



Volunteer & Friends Newsletter

September 2020

From my Home Desk as the Competition & Volunteer Officer

It is that time once again when I sit & ponder what is going to be included in the latest newsletter for you all. It actually amazes me how much information I can come up with to send to all South Streets, wonderful volunteers & our friends. I hope you all like the special interest stories that I have collected, this month I feature one of our many Calisthenic Adjudicators Michelle Urquhart, Board Member & also section chair of Speech & Drama Mary-Rose McLaren, and also I would like to share my memories of calisthenics (written by my niece Rebecca Garlick), all of us share a passion for South Street & share our memories of our involvement, I hope you enjoy the read. I also have finally managed to get our Finance Officer Susan, to write her story as well.

Competitions:

As I am writing this month's news, I should have been sitting in the Office in Lucky's Foyer at HMT enjoying the Engertiks Dance Competition, along with all you volunteering around in various positions of the theatre watching all our wonderful competitors, wow what a memory to be honest I wish we were altogether enjoying the comps. Certainly, has been a very strange year living in & out of lockdown due to COVID-19, even though we have had no comps this year we shall all banned together & make 2021 an even better year of competition. Of course, next week we would have been moving to the Australian Calisthenic Competition how our year has changed.



Something a little different to keep us motivated, South Street is having a Trivia Night via Zoom, **Tuesday, October 20th at 7pm**. Hope you are able to join me for a bit of fun & Trivia we have some great prizes to be won. Here is the link to join me, I will also resend this out to all those who RSVP to attend closing to the date as well. **RSVP if you would like to join me by Friday, October 16th.**

Topic: Royal South Street Trivia Night

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86708551738?pwd=MEhEZS9NM2NpbmBVSmtaY0dPcTFmZz09>

Meeting ID: 867 0855 1738

Passcode: 22697

2020 Badges:



The Royal South Street 2020 Badges has arrived. The cost of \$15 includes postage. Keep your collection up to date even though COVID-19 has stopped our live performances. Please follow the link, to our website to purchase: <http://125.royalsouthstreet.com.au/shop/>

AGM

Annual General Meeting

Please be advised Royal South Street Society AGM will be held Via Zoom on Wednesday, November 11th @ 7pm.

RSVP: by 31st October and a link to the meeting will be sent to you. If you are unable to access zoom, please contact Julie by 22nd October to discuss the options available.

Board Vacancies if you know of anyone who would be interested in the possibility of joining the South Street Board please contact me julie@royalsouthstreet.com.au for a nomination form, completed nomination forms must be received by Thursday, October 22nd.

Special Interest Stories

My almost six years at South Street – Susan Hughes:

I moved from St Arnaud to Ballarat in the worst winter I have experienced here. It snowed heavily at the beginning and end of winter, which I loved but it also rained every day throughout winter, and I wondered why I had ever moved here. I commenced work in Ballarat at a not for profit disability service as Finance Officer, 15 years later I moved to a child welfare service as accountant.

In 2014 I applied for the 3 day a week position as Finance Officer, a stepping stone towards winding down to retirement, boy was I wrong. I started in December, a very deceiving time because it was after the competitions, with Brett, Marilyn and Amanda, all fabulous people to work with. I will also never forget how warmly welcome I was made by all the volunteers, particularly Barb & Ric Dunlop and Ron & Dawn Harrington. What incredible support they have been to me over the years.

In 2015 I experienced my first competition season and soon realised why the previous Finance Officer had run out of the building screaming, this was not going to be a cushy pre-retirement position at all.

All of a sudden, I was having to get my head around things I had never had experience with like managing Stardom, updating the website, etc.

With the amazing work the dedicated volunteers do, not just through the competitions but all year around I was in awe. I soon became a volunteer too, my favourite position being security because you get to see everyone coming and going. Finishing a full day's work and then discovering there was no one on security so you fill the position and end up leaving the Theatre at 11 or 12 that night was not unusual. It was always enjoyable though.

Unfortunately, over the years I have been there I have seen so many staff come and go, the last two years with massive losses due to repercussions caused by the closing of Her Majesty's Theatre and then this year where we have had to cancel all live performances due to COVID-19.

