



ON AIR

Newsletter of Friends of the ABC (ACT & Region) Inc

INSIDE:

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Presidents Report cont.. | -2- |
| Annual General Meeting | -2- |
| Your Committee 2001/02 | -2- |
| Tongue in Cheek-or Italics Anyway | -3- |
| Membership Drive | -3- |
| Media Watch is Back YIPPEE!! | -3- |
| Friends Everywhere | -4- |
| Newsletter Distribution Changes | -4- |

CHRIS MASTERS AT AGM

Guest speaker at the Annual General Meeting of the Friends of the ABC (ACT and Region) will be Chris Masters of Four Corners fame (see President's paras). The meeting falls on Thursday 30 May at 7.30 p.m. in the hall of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, State Circle, Forrest.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

Thanks to all those who have renewed their membership for 2002 - and a REMINDER to those who have not done so yet that membership renewals were due on 31 March 2002. The ACT committee has proposed that fees be increased to \$25 single and \$15 concession (to be formally moved at the next Annual General Meeting.)

The AGM must approve any increase in membership fees, but as renewal will fall due before the AGM, members willing to do so are requested to pay the proposed amount when renewing their membership for 2002. The AGM must approve any increase in membership fees, so anyone not wishing to pay the increased fee before it is formally approved is perfectly entitled not to.

PRESIDENTS REPORT

CHRIS MASTERS TO BE GUEST SPEAKER AT ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

It's all happening at Friends of the ABC (ACT and Region). To begin with, the Chairman of the ABC Board, Mr Donald McDonald, has indicated his willingness to meet with a small delegation from the ACT Friends. A date has not yet been set for this, but we welcome this response from Mr McDonald and look forward to a constructive dialogue with him. We are also happy to announce that Chris Masters, long-standing reporter on 'Four Corners', will be Guest Speaker at our Annual General Meeting to be held on Thursday 30th May at 7.30pm, at St Andrews Presbyterian Church Hall, State Circle, Forrest.

Chris Masters' first programme after he joined in 1983 was the landmark report, "The Big League". Chris won a Gold Walkley award in 1985 for an international exclusive investigation of French secret service sinking of the Greenpeace flagship, the Rainbow Warrior.

He is perhaps better known for his 1987 investigation, "The Moonlight State" which triggered the Fitzgerald Inquiry into Queensland Police corruption. A book detailing the making of many of these programmes, "Inside Story", was published in 1991. A new book, "Not For Publication", has just been released by ABC Books.

Through the 1990s Chris won more awards including a Logie for his account of the 1994 Rwanda genocide and a Walkley for a report on the Bosnia conflict. In 1999 in the Queen's Birthday Honours List, Chris was awarded a Public Service Medal. We look forward to meeting him at our Annual General Meeting and hearing about the highs and lows of investigative reporting. There will also be a cup of tea afterwards if members care to hang around and say hello. (Especially new Friends. The huge increase in membership in the past 18 months - isn't it terrific? I can't help but gloat over it - means we don't know all members personally as we once did).

In addition, the Friends of the ABC Annual National Conference is being held in Canberra on the first weekend of May (Saturday 4th and Sunday 5th) at Canberra Girls Grammar School, Deakin (Senior Campus, entrance via Gabriel Drive off Gawler Crescent). Strategies for lobbying politicians in the post-election political landscape, including a continuing urge for the restoration of

cont..... page 2

AUTUMN 2002

critical base funding in the ABC's new triennial funding arrangement commencing in 2003/2004, will be thrashed out by representatives from different states/territories over the two days.

The ACT branch will be represented at the conference by a delegation from our committee. However, observers are welcome so please come along if you want to meet your interstate Friends of the ABC colleagues (or us, for that matter) and see your membership fees in action.

We were also pleased to recently play host to Darce Cassidy, National Spokesperson, and Penelope Tolz, NSW Branch President who visited Canberra

to speak (with representatives from the ACT and Region branch - Brian Hill, Rick Godfrey and myself) to politicians and others about the ABC's situation and to remind them that we intend to keep nagging at them, twenty four hours a day, seven days a week until WE'RE blue in the face and THEY'RE mentally exhausted, sick of the sight of us and ready to give us everything we want.... (See report in Background Briefing). Your membership fees in action, again.

Until next time, keep that dial tuned to '1' on the set. (You're allowed to watch SBS every now and then but only when it is broadcasting something sensible and educational like a historical documentary.) ■

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

30 May, 7.30 p.m. St. Andrews Presbyterian Church, State Circle, Forrest.

Notice of motion: That the annual membership fee be increased to \$25 single and \$15 concession.

Call for committee members.

Your committee meets monthly, and we need people with ideas to generate strategies and with energy to pound the pavements and to get friends to join them!

Particular jobs needing to be done - not necessarily by committee members - include:

- Newsletter distribution co-ordinator
 - Merchandising co-ordinator
 - Newswatch service
- as well as these which can be done only by those elected to the committee:
- President
 - Treasurer
 - Membership secretary (these two have in the past been combined)

- Newsletter editor
- Secretary
- Artwork and publicity
- Webmaster/Webmistress
- Public Officer (who may also be one of the above)

We also need some 'media watchers' like our 'ABC International Watch' currently undertaken by Helen Wiles. It's important that we are informed about what's going on in the ABC, so people with a specialist interest, such as science, children's programming etc., would be a wonderful addition to our team.

We hope in future to have regular reports from our Media Watchers, and possibly articles written for 'Background Briefing' and for wider publication.

Please think seriously about nominating at this year's AGM. ■



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Tongue in cheek - or in *italics* anyway!

