

Committee of 2006

Chairman and National Director

Wendy James OAM

Vice-Chairman

Kathleen Short OAM

Secretary

Kath Phelan AM

Treasurer

Yogan Sathianathan OAM

Committee Members -

Dr Val Asche AM

Rosemary Burkitt OAM

Dr David Cox AM

Jim Forwood AM

Alasdair McGregor OAM

Terryl White OAM

Kathleen looks after social events, Alasdair the *Newsletter* and Terryl membership records.

Committee meets at 5.00 pm on 4th Tuesday of odd months at 16 Allen Street Fannie Bay:
next meeting 26 September. **AGM Friday 17 November.**

Postal address Order of Australia Association, NT Branch
PO Box 2171
Parap NT 0804

Newsletter email: alsadairhelenmcgregor@hotmail.com

Queen's Birthday Honours, continued from July *Newsletter* Medal (OAM) in the General Division

Geoffrey Stanley Vercoe

Adelaide SA

For service to medicine, particularly in the field of otolaryngology, and to Indigenous health in the Northern Territory.

Congratulations from members of the Northern Territory Branch.

Southern Regional Group

Mrs Joan Higgins OAM convenor, assisted by - Mr Gavin Carpenter OAM

Mrs Susan Ride OAM Mr Bern Kilgariff AM **Gavin's ph (08) 8955 0177**

Gifts to the Branch

At the Queen's Birthday Dinner we displayed Mrs Louise Greenaway's most kind donation of a new frame for our old portrait of Her Majesty and a matching frame for the recent official portrait, both of which show her as Sovereign of the Order.

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In Brief We note the death this month in Queensland of **Llorabel Reynolds OAM**, formerly of RDH. Her award for nursing service came in 1983 after retirement from the Territory, so she was not in NT Branch, but she was well known to older members. **New Webpage**

www.theorderofaustralia.asn.au

National Board is revamping the Association's webpage. Click on to get the latest gen on national, branch and regional group affairs. Find recent newsletters, the addresses and functions you should know about before you make travel plans, especially the great **National Conference in Sydney from 22 - 25 February 2007**. Register now.

Edward Quong was awarded the **OAM** on Australia Day 1980 for community service. He served many terms as NT Chairman of the Association, and was a feature of annual and half-yearly national meetings. Shortly before Queen's Birthday 2005 he and Greta were in a serious car accident. Eddie was able to attend the Administrator's reception for Queen's Birthday 2006, but his injuries flared up and he died on 24 August having spent yet another birthday in hospital. Requiem mass was celebrated by one Cousin Ted, Most Revd Ted Collins MSC, AM while another, Branch Patron the Administrator Ted Egan AO, read the first lesson. The Association was very well represented, as it should have been. Tom Pauling delivered this fine eulogy -

Eddie Quong, OAM

Eulogy by Tom Pauling, QC, Solicitor-General

As one of Eddie Quongs 'cousins' it is my pleasure to welcome you here today to celebrate Eddie's life. This is the second of three occasions today, the first was a private viewing, the second is this mass in the cathedral where Eddie and Greta married in 1954 and the third will be a full jossing* at McMillan's Road before burial in the Greek Orthodox section of the cemetery. That's right: he bought a plot in the Greek Orthodox section and he is joining many of his Greek mates who remember the goats in the Bakers oven for Greek Easter. You may not know that he was as proficient at swearing in Greek as the Greeks were at swearing in Chinese.

Eddie Quong's life began in Pine Creek 81 years ago where his parents and grandparents were finding mining, shop-keeping and market gardening not enough to sustain the family in a depressed economy. In 1932 they moved to Longreach in Queensland. With war looming, Eddie's father went away to work at an army base in North Queensland while grandfather Billy Chin Wah Too got a job in a bakery in Eagle Street in Longreach where Eddie and brother Richard learned to bake as well. Under the watchful eye of mother and grandmother, the girls, Mary, Helena, Flo, Stella, Ivy and Joyce managed the farm set up near the Thompson River which was a market garden and the source of amazing watermelons. Also in Longreach with the Quongs were other Territory Chinese families, the Moos and the Yuens. I met a Longreach man at the Administrator's Office yesterday who remembers the families fitting into the community seamlessly and this must be the beginning of Eddie the multicultural man we all came to admire.