Julie has done an amazing job of keeping contact with all our incredible volunteers and one day when I finally do retire you will see me around as a volunteer.

I have developed a love of South Street and all that represent it, here's to 2021 being bigger and better than ever before.

Michelle Urquhart Calisthenic Adjudicator



Hello, my name is Michelle Urquhart.

I have been involved with the Royal South Street Eisteddfod Calisthenics Competitions in many different facets over the last 50 years, having been a Competitor, a Mother, an Adjudicator, and a Volunteer in that time.

I started the sport at 5 years of age with St Mark's Girls' Gymnasium, moving a few years later onto Clifton Calisthenics College, where I then enjoyed competing at Royal South Street.

Initially, Civic Hall was the venue of the Eisteddfod when I was a younger competitor with Clifton, which holds such wonderful memories. Back in those days, the Championship section of all age groups was held within the same week.

In the year of 1980, when I was performing as a Championship Senior, we started our competition for the very first time on a Friday night at the new venue of Her Majesty's Theatre, returning on Saturday morning to Civic Hall.

We were all horrified to be performing at Her Majesty's, as this was not our South Street experience as we knew it!

How times have changed and how much we love the history and the atmosphere that is experienced in Her Majesty's these days! Our competitors love performing in the beautiful historic theatre, as well as enjoying a fun overnight stay with teammates in Ballarat.

As a Mother, my daughters only ever experienced performing at Her Majesty's Theatre from Tinies right through to Seniors, with Regent Calisthenics College. So many fabulous memories were made for them for over 25 years of their lives, committed to a high standard of Calisthenics, enjoying so much fun in the dressing rooms and then nervous energy in the Green room, before stepping onto the magnificent stage.

My first experience as an Adjudicator at Royal South Street was over 20 years ago. I have been adjudicating for 36 years and love this part of my Calisthenics journey. The honour of being invited to adjudicate at Royal South Street was just as exciting as being a performer! This was the pinnacle of what you aspired to when starting the cadet course and moving through the accreditation levels... to at last sit in that coveted chair and get your turn!

The seat in the extended balcony is of course the best seat in the house and the best position to adjudicate in any venue we attend. It is just magic when the lights go down and the competitors enter the stage, it takes your breath away and you feel so included in their performance. The atmosphere is electric!

Adding to my experiences above, I have also played a small part as a volunteer at RSS. On the weekend of 18th/19th October 2014, there was a request for volunteers to help as ushers, as they were quite understaffed for the weekend.

I volunteer frequently in the Melbourne Metropolitan competitions and although holding a VIP Calisthenic ticket in the Dress Circle at Her Majesty's, it was an easy choice to offer my assistance. It was a wonderful experience to meet so many passionate others who love their theatre and the excitement each genre of the Eisteddfod brings to Ballarat.

In summing up... The whole Eisteddfod is a partnership of so many generations who offer their goodwill and support to so many performing artists. It has played a huge role in my life and I treasure my memories of so many years involved at Royal South Street and look forward to the future with this wonderful establishment.

Thank you

Mary-Rose McLaren Story.

Board Member & Chair Speech & Drama



I first went to South Street in 1970. My mother took me to watch the set poem section for the 9 and under 13 age group. The poem was *The Listeners* by Walter de la Mare and memory tells me it was won by Simon Nette – at least he is the competitor that I remember! And then my mother asked, ‘Would you like to have a go next year?’ Nine-year-old me did not know that both my mother and father were drama teachers. So far as I knew, Dad was a primary school teacher, and Mum was Mum with a glamorous career before us kids were born, working on 3BA. In fact, Mum and Dad had both competed at South Street in Elocution, both had completed their exams with Trinity College London, and they had

met in their Drama teacher’s front room. Over time Mum and Dad became very involved in South Street. Mum made endless sandwiches and slices, and worked on the Speech and Drama committee, and Dad was a board member, President, and life member.

So, you could say that South Street is in my blood.

Over more than a decade I competed in Speech and Drama, Piano, written poetry and the one act plays (as both an actor and a director). My own children also competed in Speech and Drama, and in Debating, Dance, choirs, bands and one act plays. I taught for some years at Ballarat Centre of Music and the Arts, and more than 100 of my students from there competed in the 2010s.

