

10th JannieQ Report:

...from
Ann Byrne



I must open this report with an answer given by Mike Burke When someone asked ‘What is a JannieQ?’ ‘The JannieQ is a longstanding tradition beloved of a largish section of the Canberra PC community. Its origins are lost in the mists of time (which is a polite term for a collective ‘alcoholic fog’). It is a BBQ, held in January, at Annie’s place, hence JannieQ. People travel from as far afield as Perth and Brisbane to attend these momentous events, and most people who have ever attended one would postpone their weddings, or even their loved ones’ funerals, lest they miss out on all the fun (not to mention the T-shirt).

Friendships are made and broken, ditto romances, BMWs motorbikes are attacked by Camrys (with or without rampant bull-bars), bus-drivers detour for miles to receive (or to avoid) the traditional cheery waves from the assembled horde. Beverages are consumed, and songs are sung. Roy Orbison is occasionally to be heard, as is ‘Stairway to Heaven’. Food is eaten and chairs are damaged beyond repair.

Coke-can cannons, various rubber appendages, and at least one small boy with a penchant for ginormous water cannons, are hazards likely to be encountered. Beware the small boy - he is the reigning champion in most events, and wears the scalps of his victims with pride. On one famous occasion, he singlehandedly destroyed the Ego as we knew

it, routing the Jamie who has never returned. The father of this fabulous kid is honored not only for producing a scion of such sterling quality, but also for his unique song and dance routines and his winning way with chocolate. Impossible to explain. You have to be there.

And at the 10th JannieQ you definitely had to be there! Visitors started arriving from Melbourne and Perth (via Brisbane) on the Friday evening. It was decided that a quiet evening and dinner at the Southern Cross Club was in order.

Saturday morning dawned and I looked at the sky in horror, there they were, the low black clouds! I shuddered and headed for the shops anyway, cheeses, whipped cream and fruit were the main staples with bacon and eggs (for the morning after breakfast) coming in a close second.

Back to house where the answering machine was filling up with messages, such as “what time”, “where”, “how much”, to be answered answering.

The rain started pouring down, the designated pack horse (David Sparrow) from Perth arrived at 2pm, we headed off to a good friends to collect mattresses, doonas, pillows and garden furniture. I managed to fall head over heels on the wet concrete and said an intimate hello to the path, slightly bloody and very bruised I heroically carried on carting furniture. My pack horse and I got fairly wet during this exercise but managed to keep the furniture fairly dry.

Back to house to toss mattresses strategically around the house and it was time to get ready for the prefest fest at Café Pronto. This restaurant understands us well and over the years has managed to keep us from doing any real damage. Tho I must say I don’t approve of their latest staff changes of replacing good looking young men with good looking young women. (But that’s a personal preference only). Hong (one of our regular festees has already beaten me to reporting on some of the remaining fest so I will pass over to Hongs version for the Saturday evening and Sunday till around 4pm when his lift arrived to take him back to Sydney.

Saturday saw us degenerates at the Cafe Pronto for the customary fest-before-the-fest. Present were Boop, Sandy, Sparrow, Sharon

Sparks/Riesinger (the best wines are made from pure Rhine Riesinger grapes, you know), Sharon’s mother and brother Randolph.

Who else? Den, Dac and Val. Bob, Bob and Kim. Some people with inconveniently polysyllabic names: Janet, Graham, and Andrew Freeman esquire. There was also this scrawny Chinese guy but I don’t know who he/she/it was. If I’ve forgotten anyone, well, that’s obviously because you’re easily forgettable.

Stuck to the wall were photos from fests gone by. There were graphic pictorials of regulars come and gone, indulging in acts of varying bad taste and indecency — which kinda matched what went on at the table, really. Sparrow revealed in passing how he liked perving at crossdressers (for the geeks out there, crossdressing is something like crossposting but is marginally more socially acceptable).

The crowd in general feasted to their hearts content, and then a few stalwarts decided to party on after. With Boop leading the fray they headed to “Heaven” night club



where upon entering Boop was seized by the bouncer and hugged till her ribs were in danger of being cracked. It turned out that this young man was her nephew who proceeded to stamp elephants on all and sundry’s wrists. As this saved us a \$7 entrance fee no-one complained. We drank, danced and for a while watched. As the place filled up rapidly (obviously word has got out that we were there) we thought a strategic exit to the taxi rank was in order.

The next day saw the fest proper at the House of Boop in Yarralumla – a notorious place of ill-repute. And the House is even worse. This year it was especially so, since the Boopster had plastered ten years’ worth of photos all over the walls. What a

collection! What a rogues' gallery! What a mountain of Blu-Tack! Some observations:

- Dac, keep the beard.
- Carebear is cuter than Shane Day.
- Quiggin in a dress isn't.
- I have no idea what the Chinese person sitting next to Darren was laughing about. Probably a joke about sycophants.

