved Miss Jan, passed away late last night. She was in no pain and her family was by her side. Words cannot express how we all feel and while our hearts are breaking we know that Miss Jan would insist the show must go on. We agree, so the up coming Sunday's concert was the best ever and a final tribute to Miss Jan.



Vale Lorraine (Forbes) Wright

Date: July 2015

A note from... Leahnore Wright - Hello, I am Lorraine Wright's daughter. I am sorry to inform you that Mum passed away June 11, 2015 Here are some photos of mum for your ALVA newsletter. Mum was a Tivoli showgirl/ballet girl and also a choreographer with Tivoli. She worked in Sydney, Brisbane and Melbourne with many wonderful people like Lucky Grills, Jan Adele, Horrie Dargie, Lloyd Nairn, Eddie Ash, Geoff Mack etc.



More recently she was one of the members of "The Ballet of a Thousand Years". Mum was a member of ALVA and always loved receiving your newsletters. If you would like me to forward anything more about mum please let me know. Many Thanks, Leahnore



Vale Bill Alexander

Date: 23/8/17

News from Pat Scroope... After a long fight and going home the other day, then back into hospital and gone this morning about 10.30am. What a fight by someone who loved life and walked the hospital halls singing for all. Thinking of Robyn, Jean and family. Vale Bill. Thank you to Coral Roy Jones for keeping us informed. Take care, Pat xx



News from Mark Kristian... It is with great sadness that Golden Years of Australian Variety marks the passing of Bill Alexander (William Scott). Bill was a remarkable entertainer and an even more remarkable human who has bravely fought an ongoing battle against a form of blood cancer, Multiple Myeloma, for the past 4 years. During that time, through his personal FB posts, Bill kept his friends and colleagues advised of his condition. Despite facing the inevitable, he never wavered in his cheery disposition and, in fact, was a huge source of inspiration for many. Bill passed at approximately 10.30 this morning. Vale Bill; and thank you for making the lives of so many people brighter through your presence. You will be remembered with great love and admiration. Our thoughts are with his wife Robyn and his family.

Address for cards: Mrs. Robyn Alexander, 1 Sky Royal Terrace, Old Burleigh Town QLD 4220

Vale Gary 'Spike' Ivory Date: 23/6/17

Gary was often seen working as a singer/drummer and compere at Wests New Lambton, Wests Mayfield and Nelson Bay Diggers. He was a loveable larrikin with a zest for life. His son, Jason, worked with him on piano and Howard Ward as his bass man. He will be sorely missed.



With Gratitude, Honour, Respect. & Love. While it is with sadness we report on these lives lost to us, we are also able to celebrate that we have been blessed to share, even if in a small way, in the talents and love of these wonderful people.

"Keep smiling through just like you always do

'till the blue skies chase those the dark clouds far away..."

A lovely appreciation & update

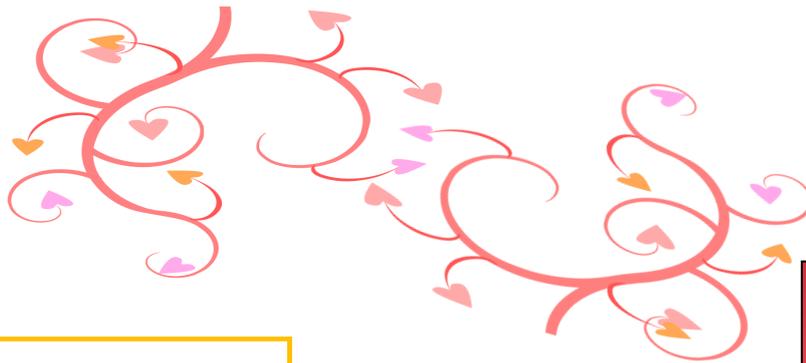
Date: 15/6/17

A note from June Hitchcock – Dear Susie, thank you so much for sending me the latest ALVA Buzz - it's wonderful! I really love the way it's all laid out and with lots of snapshots. It's simply amazing that Dame Vera is about to release a new album at her age - I wish I had just a fraction of her energy and talent - and longevity.