I recently spied a couple of media excerpts - one from the Sunday Telegraph (7/4/2002, Page 13) which states:

"The ABC is the quiet rating achiever so far for 2002, increasing its viewers by more than 10 percent.".....*(That should keep happy those who go on about ratings all the time)*

"The public broadcaster's nightly news service is neck-and-neck with the commercial networks, and its weekend prime-time programs, including "The Bill, are hugely competitive.".....*(So much for the plaything of the intellectual elite)*

"The 7pm news is attracting an average of 1.01 million viewers in capital cities, an increase of 11.9 per cent on last year. There are another 400,000 viewers in regional areas.".....*(Oh, and I thought only an insignificant minority of Australians use the ABC? - Ed.)*

And this one from the ABC website (news) on 8th April - "A report by the auditor-general has found the ABC is meeting its charter obligations"..... *(Yeah. Thanks primarily to the efforts of its heroic staff)*

"The audit report found there was significant scope for the ABC to improve strategic planning and other measures*(and adequate funding wouldn't go astray, either)* " so it can more clearly demonstrate its performance. However, the acting auditor-general, Ian McPhee, says there is no evidence to show the ABC is not meeting its legislative requirements." ■

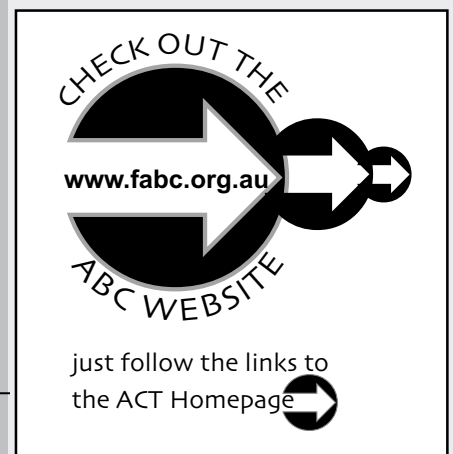
Marg O'Connor

A big thank you to all volunteers who have been pounding the Canberra (and beyond) pavements, conducting letterbox drops of our little blue and white FABC leaflets as part of our recruitment drive.



Credit for these wonderful leaflets goes to: Rick Godfrey for the design, the ever-eloquent Monica Pflaum for the content, and Barbara Godfrey for organising all the volunteers and being the most hard-working committee member ever. (It sounds a bit like an academy award nomination doesn't it).

Thanks Heaps Folks



M W Media Watch is back YIPPEE!!

Let there be singing and dancing and rejoicing. Monday night is again restored to its full glory and all's right with the universe. MEDIA WATCH IS BACK!!!

Well maybe that's overreacting a bit.

But anyway we are VERY pleased to note Media Watch's return, with the added bonus of the incisive and clever David Marr at the helm. The first episode of 'Media Watch' for 2002 was a corker, with Mr Marr firing a broadside at the proposed amendments to the cross-media ownership laws. Mr Marr's views on the proposed amendments are well documented (I'll give you just one hint.

He doesn't believe they will lead to a more diverse Australian media, to say the

very least. If you listened especially attentively, you could probably gather that from the first episode).

I know there are purists around who STILL miss the quintessential 'nasty boy' Stuart Littlemore sneering at the 'Illawarra Mercury' for having an apostrophe in the wrong place on Page 3, just as there are people who still lament the fact that Bob Dylan didn't stay acoustic. Get over it. In this age dominated by rehearsed and orchestrated talk - back radio and dumbed-down current affairs, three cheers for people like David Marr and shows like 'Media Watch' ■

FRIENDS EVERYWHERE

Hunter District Friends of the ABC sent us their February Newsletter, which reached us after we last went to print, and the Friends of the ABC SA also sent us news of their activities. The South Australians are planning four meetings for their members in 2002. The speaker at their April meeting was Charles Southwood of Classic FM, and as well as their meetings, held at the ABC

Building in Collinswood, they're planning a Midwinter Lunch and a Christmas Dinner at the Waterfall Gully Restaurant.

In the Hunter region the Friends are concerned to keep up the activity they generated before the November election. They're asking members to encourage culturally enriching groups - in music, cinema, rural organisations, education and science bodies etc. etc. - to get behind

the ABC and give support to the Friends of the ABC.

In putting out suggestions for future activities they included vineyard tours, wine tastings etc.

What about a spot of Cool Climate Wine Tasting in the Canberra Region, and a reciprocal one in the Hunter? ■

As of our next newsletter, the ACT branch of FABC will continue to send the paper version to all members without email addresses and to those WITH email addresses who request it. However, due to financial considerations, other members who have provided email addresses will not receive a paper copy but will be notified by email when the newsletter is available on the website.



Please notify Janny Corry our membership secretary on barada@ozemail.com if this arrangement is not suitable and you would prefer to continue to receive a hard copy.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATIONS/RENEWALS PLEASE!!!

The address to return renewals and cheques is: Membership Secretary, PO BOX 2625, Canberra ACT 2601

Membership subscriptions for the new financial year (commencing 1 April) are due now.

Thanks to those Friends who have already renewed). Please complete the membership application below and send it with your subscription.

I wish to become a member

I wish to renew my membership

Enclosed is:

\$25

\$15 (concession)

Name:

Address:Postcode.....

Telephone: w.....h.....email.....

Please note that members with email normally receive their quarterly newsletter in electronic form. However if you have email but would prefer a paper copy of the newsletter, please indicate here

I can afford to give some time. I would like to (please tick):Assist with collation & mailing of newsletter Make phone callsFundraisingWork on a stallAttend a rally, hold a bannerDo letterbox dropsOther

If undeliverable, please return to
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