

## 2016 August SSC President's Letter

Your President has been absent. I spent an amazing two weeks in Australia. My granddaughter, Morgen went to Charles Darwin University, in the Northern Territory for one semester as an exchange student. Her parents (my son and daughter-in-law, Scott and Julie) flew to Darwin and drove in a camper van with her across country. In their three week drive they were mercilessly bitten by insects, more vicious than Alaska mosquitoes. But they had a memorable trip. In Cairns they met me and Morgen's future sister-in-law, Sanna, and Scott flew home. Thus begins the "Girl's Fun" part of the journey. Julie wins the "Fearless Hero Award" for driving on the wrong side of the road and figuring where to turn on roundabouts going the wrong way! Thank goodness it was not me. We spent a week in Port Douglas in a small resort hotel. We really enjoyed the ocean at the supposedly croc-safe, guarded beach area. We took a Sky Tram up over Daintree Rain Forest. What a sight to see from the air, over the lush jungle! Then we visited the village at Kuranda, seeing the sights and shopping in the aboriginal markets, before retuning on the old restored railway. We drove around the area, avoiding the croc infested rivers. While driving through Daintree we encountered five Casuary who walked across the road in front of us. Amazing colorful large birds. The second week was at a quirky ➡

hostel in Cairns (pronounced: "cans"). It was the "Traveler's Oasis". What a great experience! We met so many young students with interests as varied as their nationalities. We met an Astro physicist; an English teacher at a Canadian School in Macau; a volunteer at a clinic in Venuatu; who came from across the globe. Morgen and I purchased original Art Canvasses at an Aboriginal Art Gallery, in Cairns. We went on a snorkel cruise to the Great Barrier Reef, which was amazing beyond belief! The many Corals and varied sea life were almost too much to comprehend at once. Talk about sensory over-load! We drove to the Tablelands and the Wooroonooran Rainforest, stopping at waterfalls to swim and waded in the pools below. (No crocs in this area.) The wildlife was diverse and fantastic. We saw so many crocodiles and birds and I petted a wallaby (a small kangaroo) and cuddled a Koala. On our last day we drove back to Kuranda in the rain, to shop in the little village. We discovered a boutique dress shop where I found my dress for Morgen's November wedding. When I asked the clerk to get it down from where it hung high on a wall, Morgen asked her to bring down the white lace one. It fit her perfectly, and she now has her Wedding dress! It was meant to be. It is good to be home. We had the trip of a lifetime.

—Goldie Southwood