The war ended and the call of the Territory was strong. However, grandfather Chin Wah Too died in Longreach before he could return. He is buried in the Aboriginal and other non-desirables section of the Longreach Cemetery. It would seem they didn't have a Greek Orthodox section. Grandad had a strong and positive influence on Eddie and when the family returned to Darwin in 1945 after

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VP day, a journey that took three months and included Eddie's 21st birthday, Eddie established the legendary Quong's Bakery in Smith Street West, about half-way between the police accommodation and the nurses' quarters. This was the family home as well where grandma Buck Por watched over the raising of the 13 children, hundreds of suitors, too many grandchildren to count, and of course the takings from the shop. The home was mostly self-sufficient with chickens, vegetable patch, and fruit trees. The then aboriginal community of Darwin took Eddie's father into ceremony and Eddie had a great number of aboriginal friends whom he admired. I have called the bakery legendary and it was *The Bakery* because of Eddie's personality. It became Darwin's late night social hub, where many gathered for a social ale to wash down hot bread butter and vegemite between 10pm and dawn. There were two places to be - Eddie Quong's Bakery or Tom Harris' house. That was where the social life of Darwin was. Huge numbers turned up after basketball on Sunday night where the chickens were hot and the beer was warm. Sadly, the bakery closed in 1974 before Cyclone Tracy could shut it down.

Not only bread was baked there. Sensational feasts of pigs, chickens, goats and turkeys marked every major celebration such as Weddings, Greek Easter and Christmas. I once took 99 chickens to be roasted for the opening night of a play. I didn't know Eddie that well then but with his characteristic smile, we filled up a large bakers tray, hurled about salt and pepper and we were about to shove them in when grandma Buck Por appeared. The chickens had necks and she apparently had a recipe for 99 necks, so she removed them. When the chickens were roasted, she also took a good selection of parson's noses. Eddie explained that grandma had first choice on the chook's bum where all the flavour went. Who was I to argue? We then broke up bread and dunked it in the dripping and collected pots full of the juices for making stock – delicious. It was a treat Eddie's children were to enjoy often and remember with delight. Eddie liked his food and on the many occasions we had a bit of a chat the topic of conversation was almost always food. He was a very good cook who could fashion a fantastic feed out of unpromising ingredients. But one thing stood out – Lobster – or in Eddie's parody of Chinese English, Lock Robster. Eddie was very strongly Chinese and fiercely Australian so it was in character to play Eddie the Chinaman for a laugh. He went on a trade mission to China with the NT Government. When he returned I asked him how it went, "Not too bad" he said, then with a most serious frown he said "Do you know cousin the poor blighters can't speak Chinese. They couldn't understand a word I said." Then that beaming smile.

After the Bakery, Eddie was the face of MLC Insurance and many of us were convinced by him to sign up for insurance "before another Tracy blows it all away". He loved the personal side of that work as well as more than a few lunches.

Which brings me back to the Lock Robster. We bumped into each other at Sovereign Hill in Ballarat. Tessa and I asked where he and Greta were off to and it was to a wedding on the Central coast of NSW – "And you cousin?" he asked – "Robe", I said – Well turn on the light! You may not know that Robe is a major lobster port in South Australia and the place where Chinese heading for the gold fields in Victoria first landed – Eddie well knew where we were going. A huge grin, an exaggerated sigh –

"Lobe – lobe" he said "Oh the Lock Robster" that must have been more than 20 years ago – during the difficult times in the last 14 months the glimmer of hope that we would share Lock Robster at the Dragon Court brought obvious pleasure.

Love food as he may have, Eddie loved his family unconditionally. His huge extended family included all the cousins whatever your skin colour or status in life that he drew into the family. Greta was the centre of his life over 52 years of marriage and it was a great partnership. Terry, Marie-Louise, Rodney and Donna were lavished with love and affection. There are so many actual cousins remembering names was difficult but where they fitted in was known and would bring forth the cry "I know you."

