

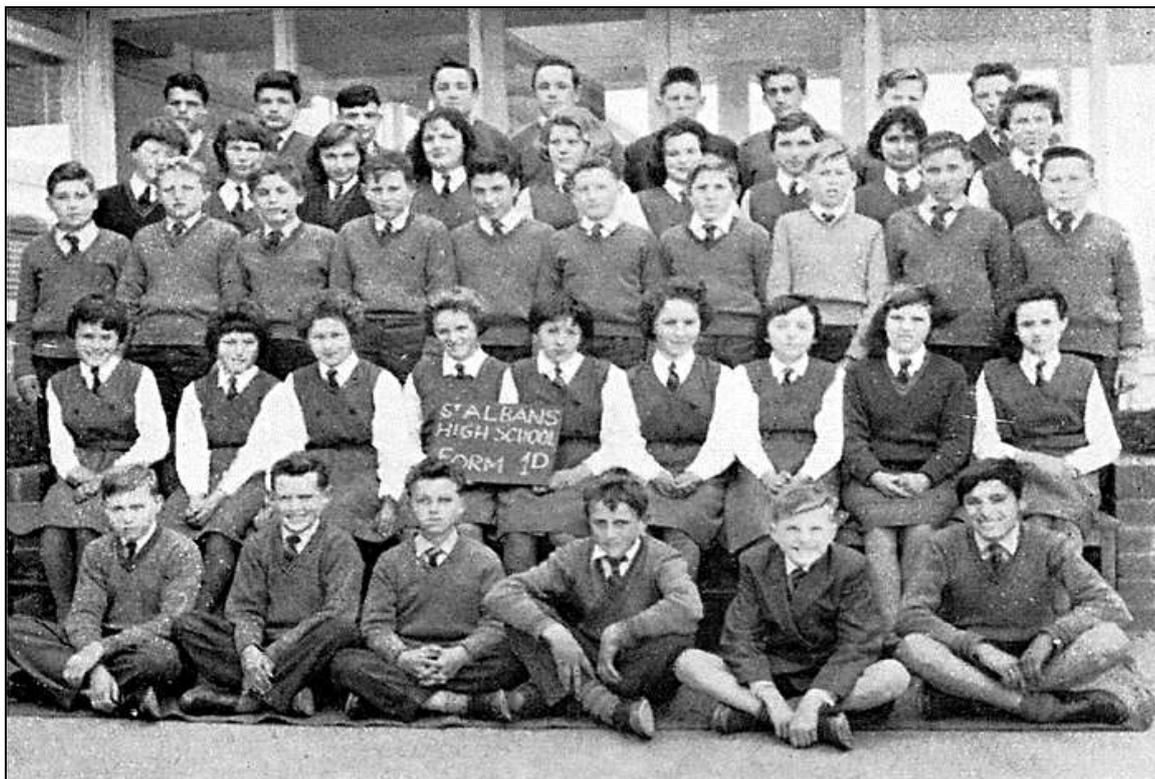
LAURIE SCHWAB: SOCCER PROMOTER, SPORTS WRITER, NEWSPAPER EDITOR



Fritz and Ingeburg Schwab came to Australia in 1954 under the Australian German Assisted Package Scheme and were settled at the Migrant Reception Centre at Bonegilla. Their children were Lorenz (Laurie) born in 1947 and Katrin born in 1948. The Schwabs were lucky to have escaped Germany, especially as other family members did not. Fritz was of Jewish background on his father's side and when the parents were sent to a ghetto Fritz and his sister Helga were sent to an "Arian" grandmother in Berlin. They later fled to Prague and then to Switzerland. When the Swiss closed their borders they went to Belgium where they sought a passage to America but ended up in Australia.

The family moved to Errington Street St Albans in 1955, which became home for Inge and Fritz for the rest of their lives.

Their daughter Olivia (Lilli) was born in Australia. All three of the children attended St Albans High School, with Laurie starting in 1960 in Form 1D: his classmates included Ivan Volkov, Vlad Turok, Cathy Hatjiandreou and Heather Goddard.



Laurie Schwab, Form 1D, 1960.

Fritz and Inge were business oriented and soon after establishing themselves in St Albans they were importing "all things German" including books, magazines, and festive decorations and paraphernalia for a growing immigrant population that was keen to keep in touch with its cultural heritage. Fritz was also a sports promoter: he wrote a regular sports column for "Die Woche" and other German newspapers, reporting on German and Australian athletics including football, boxing, cycling and swimming. He brought several German and European boxers to compete in Australia.