Now I am on the South Street board and chair the Speech and Drama committee (a job I have had for 11 years). It was a sad moment when we had to accept this year, that we simply could not run the Speech and Drama section. We had put a lot of time and effort into exploring online and streaming options, but in the end, there were just too many uncertainties to proceed.

I am also an academic at Victoria University, and as part of my research there I wrote a paper on the intergenerational bonds established through participation at South Street. It opened my eyes to an extraordinary history of overlapping stories, and the wealth of experience in the Arts in Ballarat. Because of this insight, I co-wrote a play with Peter Nethercote, which was produced by Ballarat National Theatre, entitled *Honourable Mentions* which dramatized the history of South Street. I am lucky to have had such amazing opportunities and to have been so enriched by the culture of the competitions.

It is increasingly difficult for eisteddfodau to survive. The drop off in volunteers, competing activities, and necessary, but sometimes onerous, compliance requirements, mean keeping afloat is very challenging. Early in South Street’s life, founding member, W.D. Hill said that with the competitions Ballarat was discarding the gold of the earth for the gold of the human mind and voice. I know that I have had a happier, healthier, richer, and more rewarding life because of the experiences I have through South Street. I believe that many, many other competitors would say the same. The challenge, the adrenalin, the friendships, the achievement, the discovery, the empathy one develops, the ability to improvise and trust oneself, taking a risk and sometimes failing, sometimes succeeding, and the grace in victory and defeat – all of these make more fulfilled lives. And that is why I volunteer at South Street, and why I hope it goes on and on, way beyond me.

Julie’s Calisthenic Journey

Written by Rebecca Garlick
(Niece)



Club Level

Julie began her Calisthenic journey as a 12-year-old in the Inters team at Ballarat Calisthenics College when a family friend enticed her to join (this family is also still involved with Calisthenics today). It was originally to fill in for a figure march as they didn’t have enough numbers for the team, but now 43 years

later she hasn't left. Julie was a competitor for nine years before finding her true calling, which is behind the scenes rather than on the stage.

Julie was the class manager of the Tinies & Sub-Junior sections at Ballarat Calisthenics College, a position she held for seven years, whilst I competed in the team. She also held the position of Club Secretary at Ballarat for two years (1990 -1991).

The family decided to move to Sovereign Calisthenics in 1992. Whilst at Sovereign, Julie was the fundraising secretary, a position she held for nine years. She was always trying to find different ways of raising money for the club from chocolate drives, to club bags, to pens. She would always put her name forward to man sausage sizzles and fundraiser drives. In 2007, she was nominated by Sharon Mason (a parent of the Club at the time and a current RSSS volunteer) for her tireless work she did behind the scenes and for making people feel welcomed. Julie knew all the children and parents within the club by name, all this without having children of her own.



From 1999 to 2004 Julie held the position of District Councillor for District 9. This entailed travelling to Melbourne for meetings once a month, as well as visiting each of the clubs in her district. The district included the clubs Jayde, Sovereign, Horsham, Stawell, Grampians, Warrnambool, and Pentland to name a few. Julie liaised with the coaches and CVI admin. This was a way coaches and competitors could get their message across to CVI before they introduced coach meetings.



RSSS

In 2003 Julie decided to give back to the local calisthenic community and begin volunteering at the Royal South Street Society Competitions. She first began assisting with Front of House ushering and door person, before moving backstage and assisting with time keeping, stage managing and registration.

In 2012, Julie became a sponsor of RSSS, donating money then later a trophy in her Mum Kathleen's memory, as she too loved RSSS. Also, in that year, Julie became a member of the Calisthenics Committee at RSSS which oversees the running of the discipline of Calisthenics in a voluntary capacity. As Ron Harrington (the discipline chair at the time), was beginning to step back, he asked Julie to take over the running of the Intermediate week of the competition. Julie jumped at this challenge. This involved organising the schedule of competition, liaising with club coaches, and ensuring the week went off without a hitch. In 2014, saw part of the RSSS comps being moved to

the Wendouree Centre for Performing Arts (WCPA) due to a major rowing competition being held in Ballarat. Ron put Julie's name forward to run the competition at WCPA as Ron needed someone who had a calisthenics background, who knew WCPA and someone he could trust with this important role, whilst he continued to work at Her Majesty's Theatre.

