



St Kilda Times

Patron: Sir Zelman Cowan

St Kilda Historical Society Newsletter,
Issue No 193

PO Box 177, Balaclava
October–November 2008

SECONDARY STUDENTS in DISSENT (SSiD)

Our October 12 (next Sunday) talk marks the fortieth anniversary of 'Secondary Students in Dissent' whose members distributed underground newspapers in local High Schools from 1968.

Former students from the underground are invited to attend and tell us their stories of these events.

There will be the launch of a small booklet on the history, an exhibition of some of the original underground newspapers and a multimedia presentation documenting SSiD events in 1968. (More, p3)

ADVANCE NOTICE SKHS END-YEAR FUNCTION

3pm Sunday 14 December
celebrating the centenary
of woman's enfranchisement

- ♦ experience Wilma Farrow's extraordinary portrayal of suffragist Vida Goldstein
- ♦ acknowledge the MPs who supported the 1908 Victorian Adult Suffrage Bill and 'out' the no-sayers.

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FEATURES

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Membership Renewal St Kilda Historical Society 1 JULY 2008 – 30 JUNE 2009

Do cut out and forward the completed form with cheque to the Secretary PO Box 177 Balaclava 3183 or bring to next meeting

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP \$18.00

LIFE MEMBERSHIP \$300

NAME [PLEASE PRINT ALL DETAILS].....

ADDRESS:.....

SUBURB/CITY:..... P/CODE:.....

PHONE NUMBER/S:.....

EMAIL:.....

I WOULD LIKE TO RECEIVE MY NEWSLETTER BY EMAIL: YES / NO (please circle)

SIGNATURE..... DATE.....

SKHS

President's Letter

Secretary's Notes

General Information

Website:
[http://
 home.vicnet.net.au/
 ~hsosk/home.html](http://home.vicnet.net.au/~hsosk/home.html)

Publications:
www.skhs.org.au

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COMMITTEE

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 Secretary: 9537 1967

Newsletter: *St Kilda Times*
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 Pearl Donald
 Sheila Harris
 Dorothy Lobert
 SKHS Committee

Webmaster:
info@skhs.org.au
 John Hulskamp

The recent launch of CoPP's Solar System Trail on the new boulevard along the foreshore is a wonderful addition to Port Phillip City

A new self-guided Foreshore Trail and Children's Foreshore Trail was also launched with research assistance from our Society. They can be found on www.portphillip.vic.gov.au/walks

Congratulations to our new committee member Marilyn Fahey who has joined us since the annual election. Marilyn is keen to commence a project exploring the oral histories of members of our community in residential care.

Our next general meeting on Sunday 12 October exploring forty years since the Students in Dissent movement of 1968 is close to my heart. It is exactly forty years since I was suspended from Melbourne High School for subversion. Being expelled for subversion was a great experience for a budding writer and historian.

Studying history is one of the few predictors of our future because there are patterns often destructive in society which are repeated again and again. For example how often has Australia been at war, not because it was threatened but because of it sought favours from powerful allies? Vietnam was part of that pattern and it spurred the students in dissent movement.

See you on Sunday!
Meyer Eidelson

[Ed: also see p3 for media release]

HISTORY IS HERE

This year's membership was due on 1 July and some of you have forgotten to contact us.

We would appreciate your renewal as soon as possible as it assists with ongoing voluntary work to preserve items in the SKHS collection.

You will become part of recorded history when you gift yourself SKHS membership. Just cut out the application form on page 1 (over), print out your details and send to us with your payment. We'll do the rest.

Rewards

Among the awesome benefits you receive are:- free entry to all SKHS talks and functions, free assistance from SKHS' heritage officer, access to the collection, notification of free guided CoPP walks and local events, reciprocal rights to the Royal Historical Society of Victoria and other local history groups, plus *St Kilda Times* every two months. (*Frances Bader*)

New Member

SKHS welcomes new member, Roger Beilby and hope to meet him at our monthly Sunday meetings.

New Volunteer

We have a new volunteer, professional conservator, Deeksha Bhardwaj.

Deeksha is advising us on the optimum display of materials and objects in SKHS' collection.