Laurie became a sports writer, like his father. He started as a reporter with the Footscray Mail in the late sixties and also worked for the Werribee edition of the paper. He later joined The Age and thus obtained a much broader audience of readers, especially when founded and edited "Soccer Action" which was published by Fairfax. He also worked in a senior editorial roles in Fairfax suburban newspapers. He occasionally appeared on ABC radio as a sports

commentator. Schwab became one of Australia's most popular and respected soccer journalists, especially after 1977 when the National Soccer League was formed and introduced a national competition, the first football code to do so in Australia. The relationship was not always amicable, as the NSL tried to ban him for referring to the soccer clubs' original ethnic names. The ban did not succeed. Schwab continued his soccer coverage for a couple of decades but died unexpectedly of a heart attack in 1997, aged 50.

SPEECH GIVEN AT SILVER JUBILEE CELEBRATION AND THE NAMING OF THE KEITH HAYNES OVAL, 1981

Welcome and Introduction

Your Excellency Sir Henry Winneke, Lady Winneke, Mrs Haynes, Mr Mayor, Commissioner Gillon, Ladies and Gentlemen. I thank you on behalf of the former students of St Albans High School.

I think, Sir Henry, this visit could pay off for you. I understand you were a legal man of some ability before taking this job. The fact is, former students of this school get into lots of trouble ... see me later ... I might be able to put a bit of work your way. Help keep the wolves from your door, you know.

And I wonder if you could clarify this business about Prince Charles becoming the next Governor General. Is it true that an exchange program is being worked out—Prince Charles for Governor General, Malcolm Fraser for King? No?

Aspirations and Competition

Talking about exchange programs, it reminds me of one of my many failures at school. I applied for an exchange scholarship to go the United States. Jan Griffiths got it instead.

So, on a more parochial and probably more ambitious level, I decided I'd try to be a football star. That was no good either. I was surrounded by the likes of Les and Garry Cameron, Ray Haynes, Ange Tantsis, Mike Pokrovki, and Dave Taylor, who made me feel positively inferior.

But it was the era of the Beatles and the Rolling Stones and so I was inspired to perhaps reach the dizzy heights of show business. Fat chance. Broderick Smith did that and so did Katie Akterburg and Jutta Aukstulewicz, while I still can't hold a note.

Not to worry, thought I. I did have other talents. I was dedicated to learning, for example. Or was I? I seriously began to doubt it as everyone else did all the achieving. Doctors started to emerge: Alex Bezbodoff, Claude Calandra, Enver and Tim Baraszewski, Tony Venes, and Peter Bevs ... We had solicitors like Victor Mahorin for example. There's a university lecturer as well, Sneja Gunew, the first St Albans High student to win an exhibition at Matric. And it's the name of my sister Lilli that's up there on the honours board, not mine.

But there were other possibilities for me. What about politics? The hustings, the wheeling and dealing, the long knives ... No. I fell by the wayside, while Marija Biewer and Alex Adrianopoulos became Keilor City councillors and Rosemary Kiss a councillor at Fitzroy.

Then I set my sights on becoming a journalistic giant, but Tanya Korinsky is doing that from Tokyo of all places.

In the world of business I could never match Knut Werner, Ivan Volkov or George Swadiak ... I thought about teaching but there were 695 qualified teachers among our ex-students, still waiting to get a job.

I wonder why they asked me to make this speech; I'm a bit of a failure, really. Let's hope my son Adam does a bit better. He started here this year.

Ungers and The Arcade

I did, however, contribute, along with most other students, to the development of this town's commerce. If Mr Unger is here, I think he should stand and put his hands together for the generations of Coca-Cola guzzlers who have passed through this school and his shop.

School principals contributed in like manner. The establishment known simple as 'The Arcade' experienced a major boom in trade every time one principal or another declared it off limits. And what about the tobacco shops and the hotel ... ?

Celebrating Community

There is another very significant way in which so many former students have contributed to the community. They don't live here anymore. That's not quite true of course. Whatever sense of community does exist in St Albans is due to our schools and their former students—kids from all over the world, or at least of migrant families—growing up here, forming friendships, marrying, pursuing their interests through the sports clubs, the churches, and, notably, through its great Champion Lorna Cameron, has claimed the interest of so many kids for longer or shorter periods throughout these 25 years.

What makes this school unique is that it had the languages, the attitudes, and the traditions of most of the world within its walls at a time when St Albans grew up as a truly International Village.

The very decision to leave the home country and travel to an unknown new world indicates the enormous strength of will that characterises our people.

There were problems, sure, social problems associated with language, employment, and with the human spirit itself. The problems surfaced within families and in this school. But I wonder how much more we gained from each other in terms of human insight than students of more conventional schools. If we feel proud of our own very diverse backgrounds, then surely we must feel proud of having gone to this school and having lived in this town.

