

## Portland CEMA Inc. - Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts

### Newsletter - February 2007

#### President's Report

Happy New Year to all members. We look forward to a year full of creativity and fun.

##### The Lakes School

Soon after New Year I attended The Lakes School of Celtic Music and Dance at Koroit.

It was a great start to the year, mixing with interesting music lovers from all over Australia. I participated in Songwriting workshops, and "Slow" sessions learning Irish tunes. Highlights of my week were the joy of watching performance poets at "The Spud Poets awards" and hearing ten year old Emma Hocking (a CEMA member) perform her own composition at the Singers concert in the Commercial Hotel. My tin whistle playing is slowly improving (it is payback time for the Heavy Metal bandmembers who share my house!).

##### What's On

Convenors are asked to contact Lynda Cooper for "What's on" and Angela McFeeters at the Portland Observer with details of upcoming activities. If our organisation is to remain active and vibrant we need to open our arms to newcomers and open our minds to new ideas.

##### Arts Company Position

While most groups wound down after our November meeting, some executive members remained extremely active. Many thanks to Heather Clark and Bev Martin for an extraordinary effort leading up to the interview for the .5 position at The Arts Company. There have been many hours of meetings with the sub committee and we appreciate the great support Karl Hatton has given to this project also. Read more about this in The Arts Company report.

##### Chalmers Farewell

Our farewell lunch for Don and Lex Chalmers went off well, and I want to especially thank Bev and Bill Martin, Ron Colliver and June Roberts for a sterling effort in the preparations and clean up, and to all who provided delicious food and fine conversation.

A letter from Don and Lex is included in this newsletter.

##### Vale Eric Thorpe

I was saddened to learn of the passing of CEMA Life Member Eric Thorpe, and have provided a tribute later in the newsletter. Executive have sent a sympathy card to Hillary and Helen.

##### Nancy Malseed

Thanks to members who have visited Life Member Nancy Malseed in hospital over recent weeks, before her relocation to Penshurst.

##### Relay For Life

My music room at home has been alive with the sounds of different groups practising for "Relay for Life" performances. Two local songwriters have penned songs for this occasion and I happily volunteer my time to coordinate the musical entertainment over the 24 hours. Many CEMA members walk in various community teams. Please consider giving this event your support.

Have a great start to your Arts in 2007.

Jan Colliver (President)

#### Membership Secretary's Report

There was discussion at our executive meeting on Thursday, 18th January regarding unfinancial members still using equipment and facilities belonging to CEMA Inc. and the Arts Company.

As these members are no longer receiving newsletters we ask convenors and financial members to prompt them. It was decided at the meeting to make lists of those members eligible to use the facility and display them in the various workshops.

Bill & Bev Martin (Membership Secretaries)



Bill Golding speaks at the Chalmers Farewell

## THE ARTS COMPANY

The Committee of management would like to welcome Amy Gartlin to The Arts Company as our "Arts Program and Business Coordinator". Amy will be working from our office on Monday's, Wednesday's and Thursday afternoons. Please make her feel welcome.

Amy's major role is to:

- a) Coordinate the management, marketing and promotion of The Arts Company and the June Hedditch Apartments.
- b) To develop, promote and implement a regular arts workshop program.
- c) To coordinate day to day management of the retail outlet, provide assistance to volunteer staff and provision of training and skills development for volunteers.

The committee will hold an informal evening to meet Amy, following on from RAV funding information night **Friday, Feb 9th from 7pm** (see details below). All members are most welcomed for all or part of the evening. If you wish to attend a plate of finger food would be most appreciated.

Heather Clark (President)

### Regional Arts Fund Grants available to South West artists and arts community groups

South West Regional Arts Development Officer, Jo Grant will conduct an information session on applying for funding for projects that have a public outcome in the community that will commence after June 30th, 2007, or for organisations that have not had any previous success in applying to the regional arts fund.

The Arts Company, Studio Gallery, Julia St  
Friday Feb 9th  
5.30pm - 7.30pm

For more information contact; Jo Grant 0448 500 608  
Or [jgrant@rav.net.au](mailto:jgrant@rav.net.au)

## Choral Group

Our first meeting for the year will be on 7:30 pm, Monday, 5th February at the Portland Arts Centre. This will be part singing, part social as we begin a new year of choristry. Bring along some food and drink to share.

New members are always welcome and this is especially true at the start of the year. So if you can sing in tune, why not come along and join in. Or if you know someone who sings, why not encourage them to come along. We need men especially.

Warren Mars (Bass)

## Historical Society

February meeting: Thursday 1st, 2.30pm at Portland Arts Centre. First meeting for the year. Members please try to attend.

Betty Vivian (President)

## Poetry Reading Group

Our next reading to be on February 18th at 2 pm at the Portland Arts Centre.

Our meetings this year will be as usual - held on the 3rd Sunday of every month unless otherwise notified.

