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RESPONSE FROM SOLANGE

By Solange Shapiro



Dear Andy,

I was overwhelmed by the front cover and articles in the last issue, and note that you overruled my plea of "one photo only please". I have decided to let you live.

I am grateful for your kind words and those of John 'The Professor' Thonard, Jim Moir and Nola Anderson. It has been a great privilege to serve the DIAA for the past 15 years and I have many fond and interesting memories of the friendships and kindnesses shown to me.

I started out as secretary to John Andrews, followed by Henry Shapiro, for the last 10 years with Jim Moir, and since October 2010 with Andrew Hansen. A more diverse lot of Presidents would be hard to find.

I remember well setting up the DIAA at John Andrew's farm in Eugowra, convinced that a national body would be of greater benefit for deer farmers than State organizations. As it turns out, with the support of Peter Core from RIRDC, the DIAA was formally recognised by the government as the voice of the industry, and this made its job of representing both farmers and processors a reality.

One of my lasting memories will be of the weekend when Victorian members came to build the deer yards at our new farm in Lismore. Guy Dockrill organised the troops, and it was fantastic social as well as practical weekend. Such tales could be told of those that misbehaved, but my lips are sealed.

Guy also arranged trips to New Zealand for groups of farmers. These events forged camaraderie among the members and were instrumental in forming relationships with New Zealand deer studs and the wider industry. I remember that, at one stage, there were six families vying to buy two framed pictures of 'Monarch of the Glen'. We were one of the successful ones having to cart it home on the plane. It hangs proudly still.

For those who have expressed your thanks to me, I respond that it has been an honour to work on your behalf and that the friendships made along the way will always be treasured.

My observation is that the industry is again on a slow but discernable growth path. The team of Andrew Hansen and Marika McKinnon will now carry the torch. Give them your unstinting support.

A fond farewell to all of you.

Solange