Governments have largely ignored the western suburbs — when will that ever change — but we must concede that they have been kind to St Albans High School, as our excellent facilities testify.

A Dedication to the Haynes Family

We are here to commemorate the opening of the latest of these facilities: the new-look oval named after the school's most faithful servant, Keith Haynes. Keith was our foreman here from the time the school opened. He was a sympathetic guide and friend to many a kid who needed help or merely contact. He was involved with kids through the local cricket, football, and youth clubs. I remember many a pie night at the Haynes' home in Main Road East while Keith was helping to look after the youth club's footy team.

Now his wife, Bess, has taken over as foreman here and she too is always ready to extend a helping hand. The six Haynes children — Ray, Philip, Graham, Bonny, Elizabeth, and Geoff — all went to this school and all have good reason to be proud of their dad and the work he did here.



School reunion circa 1981. (L-R) Milica Jankovic, Erika Kolin, Katrin Schwab, Ivan Volkov, Laurie Schwab, Tanya Korinsky.

SPEECH AT ST ALBANS HIGH SCHOOL'S JUBILEE CELEBRATION AND NAMING OF THE NEW SCHOOL OVAL, 27 MARCH 1981.

Changing Times as St Albans High School becomes St Albans Secondary College, 1990



"I went to St Albans High school during the sixties," I tell the student showing me to the room with the coffee and the sandwiches where people are waiting for Education Minister Joan Kirner to arrive. In fact my two sisters, Katrin and Lilli, and later my two sons, Adam and Jason, also went to this school. So did many of those who are among my closest friends.

"Did you like it?" he asks. I want to tell him that I like it more and more as the years go by - not that I ever disliked it - but I just say "Yeah."

Back in the sixties the times were a-changing for most of us. Was it really something peculiar to that era or do times still a-change that way?

Back in the early sixties it was plain old St Albans High School: perched on mud in winter, dust in summer, two grey bunkers in single file. I have come back for the renaming of the school after its recent two million dollar facelift, as the St Albans Secondary College.



Renaming of St Albans High School to St Albans Secondary College, 1990.

(L-R): Alex Andrianopoulos, Andy Kratsis, Natalie Cvijeticanin, Laurie Schwab, Loue Traianou.
Foreground: Joan Kirner, Minister for Education.

Teenagehood in the sixties was a time of striving for identity, rejecting what we knew was claptrap, and learning to go with the changing times. Teachers were dismayed because children were supposed to be subservient.

If you made a movie about it these days you'd dream up supercharged tales, each of them a parable. But life is not like that. At St Albans High in second and third forms, the action

was more about rolling your shirt sleeves up no higher than two inches from the wrist, making your pants as tight as possible, having your cap perched on the back of your head to show off your hairstyle, and scowling a lot.

Inspired by the world-wide protest movement, school jumpers got longer and longer. I switched from regular school uniform to the longest jumper I had, which happened to be blue instead of gray, and harassment by the headmaster was the price I paid. "Spud" Murphy was suspended over the length of his jumper so we ran a letter campaign through the local paper on the theme "What length freedom?" Caps became a rare species and rightly so, as the combination of Brylcreem, sweat, and dust built up grime deposits on both cap and head. Skirts became shorter and shorter making it a time of heady romance and hearty loins.

Students took their morning and afternoon smokos in nearby Lyall and Vista streets, until the headmaster announced at one Monday morning assembly that the area would be strafed every recess.

I remember the school excursion to a Bacchus Marsh quarry as part of our geological awareness education. We hated such school excursions, apart from which the boys were in one bus and the girls in the other. At Bacchus Marsh, Knut Werner and I made sure of missing the boys' bus back but the teachers wouldn't let us on the girls' bus so we had to hitchhike home. As punishment for this escapade we were banned from future excursions. This was an unforeseen but much appreciated consequence, as we could not have been happier with the result.

When our initial burst of competitiveness at football, deadly dull cricket, swimming, cross country running and other forms of athletics (tunnel-ball would you believe?) dissipated, sport became uncool in our crowd so we stole away instead to Unger's for Coke and to the Arcade - declared off-limits by the headmaster - for fish and chips. Never have fish and chips tasted so good.

Unfortunately there was a lunatic fringe among the teaching staff: misfits who got their kicks from verbal sadism and physical belligerence. Twins who paid one such teacher back in kind outside of school hours gained both notoriety and celebrity status in absentia. But the rev-heads on the teaching staff were heavily outnumbered by decent and inspiring people, epitomised by senior mistress Mrs Alice Gliddon, who gave us an appreciation of literature, and our inspiring maths teacher Mr Barry Rayner, who was young enough to be on our wavelength.