She has experience with paintings, stone sculptures, metal coins, and has worked in various museums and art galleries in Delhi and Melbourne.

We welcome Deeksha to SKHS

Donations

The Society would like to thank three people who recently made donations to SKHS.

- ♦ Shirley Joy, Sandringham, kindly sent us her detailed research into the Thackeray and Parsons families.
- ♦ Ron Jeffs, surveyor for the city from 1975 until 1997, kindly gave us old by-laws books and various paperwork associated with his job.
- ♦ Margaret Whiting from Mulgrave, kindly sent us a raw silk kimono which belonged to her aunt, Margaret Edwards who lived in Gourlay Street until her death in 1943. Margaret was a librarian at St Kilda Library from before 1973 until her retirement in 1992. She also provided SKHS with details of her family history which we certainly value.

Many thanks to you all for your much appreciated donations to SKHS' collection.

If other members have anything connected with St Kilda that you could donate to SKHS Collection, it will be gratefully received and acknowledged.

Dorothy Lobert

Committee Meetings:
6.00pm-8.00pm 1st
Tues ea mth. SKHS
Office, St Kilda Library.

Spring of '68

SKHS Talk 3pm Sunday Oct 12 Secondary Students in Dissent

1968 was one of the more tumultuous years of the twentieth century. It was the year of the assassination of both Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy and the crushing of the Prague Spring. It was the year of the 'Paris Uprising' involving ten million workers and students.

The Tet offensive changed the tide of war against the American allies in Vietnam. The Mai Lai massacre destroyed American credibility. There was a youth revolution fed by a growing counterculture in the western world. In Australia, the antiwar movement was on the rise. Concerned parents, trade unionists and university students were engaging in sit-ins, strikes and demonstrations.

Male high school students faced a conscription* ballot the year after they finished school, potentially sending them to fight in the jungles of South East Asia. Many secondary school students were keen to be involved in influencing these events.

In 1968 Dr Jim Cairns (later deputy Prime Minister) convened a youth action forum to capture this interest. Some of the young people split off to form independent groups such as Students in Dissent (SID) or the later Secondary School Students for Democracy (SSSDs).

These students were loosely allied and many edited underground newspapers in their respective schools, sometimes using the press owned by the Monash Labor Club at a house in Shirley Grove, St Kilda. Some used the pseudonym of Fabian Willmore the non-existent spokesperson for SID. This was part of the humor, having a spokesman who was everywhere yet nowhere. There was also a 'Felicity Wilmore'.

It all came to a head in September 1968 when underground student editor, Michael (today Meyer) Eidelson, was suspended from Melbourne High School for printing *Sentinel Underground* (the school paper was *Sentinel*).

On 4 October the *Herald Sun* headlined the event on its front page. Over the next month a debate erupted in the media in which participated secondary students, teachers, principals, politicians, cartoonists and journalists.

A teacher resigned in protest from Melbourne High School. An MP was suspended from the house during debate on the 'Eidelson Case'. Teachers signed petitions. High School students demonstrated in the city square. The Liberal Party attacked Cairns. The Labor party attacked the Minister for Education.

* Ed's Note: Late in 1964, the Menzies Government introduced balloted compulsory military service for 20-year-old males to provide additional personnel for the escalating commitment by a coalition of Liberal, Country and Democratic Labor Parties to the Vietnam War. 'National Service' was for two years (later cut to 18 months).

When Federal Labor came to office in December 1972, the Regular Army numbered 41,290 of which 11,947 were 'Nashos'. Honouring their election pledge, Labor abolished conscription followed up by the *National Service Termination Act 1973* (www.aph.gov.au/library). Statistics show that between 1962 and 1972, the Vietnam War took 478 young Australian lives and wounded 3028.

Today in 2008, Meyer Eidelson is an historian, writer, tour guide and president of the St Kilda Historical Society.

He says: 'It was a very traumatic to be expelled from school as a seventeen year old. However I learnt an enormous amount from the experience, which has served me well in public life.

'We defied the status quo and established in the public mind for the first time that young people would participate in the politics of protest. The secondary school system like the wider society was a very conservative place and I am proud we shook it up a little.'