Julie became the Deputy Chair of Calisthenics section in 2014, she shadowed Ron for 12 months learning the reins. When Ron retired from being the discipline chair in 2015, Julie was asked to continue being the Deputy Chair, she held this role until the end of 2018.

In 2016 Julie finally turned her love of calisthenics into her paid work when she began working at RSSS in April that year. She became the Competition Officer which entails managing 13 disciplines, helping the discipline chairs, making sure jobs are completed and ready for the start of each discipline. This includes getting critiques ready, booking flights and accommodation for the adjudicators, and catering just to name a few.

In 2017, Julie was the Deputy Chair for the Arts for All competition, a new section at RSSS primarily for people living with disabilities. In 2020 Julie took over the running of this section. Also, in 2020, on top of her Competition Officer duties, Julie became the Volunteer Officer looking after over 180 volunteers, keeping them engaged in newsletters and Zoom catch ups during Covid 19 restrictions. Lets' hope the competition is bigger and better post Covid-19.

Julie has been a strong supporter of the RSSS comps having held a season ticket for the Calisthenic section for 40 years. She is often seen spending countless evenings at Her Majesty's Theatre watching all divisions and sections or nowadays down in Lucky's Foyer in the RSSS Office. Even though she is a paid member of staff, she will still volunteer her time during the competitions.

Ballaarat Solo Competition

Julie had always supported the Ballaarat Solo Competition (which was formed by the Ballarat Calisthenic Club), by watching local competitors. In 2006, Julie decided to volunteer at the competition by assisting with timing. Julie joined the committee in 2008 to take a greater role in the competition. In 2011, Lorraine Meade who was the competition convenor at the time was retiring soon so Julie shadowed her for 12 months before becoming a co convenor with Krystle Williams in 2012. She became the sole convenor in 2013 a position she still holds today.

The competition has grown quite considerably in the years since due to soloist numbers growing. The competition has almost 600 competitors from Victoria, South Australia, Queensland, and Northern Territory. This has also meant that we have needed to use two venues to run the competition. Many competitors and their families remark how the Ballaarat Solo Competition is the 'friendly' competition. Although Julie has a small band of volunteers in the committee to support her, she is still there from 6.30am to 11pm for the two and half days of competition, not leaving the premises during this time. Julie's role begins well before the March/April competition. She leads committee meetings provides training to volunteers, gains sponsorship, organises the trophies and medals, organises adjudicators, collates the entries, manages the schedule, prints and collates the program, double checks competitor information, liaises with photographer and videographer and organises catering for the weekend to ensure our adjudicators are well fed as well as our committee members. She oversees committee members collating time sheets and critique papers. These are just some of the roles Julie does, this is often hours each night after a full day's work RSSS and weekends. Once the competition ends, Julie contacts and thanks our sponsors and volunteers and then restarts it all over again for the following year.

In 2016 after the RSSS has held the Graceful Girl competition for many years, they decided to begin the Calisthenic Solo section. This section is fully sponsored by the Ballaarat Solo Competition, which includes Trophy for the Winner, Coach Trophy, \$1750 in Prize Money and Highly Commended Medals. It is something that Julie was keen to do and made it happen.

In my 23 years of Calisthenics, Julie never missed a competition or concert of mine – this was from my Tinies years all the way up to Masters. She has travelled all Victoria and interstate to support me and/or the Club as a whole. She has travelled interstate to watch the Victoria State Team on numerous occasions and also volunteered to other competitions such as CVI to assist them. In the 43 years she had been involved she has sewn countless sequins, made team headgear, and made props.

Julie has made many lifelong friends with many different people from many different clubs – this has included competitors, volunteers, parents, coaches, officials, and adjudicators.

Calisthenics really is an addiction and who could have believed that one little shy 12-year-old, 43 years later would now make a living out the sport she loves. Julie looks forward to a new kind of calisthenic journey when she starts to support her little great niece Charlotte when she begins calisthenics next year, 2021.

Until next time:

Kind Regards,

Julie
Competition & Volunteer Officer