I was a friend of Jo McRobert and Ron for quite some years. I met them in 1986 through mutual friends, when they lived at Lindfield. They were a lovely couple and I enjoyed their company so much. When Ron passed away, I still visited Jo in her townhouse at Wahroonga, the last time being on my last trip to Sydney in 2003 (my health has intervened since then, so it's 14 years now since I've been to Sydney, where I was born and lived 'til I was 21 years of age.) My trip in 2003 was a quick trip to see my son, but I'm glad I caught up with Jo. When Ron passed away, she sold her townhouse and moved into a retirement village in Wahroonga and we still kept in touch. I didn't hear from her son James, so I didn't know she had passed away on June 19th, 2016 until I received a message from ALVA on my computer. When her number was disconnected and I couldn't reach her, I had feared the worst. Jo was full of life and I miss her very much. We had great phone conversations in the years since I've lived in Tasmania.

I met Maria Venuti many years ago, when I came to quite a few ALVA meetings, but she wouldn't remember me. I wonder how she is recovering now? Congratulations to her on her Lifetime Achievement Award.

Thank you again Susie for my copy of the ALVA Buzz. It's so nice to read all the news, even though I live far away from all the events and excitement! Love from June Hitchcock x-



String Fever In Sydney!

It's been a while! World-travelling musicians Jacqui Edgecombe (ALVA life-member) and husband Brenton are excited to be visiting their old stomping ground for some shows in September. The Edgecombes first came to Sydney from Adelaide in 1997, moved to Melbourne in 2007 and now are back in Adelaide in 2017. Is it a ten-year itch? If you'd like to see them or tell your friends you can find the Sydney dates on

<http://www.stringfever.com.au/live-shows/>



Julie Trachtenberg

VICTORY LAP – *With love from Julie Trachtenberg*

Date: 16/8/17

As I write from sunny Bonville, I am having a staycation weekend. My Husband Michael is in Sydney this weekend at his daughter's home, having an early night in anticipation of 'walking' his 45th City to Surf with his granddaughters tomorrow. Eleven and a half months ago he had done just this for his 44th time. But as we discovered two weeks later when he collapsed in our local movie theatre, he only had 75% capacity in his heart arteries. He was flown down on an emergency Care Flight, to Sydney Prince of Wales and came home six weeks later with five new arteries, a pigs valve and 10 kilos lighter. Medical drug fogged and in a bubble, very wounded Lion. The Heart Surgeon who did the five hour operation did not pick up on my black Irish sense of humour when I asked if it was a Kosher Pigs valve he had inserted in my Jewish Husbands chest. I am happy to say that he has recovered to nearly 99%, and with all his marbles and everything else working, after a very challenging 11 and half months. I have been his sole carer and we have both experienced the gamut of emotions in that time.

There have been massive behind scenes of not just medical issues, but financial, practical, bureaucratic bumbings and family dissention that could have done us both in. But I am so proud of my beautiful Ruski Lion. I have released him back into the jungle. I figured there would be plenty of medics and support around him in the midst of 80 thousand participants of the City to Surf plus his Family, that it was out of my hands of what could happen. This is his challenge. Tomorrow he will be victorious and he will be coming home to me, back to 'ARGASARI', our beautiful oasis of peace we have managed to salvage, which has been his healing place of the last year.

Thank you to all who have supported us and kept us in your hearts, and for understanding that our no communication has been necessary for his recovery away from the madness. We are very private people and I have been wearing several different hats. Secretary was not one of them. I can now breathe again and watch the daffodil bulbs we have planted come up in the spring and the blossom trees. Our garden has been our solace and the changing of the seasons and the beautiful warm July in the sunshine our bonus after a very quiet birthday week.

Michael only just turned a corner in the last two weeks. Amazing to watch as his last cylinder kicked in and fired up. We have been very, very lucky. Listen out for the 'ROAR'!!!! We will both be in Sydney very briefly on 26th August to see 'My Fair Lady' at the Capitol. I have had the tickets for months and didn't know if we would make it. This is our belated birthday treat to ourselves. It is the same production that I made my professional debut with JC Williamsons touring in New Zealand in 1961. Fifty six years ago. Full circle for me with wonderful memories.

My love to you all, Julie Tx

PS 13/7/20 Just had a phone call from victorious Michael after the City to Surf – 2 hours 14 minutes over 14 klms.



Bobby Dennis

Date: 11/8/17

News from Mary Bradford.... Bobby Dennis, now 91, is arriving with his new girlfriend Vicki for a visit next month - arriving 20 September. Vicki Lane, a former singer dancer, is the widow of Ken Goodwin who was a well-known British comic. He plans to be here for 5 weeks.