Many of us attended the school's Silver Jubilee in March 1981. Asked to speak on behalf of past and present students, I shared the stage with the then Education Minister, Alan Hunt, and the Governor, Sir Henry Winneke, at the formal opening of the Keith Haynes Oval, named after the late, long-serving school foreman who was succeeded by his wife, Bess Haynes. Back when the times were a-changing I would have thought consorting with governors and ministers was a sellout. But then, as now, I felt good about being there.

In the late fifties and the sixties St Albans High was unique in that it had the languages, attitudes, and traditions of most of the world within its walls. It was the cosmopolitan capital of Victoria if not Australia.

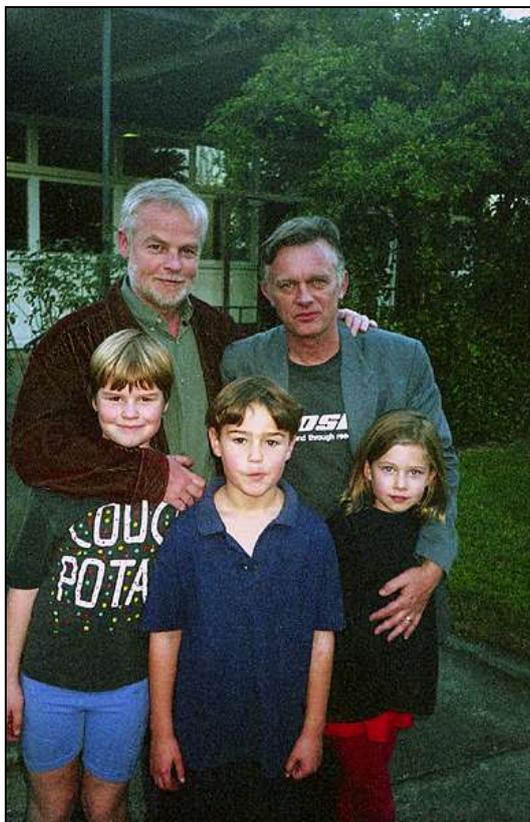
There was great strength among our townspeople. The very decision to leave the home country and travel to an unknown new world indicates the extent of the despair back home and the enormous willpower that characterised these people. Sure there were social problems associated with employment, language, and at times with the human spirit itself, and these problems surfaced within families and within school life. But we gained so much more from each other in terms of human insight than did students of more conventional schools. If we feel proud of our own very diverse backgrounds, we surely must have a warm feeling about being together in St Albans and at this school when the times were a-changing for all of us.

The students of St Albans High were big achievers in the days before migrant kids became the domain of social worker thinking. Enver and Tim Barajszewski, Claude Calandra, Tony Venes, Peter Bevs, and Alex Bazboradof, became doctors. In the world of show business, Broderick Smith has survived two decades of shifting musical tastes. Sneja Gunew is a now a university lecturer, Tanya Korinsky is a globe trotting writer, Wally Kosiak a prominent engineer, Alex Andrianopoulos a State parliamentarian, Andy Kratsis a financial counsellor. George Swadiak, Ivan Volkov and Knut Werner, became successful businessmen. Garry and Les Cameron and Ray Haynes played VFL football. Garry also led the fight against irregularities at the St Albans Community Health Centre, resulting in government intervention to rectify matters. There were artistic talents like Norbert Loeffler, Henry Fuchs became a top-level government

advisor, and Jan Griffin got the exchange scholarship to the USA that I really wanted. Such is life.

Laurie Schwab, 1990.

(Article prepared by Lorenz Schwab when St Albans High School was renamed St Albans Secondary College in 1990.)



Laurie Schwab and Broderick Smith at High School Reunion, 1996.

Laurie Schwab passed away in 1997. Helen Schwab died in March 2012 while swimming in Queensland. She was born in England and came to Australia when she was five, and worked as an editor, designer and writer for magazines and publications. She represented Victoria on the Playgroup Council of Australia and represented them on a forum of the United Nations International Conference on Women. She helped preserve her husband's commitment to soccer journalism by establishing the Laurie Schwab foundation.



Helen and Laurie Schwab.
(Les Shorrock collection Deakin University Library)

These articles are based on archival material provided by Lorna Cameron in 2004.
Thanks to Jutta Szwed for extra references and translations.
1981 school reunion photo courtesy of Tanya Korinfsky.
Photograph reproduction courtesy of Nick Szwed.