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Eddie also loved the comradeship of his friends and peers. He made a great contribution to Rotary and earlier Apex and to borrow from Rudyard Kipling he walked with Kings yet had the common touch. He wanted to do good and he did. He saw the suffering that came about from a lack of access to good medical care so he got himself onto the committees and boards that established and managed both hospitals in Darwin and served with distinction. He also was a most valued member of the NT Parole Board an office he discharged with great humanity and understanding. Later on he became less active but no less enthusiastic. A glance at the notices in the paper will reveal a staggering variety of boards committees and foundations to which he either belonged or was a founder and life member. Many of you will have had your pockets lightened by Eddie selling tickets at the Darwin Show Chocolate Wheel – Eddie and Greta were always there for charities and community help - The Spastics Association, Red Cross ,Meals on Wheels are but a small sample.

We are here to celebrate a life, not mourn a passing. There has been and will be time for that.

He would be very proud to see you all here today. He always believed that people were more important than things. He cherished his friends and big stuff never turned his head. The Order of Australia Medal was not something he sought but by goodness, he deserved it. He was doubly proud that he was the first person of Chinese origin to receive the award.

He lived a full life surrounded by family and friends. During the last 14 difficult months Greta, Terry, Marie-Louise, Rodney and Donna were there to give him the strength to carry on. Throughout his life, he touched the hearts of so many, this fun-filled Chinaman with the wicked sense of humour and that twinkle in the eye. We are all the richer for knowing him and the poorer for his passing.

There are so many stories that could be told but my instruction was to be like Eddie – short! There is a wake at the Waratah Club tonight so bring your memories and share them around.

On behalf of the family, thank you for coming to honour Eddie and, as Eddie would have said -

"See Ya, Cuz!"

**the verb to joss is not in all good dictionaries: it derives from joss-house, and ultimately from the Portuguese Deos or GOD, and in the Territory describes Chinese funerary rites.*

Functions

The **Queen's Birthday Dinner** returned over \$400 to branch funds. **Devonshire Tea** at Wendy's in July produced about \$120 for the Foundation. Thanks to Wendy and team.

We note the **Lord Mayor of Darwin's** kindness in inviting members of the Order of Australia to a **Reception** on 20 September.

What Members Are Doing

Professor Kerin O'Dea AO has left the Menzies School at Darwin to be Head of a Unit in Healthy Ageing and Nutrition at University of Melbourne. She is the author of "The Price of 'Progress'? Diabetes in Indigenous Australians" in *Conquest*, Winter 2006, the magazine of Diabetes Australia, earlier published overseas in *Diabetes Voice* Vol 50.

New Members We welcome three new members of the Association and NT Branch: the **Hon Shane Stone AC, QC; Captain Ian Watts AM;** and **Earl James AM.**

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Nomination Form 2006-07

**AGM 6.30pm Friday 17 November
Brolga Room Novotel Atrium Hotel**

Post to PO Box 2171, Parap NT 0804 by 3 November 2006

I accept nomination for the office of

(chairman, vice-chairman, secretary, treasurer, Committee member)
of the Northern Territory Branch of the Order of Australia Association. I declare that I am a financial member of the Association.

Signature of nominee

Proposed by *..... Seconded by *.....
(financial members of the Association)

*Secretary can find proposer and seconder – just you sign as nominee!

AGM Apology I.....shall be unable to attend the AGM and ask for my apology to be recorded.

RSVP to PO Box 2171 Parap NT 0804 before AGM

Dinner Acceptance

RSVP to PO Box 2171 Parap NT 0804 by 11 November

I.....(name) shall attend the Dinner at 7.00pm on Friday 17 November 2006 at Novotel Atrium Hotel I shall be accompanied by..... (name/s) at \$40 a head.

My cheque to “Order of Australia Association NT Branch” for \$ is/is not enclosed. (Please pay with booking if you can, to give treasurer a fun night too. But we appreciate some of us don’t keep cheque accounts any more).

The meal will be in the form of table service Christmas Dinner. Please **indicate** if any of your party require e.g. a vegetarian meal.

NB - We may refuse refunds on late cancellations.

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