

Rhubarb Rhubarb Rhubarb

Joanna Hall Hailed as Hero

Issue 7

February 2006

The first rehearsal for 2006 started with extreme drama when GALS was invaded by a giant, mutant cockroach.

As they were serenely singing, this huge beast suddenly burst into the hall and began trying to attack members.

Panic erupted, as members screamed and climbed on their chairs. Others frantically scrambled to hide in the kitchen or toilets, whilst others still tried desperately to protect themselves with music files.

Unfortunately, the mutant cockroach also had wings and there was no safe spot for the helpless GALS members.

But fortunately, GALS had one among them who was fearless in her determination to save the singers from their plight.

Joanna Hall, a country girl at heart, and raised in the wilderness of Australia's far North where she was wrestling crocs and skinning snakes by the age of 5.

The valiant Joanna gave a terrifying war-cry and took a flying leap



The giant mutant cockroach is shown here in real proportion to Joanna, who is pictured below in a cockroach –wrestling pose.



(with no concern for her own safety) upon the hideous brute.

There ensued a mighty struggle with Joanna fighting for her life as the mutant cockroach sought to bite off her head or poison her with its venomous leg spikes. GALS watched, hardly daring to breathe as Joanna and the cockroach wrestled furiously.

Finally, Joanna wore the cockroach down, and then gripping it tightly with its fore-legs twisted behind its back, she marched it outside where she forced it to return to the sewers and threatened it with instant death should it ever return.

Joanna returned as a conquering hero, having saved GALS from a fate worse than death.

Once the victory had been celebrated, it was suggested that the creature had possibly been attracted by the high-pitched squealing of the sopranos. Although there is no solid evidence to support this theory, a unanimous vote was taken to require that the sopranos sing in tune, just in case.

Thank god for Joanna—what would we do without her?

GALS Bags

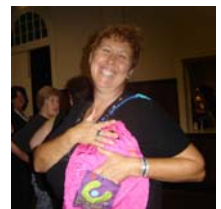
GALS Bags? No, we're not just talking about Deb H, but about our latest fundraiser. These handy bags are made of parachute silk and so are extremely strong and hardy. They have handles and a cute little pocket (and one can never have too many pockets). They're light, they come in a range of colours and they fold up to being small

enough to fit on your key ring so you never have to worry about being without a recyclable bag when you go shopping. Better still, these miraculous, astounding bags can be yours (or your friend's) for just \$9.95.

These bags also make wonderful presents for birthdays, Easter, Christmas, Valentines Day, anniversaries, St Patrick's Day,

Chinese New Year, Anzac Day, Spring Equinox, Hari Raya Puasa Day, Halloween and more - so many reasons to buy at least a wheelbarrow full of them!!

Below: No, the gorgeous Deb H is not displaying her underwear, but modeling the unfolding of the incredible, phenomenal parachute shopping bags.



Meet Meredith

By Joanna Hall

An experienced community services worker and single mother of two, Meredith has been looking forward to joining the choir for some time, having been a choir singer in Canberra years ago.

Since joining GALS she has been involved in preparing intensively for the launch of a new organisation which provides support and advocacy for children in care and their natural parents.

Queensland has this service, federally funded, and Meredith has been collaborating with parents and professionals for the past two years to establish the group here in WA.

Its overall aim is to ensure that children are not removed from the care of their parents simply because of a lack of financial and other resources in families but to change DCD policy so that people are supported realistically to maintain their families rather than having their children taken from them.

The organisation, called the Family Inclusion Network, was launched at UWA last Thursday, with Meredith as keynote speaker.



GALS would like to welcome Meredith.

Who Said This

Which two choir members were overheard having the following conversation referring to verse 4 in Hallelujah, 'remember when I moved in you'

“Oooh, I can’t sing that line.”

“I’ve heard that strap-ons work well.”

“Well, maybe we should re-write it then to say ‘remember when my strap-on was in you.’ ”

How I Outed Myself in the School Canteen

By Joanna Hall

It happened last Friday, I'm not sure how. There I was, doing a mountain of washing up, aching legs, dripping with sweat, making rolls and sandwiches while every class in the school, one after another, did screaming sports lessons outside the window and the canteen boss (a scary lady let me tell you) watched me to see if I would do something wrong.

Anyway, apparently I was singing the tenor parts the March 12 songs under my breath, because as soon as she left, everyone started talking, and before long I'd outed the choir and more or less as a result, outed myself. I think one of the other women is gay and still in the closet. After briefly mentioning her husband the truck driver, she told us stories about all the lesbians she had ever known: the two Dutch women she met on holidays, her gay friends over the road who've just had triplets, and so on and so on. Later she asked me a few more personal questions, once we'd given all the kids their lunches and ice-creams and whatnot.