The 10th anniversary t-shirts were unveiled and if you see anyone around town wearing a t-shirt with LTUAE in vivid purple print you will know where they got it.

Food consisted of a spit roast catered by a couple of guys, one of them a female of the opposite sex, driving a van. Very nice. The spit roast, that is; not the van, and not the guys, not even the female of the opposite sex. They wanted payment in cash as opposed to sexual services, which contrary to some persons' beliefs, is not (yet) legal tender in the ACT.

A whole bunch of people turned up who weren't at the Cafe Pronto the previous night, possibly because they got lost on the way: Mr Rimmer, looking far more substantial than your average hardlight hologram: Allan Mikkelsen – who treated Andrew very kindly; Michael Lightfoot – with hat and daughter Laura in tow; Michael whatsisname, sysop of the PCUG BBS (Phillips); Rex and his SO; Graham Jenkins and his SO (Paula); Neens, with requisite jackboots; Dooles, without requisite pink salmon top; Helen; Dags; Caroline, Dags' SO, wearing a fetching collar; Brutus, Dags' Navara 4WD; Quiggles – he of the flamboyant dresses; Paddy, who in LTUAE myth and legend, will always be age 8; Karen, Sparrow's SO, and son Jarrod; Some guy with an American accent who runs an ISP; Xuthus, a friend of Dac's; Birgitta and SO Paul; Friends of Boop's who arrive each year to give her moral support or some such thing.

If I've left you out, that's because you're not important enough to be listed. Don't take it personally though.

Mr Rimmer sounded forth on all subjects under the sun, as well as some others. They were very boring, so I listened in for only two hours. He brought up (again) the topic of Russell's paradox, which if anyone doesn't know, goes like this. Russell's paradox is really an irreconcilable problem at the heart of mathematical logic, a deep result which Bertrand Russell discovered nearly one hundred years ago and Mr Rimmer has been talking about ever since.

Unfortunately I was forced to return to the pits from whence I came (Sydney) early, hence I missed the drunken debaucheries which

undoubtedly continued far into the night. Here are the unanswered questions which remain:

- How much JD did Neens consume, and is it true that after the 5th shot it starts to taste like Ribena? Or am I thinking of Mr Rimmer's red?
- Did Dac sing "American Pie" again, and does his falsetto still sound fit to beat the Bee Gees?
- Did anyone break out the Wallace & Gromit tapes, and if so, were any uncanny matches to "Weird Al" Yankovic songs discovered?
- Did Sparrow and Quiggin get "up close and personal" during the night?
- How much *was* that doggy in the window?
- Has anyone ever wanted fries with that?
- Will the bloody sycophant me never die?

As you can see from the above Hong has a very warped view of people and events, an essential part of being a player at a JannieQ.

With the hordes fed and the natives settling down to some serious comments on Life The Universe and Everything the alcohol trips became more frequent, Dags (he with the Navara) who never drinks was the designated chauffeur for these forays to the local shops. The bus drivers were greeted with louder and louder cheers as they went by. The neighbors and passers by crossed the road to avoid physical contact. Did I mention before that this event takes place on the front nature strip?

Round 7pm a few of the more sober ones wandered inside for Den's latest collection of videos from the UK we saw an edition of Red Dwarf which was screened in Canberra on the 2nd February and it was only as the credits came up that I realised why I'd had a feeling of 'de ja vu' all the way through it.

Den is famous for introducing "Wallace and Gromit" to LTUAE festees twelve months before they became a cult figure over here. He invariably turns up at these events with new tapes from the UK some of which defy any sort of explanation.

The cheese and biscuits were brought out, some to be dispensed outside to those deep in conversation, the rest to dispensed to the TV watchers. A call for "Who wants Irish Coffee" was greeted with every hand going up in the place except one soul who wanted an "Irish Milo" (There's one at every party) The Irish coffee is yet another JANNIEQ ritual what most

attendees don't realise is that the amount of "Irish" depends on Boops' assessment of how much more alcohol they can consume. The usual judgement is that she is the only one there who deserves a full measure!

There were queues for the toilet as an unnamed guest had locked themselves in to meditate LTUAE, people were falling asleep, falling over and generally feeling the effects of



a very loong 24hours. Taxi's were called, guests were checked out by Boop before being handed keys to cars and the crowd generally faded away into the early hours of the morning. Those left were allocated mattresses and on finally settling everyone down Boop found that someone had beaten her to her bed. Another mattress was located for her to collapse on and all was quiet on the fest front.

Breakfast the next morning consisted of Dens scrambled eggs, Boops grilled bacon, lots of toast and Andrew's orange juice. (Thanks Andrew)

As the last guest wandered on their way around noon, Boop hosed out the house, collected numerous cans and bottles and generally restored the house to some sort of order. Wondering as she had for the last ten years if she is up to doing this again next year.

...LTUAE...