Forty years after he was suspended, Meyer returned to Melbourne High School on 10 September 2008 to address hundreds of students at school assembly.

'It was astonishing to say the least to sit in the same principal's office where exactly forty years ago almost to the day, I had to be ordered to collect my books and get out immediately. Now I was being served cups of tea.

'Once again *Sentinel Underground* was being printed but now it was by the vice principal so that copies could be framed to hang on the walls of the school.

'Once again I was singled out in the assembly hall but this time it was to the applause of students and teachers who seemed delighted to see the old articles and cartoons highlighting another era at Melbourne High presented on a giant screen.' (SKHS Media Release, Sept 2008)



ST KILDA HISTORICAL SOCIETY FREE PUBLIC EVENTS 2008

SKHS is grateful to
Mr Danby's office
for reproducing the
St Kilda Times

website: <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~hsosk/home.html>

Members meet 2.30pm. Speakers at 3pm Community Room St Kilda Library	Unless otherwise stated, meetings are held the second Sunday of each month at the St Kilda Community Room, St Kilda Library, 150 Carlisle Street St Kilda, 3183. Agenda is subject to change. SKHS Publications available for purchase. Afternoon tea provided. Visitors and Public are very welcome. Free Entry.
12 OCT 2008 Members meet 2.30pm Speaker at 3pm Community Room	STUDENTS IN DISSENT In 1968 a secondary school student was expelled from Melbourne High School for being a member of a movement printing underground protest newspapers. Forty years later, former underground students gather at SKHS meeting to recall the times.
9 NOV 2008 Members meet 2 30pm Speaker at 3pm Community Room	SURVIVING THE YOM KIPPUR WAR Elwood resident Aaron Eidelson migrated to an Israeli kibbutz as an idealistic teenager to find himself in the trenches on the Suez Canal during a military assault on Israel by Egyptian and Syrian forces in 1973. On the 35 th anniversary, Aaron describes the traumatic events of the war.
14 DEC 2008 Volunteers are needed to help set up from 2.pm Function:3pm Community Room	SKHS EnD-YeaR FuNction We celebrate the centenary of women achieving their democratic right to vote in 1908 despite strong opposition and ridicule by some Victorian MLAs and MLCs. Bring your Friends. Free Entry. Light Refreshments provided. RSVP needed for catering purposes, o/wise bring a plate, etc. Do phone Dorothy on 9537 1967 or Email info@skhs.org.au



GUIDED NEIGHBOURHOOD WALKS

Free CoPP walks. Limited numbers. Bookings essential.

Meeting place: You will be told where to meet when you book

Bookings: E: walking@portphillip.vic.gov.au or Ph: Walk Line 9209 6522

Baths, Butts and Battery: The History of Beaconsfield Parade

Neighbourhood: Middle Park/Albert Park: Sunday 12 October 2008, 10.00 – 12noon. Leader: Meyer Eidelson
This walk takes us along Beaconsfield Parade once known as the Military Road. We explore its early military origins as well as the early swimming culture of the area. We also visit the former Gasworks industrial site, now a park. BOOKINGS: 9209 6522 OR walking@portphillip.vic.gov.au

Street Poetry in the Poetry Streets

Neighbourhood: Elwood. Sunday 9 November 2008, 10.00 – 12noon. Leader: Meyer Eidelson
Join our tour of the amazing 'Poets Corner' of Elwood. Group members can take turns to read the poetry of the thirty or so authors and poets whose names are borne aloft on street signs such as Dickens, Tennyson, Byron, Browning, Barrett and Gordon. BOOKINGS: 9209 6522 OR walking@portphillip.vic.gov.au

Made in Port

Neighbourhood: Port Melbourne. Sunday 7 December 2008, 10.00 – 12noon. Leader: Janet Bolitho
From marine engines to whiskey, it was made in Port. We visit former industrial sites where an amazing variety of goods were once manufactured but have now succumbed to demolition or transformation into glamorous apartment blocks. BOOKINGS: 9209 6522 OR walking@portphillip.vic.gov.au