It was quite an education really, my first time in a school canteen. So was seeing some of the disgusting food that they serve. The chicken was made of some type of jelly, I think, the ham was mostly white and the plates and plates of little cakes had green, green icing. I think maybe I'll just pop over twice a term and catch all the school cockroaches instead. I'm good at that.



How to Conduct an Unbiased Survey

Last week during announcement time, a very important discussion took place. GALS was faced with a vital and life-altering decision to make—where should they stay at Denmark?

After months of arduous meetings and intrepid research by the hard-working Events Committee, the numerous choices were narrowed down to three. As described by the illustrious Joanna, these choices were:

- “1. We can stay in the caravan park where we’ll be really, really squished and uncomfortable and cold and where it’s noisy and horrible.
2. We can go to the Ocean Beach Chalets again (because it seems the new owners haven’t been told to avoid us) and they’re ok, but they’re pretty basic.
3. Or we can go to this new place, Karri Mia where we’ll have heaps of room, there’s a spa in each cottage, it’s comfortable, there’s hot water, it’s close to town, the owners are happy for us to be there, it’s private and has all the mod. cons included and best of all, I talked the owner into giving us a 15% discount so we can stay in this luxury for the same cost as Ocean Beach.

Now, who votes for the nasty, cramped and squishy caravan park? Who votes for Ocean Beach which is well, ok I suppose. And who votes for the comfort and luxury of Karri Mia?”

You’ll never guess which one we voted for. We thank Joanna for her enlightening lesson on the process of unbiased voting.



Liz B, Carole & Lesley say no to the caravan park.

Memorable Moments

The Rotating Men Roster

GALS has been graced with the presence of a number of men this year - one every week during our first month back, in fact.

We were thrilled to have males amongst us again, and we are now working on solving the scheduling problem with our roster of men, so that we have more than one attend at a time.

If anyone has any creative solutions for our scheduling problems, please contact us.

Liz & Jackie Strike Again

The Lovely Liz B and the Jubilant Jackie have been at it again. That's right, they've partnered up a second time to produce some fabulous sounds for the benefit of GALS members.

After spending over 76 hours slogging away at the piano and computer, the dynamic duo have yet again compiled a cd of our songs which will help us practice them to perfection.

GALS would like to officially sing the praises of Liz and Jackie for their selfless sacrifice and dedicated service and assure them that their hard work is greatly appreciated.



Latest News from Campaign 'Get More Guys'

As GALS returns in 2006, our 'Get More Guys' campaign continues. Amongst our latest strategies includes a suggest from Deb H that she make an appeal on the radio saying,

"I'll bet you never thought you would hear a lesbian asking for men, but that's exactly what I'm doing. I'm part of a group of lovely lesbians who actually want men to join them."

The GALS PR Committee has doubts about the effectiveness of such a strategy, but congratulates Deb on her bold and innovative idea and suggests that she have another beer and keep trying.



Wang Dangs Revealed

At a recent special alto rehearsal, members not only practiced singing, but conducted an inquiry into the deeper meaning of the lyrics.

"What the heck is a 'wang dang' anyway," asked one puzzled alto, to which one of her learned colleagues replied, "oh they're wonderful things. In fact, I've got a couple in my top drawer. Every woman should have at least one in her bedroom."

Confused Sopranos

At our most recent choir rehearsal, the confusion broke out amongst the sopranos as they struggled to ascertain who were the tops and who were the bottoms among them. Much to the relief of the other sections, the sopranos managed to sort themselves out with the assistance of copious cups of tea during the break and there is now no doubt as to who prefers what.



Mystery Woman at GALS

Lately, GALS have been singing about a mysterious woman. Every week, whispers and rumours have pervaded the sacred space of the North Perth Lesser Hall.

"Who is Miss Chatelaine?"

Yes, speculation has run riot as choir members have wondered about the elusive Miss Chatelaine. Was she one of kd's lovers? An imaginary friend? An alter ego? And regardless of who she is, why does kd want to become her anyway?

After extensive research and interviews with hundreds of people, the editor of the Rhubarb is sorry to announce that she has not uncovered the secret and it seems that Miss Chatelaine is destined to remain a mystery for a while longer.

Nikki Causes Chaos

In an unprecedented and highly unusual occurrence, our beloved, but generally shy Nikki Jones was enhancing our rehearsal with exaggerated arm movements and expressions last week, when Frances suggested that her antics might not be the best way to perform 'Can't Help Lovin' that Gal.'

The choir was thrown into momentary turmoil as debate raged as to whether we should indeed 'ham it up' or not. Eventually, a compromise was formed, with the irrepressible Nikki agreeing to coordinate a few simple movements for the song which everyone could take part in. We then returned to our previous peaceful singing of fish and birds.

Later, in an exclusive interview, Nikki revealed to the Rhubarb that she had no idea she could incite such strong sentiments amongst people, but that having discovered her hidden power, she rather liked it and was already plotting further subtle chaos in the future.