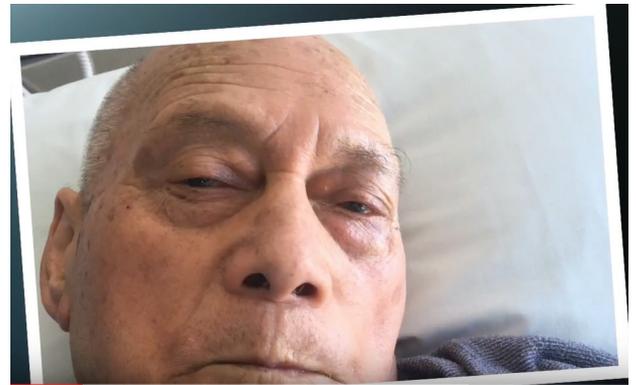
News from Lisa Cook

Date: 16/8/17

Andrew and I have been working on a charity project in Nepal. The members might find it interesting.

Sona Selwyn

News from Tia Jordan.... Sona Selwyn, half of the Glo Pois act that worked the circuit in the 60s-80s, Robyn Wade's former hubby, and my dad, experienced a stroke 25 days ago. It was huge. Unable to answer the phone, he held on for 2 days until he was discovered. Thankfully his cognitive skills are very good and his attitude is excellent. He is however learning to do everything again. The 1 minute uplifting video clip gives an insight into his journey for anyone who may be interested. YouTube search 'Hira: A New Day' <https://www.youtube.com/>



Radio Station 93.3FM Gosford Benefit Concert



News from Barb Cohen... Will send you a poster of an upcoming Benefit Concert to raise funds for Radio Station 93.3FM here in Gosford where I work as a Volunteer and have put this concert together to raise funds to update our equipment (with technology going so fast it is a constant battle). Show will be held on the 10th September at Gosford RSL and commences 2.00PM until 5PM - Bistro opens at 11.30AM if you wish to have a bite beforehand either at the Cafe or Restaurant. Our Station Licence requires us to play at least 25% of Australian Artists in our programs and we are constantly looking for more CDs if I do not already have them from you. Lisa Crouch, Kel-Anne Brandt & Liz Layton are the ALVA girls performing who have graciously donated their time once more. Warren Williams and Lucky Starr will also be there supporting us as well. Also I wish to thank Monique Montez for offering her services, however I had already filled the bill. Thanks so much for your CD Monique. Come on ladies – lovely train trip from Sydney to Gosford – only takes 1 hour 15 mins and fabulous water views along the way. Trains run every half hour.

Annual Banquet

Another wonderful day....



Golden Girl
Monique Montez
with Toni Stevens



For the love of Hunter



Thanks for the music
John Watson
Irene & Anne



www.openaircars.com.au



Thank you for the bubbles
Lady Joan Hardy



www.jennymccarthycakes.com.au



So many more fabulous photos...
to see them go to www.alva.org.au



Memories

Jan Murphy,
 Patrice Tipoki and
 Jacqui de Paul



What's on.....

Tulips & Tea - Bowral Bus Trip

Bringing back some of the 'good ol' days'

Monday 25 September

Bookings & Details: Kathy Watson

Ph: 02 4862 2345 or 0448 197 179

or email kathywatson35@gmail.com



Gold Coast Get together - watch this space...

We have some very exciting news for those ALVA members and friends on the Gold Coast

Save the date!! - **Monday 16 October** with more information very coming soon !

Need Assistance? Know someone who does?

Our ALVA Benevolent Committee is here to help. If you or anyone you know is in need of assistance, then please let us know. Perhaps it is to have Vitalcall installed, assistance with a bill or even just a friendly ear to listen, ALVA is here for you. We can only help if we know and all benevolent assistance is kept in the strictest confidence. So let us know so we can do our thing.... Contact Pat Scroope, Lisa Crouch, Kerri Lacey or Kathy Watson (contact details below)

Keeping up.....

Keep up with the latest ALVA & Entertainment Industry news if you have **Facebook**, make sure you 'Like' our ALVA page and/or ALVA group. Also, we now have **Instagram** so link in there too! Throughout the year, Susie sends out many **Emails** to ALVA members & friends. If you are not hearing from us please let us know. There may be an issue with your email address and if we don't know we can't fix it!.....we would hate for anyone to be left behind on the goss! :-)



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The Australian Ladies Variety Association Incorporated is a benevolent association who assist members of the variety Entertainment Industry and wider community.
HOW YOU CAN HELP..... Become a member, attend an event, organize or support a fundraising event.