Wishing all CEMA groups a happy and successful 2007.

Dawn Turner (Convenor)



Anne McMaster - Drought, Bones, Crockery #8



JH Apartments resident artist Anne McMaster inking a plate at portland bay press in January

# VALE ERIC THORPE

Eric was a foundation member of Portland Council for Encouragement of Music and the Arts (CEMA). He was present at the Portland public meeting which was called to form CEMA in July 1945, and also at an earlier meeting in Melbourne where the first Victorian Council for Encouragement of Music and the Arts was formed.

Eric's main interest originally was the Literary Group. At the initial meeting at the then High School (now Portland Palmer St school) people were asked to discuss a book that they had just read. The format of meetings varied, with volunteers leading discussion on topics which interested them. Eric led an early session on D.H. Lawrence. In 1946 the group published a Magazine and Eric contributed a book review of "Chaos Enthroned" by James Crockett. Eric became convenor of the Group in 1947. The group affiliated with the Council of Adult Education in 1951 and the meeting format has remained constant since. Many former members remember collecting their books from "Thorpes". Eric remained a member of this group for over 50 years.

Eric was present at the meeting which decided to set up a building fund for CEMA, until this point CEMA fundraised for other organizations like the hospital. He was amongst the first donors to the building fund. Eric and his contemporaries worked hard for nearly 20 years to establish a home for the CEMA organisation. Theatre productions from the 50s and 60s contributed to the fundraising cause. In 1974 the dream of an Arts Centre for Portland was realised with the help of State government funding, a donation of land from the Portland Town Council, significant help from Keith Anderson, and a huge fundraising effort from CEMA members.

Eric served on CEMA Executive and was President for a time.

Eric gave a great deal of pleasure to Portland audiences for five decades. His name became synonymous with theatre in Portland. Eric told me some years back that he was "dragged" into the Drama group originally because they needed more men. He recalled that early CEMA Drama held weekly play readings in Moody's flat and performances in the Free Library Hall. Eric's first production was BAA BAA BLACK SHEEP (1946). Special projects that Eric and his CEMA Drama group colleagues were involved in were: in 1951 a pageant re enacting the meeting of Major Mitchell and Edward Henty (this was performed at Hanlon Park), and in 1955, a reenactment of the first Municipal Council meeting, performed, I believe, in a sound shell in the Botanical gardens.

Eric performed a wide range of characters, on a variety of Portland stages. In my CEMA memory, which only begins in 1980, I recall Eric playing a night club owner in "Showboat" in the Civic Hall, Henty senior in "Portland Bay Swells" in the Drill Hall, a Jewish Rabbi in "Fiddler on the Roof" in the Star Cinema, a Catholic priest, a politician, a solicitor, and a naval commander in various shows on the CEMA stage.

When I presented Eric's life membership in 1995, I commented that he was a true gentleman and explained how he had endeared himself to the prompt during a production of "Tomb with a View" (1985?). The prompt was hidden inside a cupboard, and when Eric needed a line, he leaned a little closer to the cupboard. The line was given, Eric (always the gentleman) slipped momentarily out of character to say "Thank You" in the direction of the cupboard and then proceeded to the climax of the play where he executed a marvellous fall envied by those many years his junior.

We have happy memories of Eric's involvement in CEMA groups, our archives boast photos and programmes detailing his commitment. Our organisation is richer for having had more than 60 golden years of Eric's energy, wisdom and talent and he will be sadly missed by all members, but especially Poetry group where he was a regular participant until recently.

Vale Eric Thorpe.



"Baa Baa Black Sheep" cast - Eric Thorpe centre



Life members at 50th Anniversary - Eric 2nd from right



Dear Jan and Members,

Thank you for the lovely farewell luncheon in December. Don and I both thoroughly enjoyed it.

But really we want to thank CEMA for 38 years of fun and entertainment through the Drama and Theatre Groups, Portland Arts Council, Film Group - and of course CEMA Executive Committee meetings.

Naturally, in our experience, most of the fun and entertainment came from behind the scenes with the efforts to "get the show on the road". This was obvious with Party Revues, productions, film screenings, touring shows, and artist residencies. But efforts leading to community resources such as the Community Arts Officer, CEMA Arts Centre, the Shire's Cultural Strategy or the Julia St. Complex (aka The Arts Company) and the June Hedditch Apartments were challenging, worthwhile and also rewarding achievements.

Then of course trying to keep many of these shows on the road as circumstances changed around us (such as the amalgamation of the three Shires) became another story.

So thanks to CEMA and its members and especially its Executive Committee which continues to work for community development, is the "umbrella" for many group and individual initiatives, takes risks and has fun along the way creating and contributing to Portland's vibrant cultural community and facilities.

All the best to CEMA Inc. and its members for a creative and rewarding future -

Don and Lex Chalmers.

Top of page - scenes from Lex & Don's farewell