The editor reminds GALS members that whilst they must beware of devious arm actions which may threaten to undermine the serious nature of our choir, they also need to be understanding and compassionate with Nikki, who is a valued member of our choir and cannot help suffering from frequent comedic seizures.



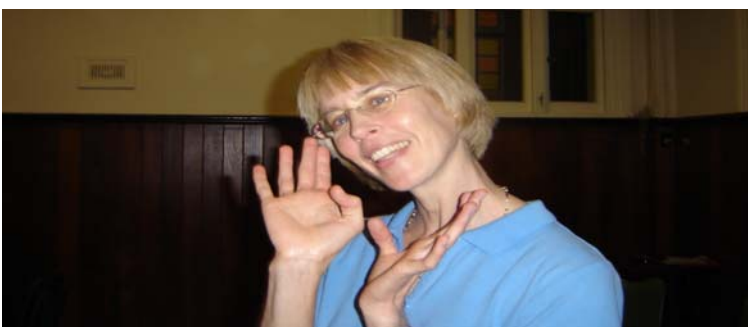
A Critical Analysis of “Hallelujah”

Leonard Cohen’s song “Hallelujah” has puzzled musicians for years with its contradictory yet powerful lyrics. The first question a listener asks is, “what was the secret chord that David played and why did it please the lord?” Did David keep his chord secret in order to baffle the king who was composing Hallelujah? But if the king was composing Hallelujah, wouldn’t that have also pleased the lord? Perhaps the king was composing Hallelujah in order to convince David to reveal his secret chord, although David’s secret chord might have also been a secret code. David may have been an undercover agent plotting to overthrow the pious king.

It seems that David’s devious use of secret chords was successful, because the second verse begins with a clear reference to the biblical story where David becomes the king. One night, he saw a woman called Bathsheba bathing on the roof. He was so taken with her beauty, that he arranged to have her husband sent to the front lines of the army where of course he was killed. David then went to ‘comfort’ the grieving widow and then added her to his collection on wives. In “Hallelujah” though, the woman ties David to the kitchen chair, breaks his throne, tortures him and cuts his hair. Is this an extreme feminist statement? Is it a criticism of David’s loose morals and what he deserves to have happen to him? Is it a comment on man’s misuse of power in positions of authority? Could it be an analogy for the overthrow of the reign of patriarchy in the world?

The plot thickens in the third verse as the listener is left to question exactly where the heck the person narrating the story is, and whose flag was on the marble arch? It has been suggested that perhaps the narrator of the lyrics was also part of the conspiracy hatched by the devious David and that he was brainwashed as part of an agent training program. This explains his vague recollections of seeing a room previously, perhaps triggered by the presence of the flag which contains a coded message in its symbols. Naturally, the agent feels bitter and frustrated because his job doesn’t allow him to lead a normal love life.

In the fourth verse, Cohen returns to the theme of sex and casts aside all pretence of feminist and political messages. In this final verse he does not resolve all of the listener’s questions, however he does reveal the deep and underlying meaning of the song: love sucks, life is painful and the world is a depressing place.



Liz W hears the secret chord...

Reminiscing...

When Joanna called for people to share their stories and memories of GALS earlier this year, I thought back to when I first joined GALS over three years ago now. It was the first time I’d had anything to do with of group of gay people - I’d known individuals, but never a group. After my first rehearsal, I remember a friend of mine asking me how it went. I sounded surprised as I said, “they were all such great people.” My friend laughed at me and said, “did you think they’d have horns and purple noses or something.” I said, “no, but there was a whole group and they were ALL great.” It seems so funny now and such a long time ago. Well, GALS are still all great people who never cease to amaze me with their talents and the copious articles they continually write for the Rhubarb and so I thought I’d share this poem I wrote for GALS during my second year.

Singing Out

*Without knowing it,
you helped me find my voice.*

*With the music of who you are,
you opened the door for me
to sing who I am.*

*You allowed me to join
your rainbow; a riot of colours
brightly shining,
a diversity of sounds
merging to create harmony.*

*When you look for it,
there is more to people
than can be seen, and
there is more to a song than
the melody when you listen.*

*I watch you play the
tunes of your lives ;
a rich patchwork of brilliance,
and I step into my own
composition with pride –
vulnerable, but surrounded
by a symphony of support.*

*And without knowing it,
you add a note
to a masterpiece in progress.*

Gay and Lesbian Singers of WA
North Perth Lesser Hall, View Street, North Perth
www.galswa.org.au



This is the obligatory photo of Cherie because it just didn’t seem right to have the first Rhubarb of the year without Cherie in it.



This is a photo of Michelle which miraculously captures her at a loss for words.



And this is a photo of the back of Saani’s head taken by Michelle in a desperate attempt to see over her shoulder into her top secret Rhubarb notebook.