

# The Sospan Fach saga

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happily married, and the father of three children.)

It was three more days before the seas abated enough for Ata to leave the reef and head the 300 miles to Ballina.

Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Braham, who had flown from Adelaide to meet their daughter, wept when they saw Christine. Mrs. Braham had given up hope of seeing her alive.

Christine worked for a year doing research at an Auckland hospital, and had spent another year touring the North and South Islands.

Christine, a casual, carefree girl with a snub nose and eyes the color of the sea, couldn't hide her happiness at being safe. She winked exuberantly at everyone she spoke to.

Geraldine, a tiny Chinese-New Zealand nurse, was thrilled to be met by her foster parents of five years. Mr. and Mrs. Jerald Van Es, poultry farmers from Pukekohe, south of Auckland.

A large party of relatives, including his parents, was in Ballina to meet Peter.

With so many reporters anxious to buy someone's story (Ata's arrival had attracted almost a record press coverage), Peter was adamant he wouldn't sell. He said: "I feel the whole thing has inconvenienced and worried so many people it wouldn't be right to capitalise on it."

## "You learn a lot"

"I've gained from the experience. You learn a lot about yourself and life in a crisis. Money isn't important."

The day after their arrival in Ballina, Christine and Peter went shopping in local supermarkets for trolley-loads of tinned food.

They arrived back at the Ata announcing they were Father Christmas, and gave the food, plus a magnificent guitar, to the Tongan crew. They felt they could never thank them enough for their rescue and their care.

Last year, through no fault of his own, a ship of which Mano was skipper was wrecked by a freak wave as it was entering a channel. Eight children were washed from their mothers' arms and drowned.

Peter Warner said: "It wasn't Mano's fault but he was very dependent about it. We talked about it and I said to him, 'For some reason God has brought us together. Maybe we are going to do something good with our lives.'"

Those words were prophetic.

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# FOUR WOMEN LIKELY

It now seems almost certain that Jean Melzer, Kathryn Martin, Margaret Guilfoyle and Ruth Coleman will be elected to the Senate. Senator Dame Nancy Buttfield (Lib., S.A.) retired at the end of last year for personal and private reasons.



Kathryn Martin, a Bachelor of Arts, who majored in political science.

## Kathryn Martin: "Politics are my life"

ALTHOUGH only a neat 7½st., Kathryn Martin, of Queensland, evidently packs a man-sized punch in the political scene.

Slim, with blonde cropped hair and an attractive figure and legs, Miss Martin won a Senate seat for the Queensland Liberal Party.

At 32, once married but divorced some years ago, she devotes most of her time to politics. She has no children.

She dresses attractively, but says she is not really clothes-conscious.

Up till now she has had a salary of \$10,000 a year as a university administration officer and a lecturer at the Queensland Institute of Technology. But for Miss (she prefers this) Martin, the Senate will mean another \$4000.

Kathy Martin got leave in February from her job as administration officer for the Faculty of Architecture to give all her time to the election campaign.

She makes no secret that "politics are my life" and her background was an enormous help in her campaign.

She is a Bachelor of Arts and majored in political science when studying for

the Arts degree. When she was endorsed for the Senate last year by the Liberal Party, she was studying for a Master of Business Administration degree at the University of Queensland, but had to interrupt this for election tours.

Skill in debating made her a confident pre-election speaker. As a member of the Queensland Debating Union team, she has represented the State five times in national debating championships.

She is interested in trade unionism. She is a foundation member (vice-president) of the Queensland University Employees' Association (a union for non-academic staff) and is currently president of the Association.

Recently she has been working with the state secretary of the Clerks' Union to formulate the first industrial award for University clerical staff.

She became a member of the Liberal Party at 18 and is an honorary life member of the Young Liberal Movement. In 1963 she was the State's youngest vice-president of the Young Liberal Movement.

— JEAN BRUCE

## Jean Melzer: "No armchair theorist"

MRS. Jean Melzer, Victoria's first woman Labor senator, has a problem.

"People ask me: 'Are you going to promote women's issues?' I'm blown if I know what a woman's issue is."

"Of course there are things like child care and working mothers, that women know much more about than men. But men are concerned about them, too. There is no separate issue for either women or men."

Mrs. Melzer, mother of six, grandmother of 3½, has just about got her second wind after a certain flatness which follows the hustle and bustle of the elections.

As secretary of the Victorian branch of the ALP she headed the party's State election campaign.

Mrs. Melzer says she enjoys an argument, likes a bit of shouting and banging on the street.

Nevertheless, in her office at Fitzroy, there is an aura of calm efficiency.

The seemingly endless mass of work around her does not worry her. "I can do three or four jobs at the one time. I can cope, because I like the work."

She is still in her job as party secretary before she takes her place in the Senate. It is a position she has held since 1971 when she was the

By MAUREEN BANG

first woman to be appointed to the office.

Politics are Mrs. Melzer's life. "I am interested in people, I like people. Politics are people."

At first she was "a bit worried" about being in the Senate — "a place of retired old men" was how it was pictured to her.

"But situations are as good as you make them. I think I can become just as much involved with people and have a bigger scope through the whole of Victoria."

Being a senator will mean other changes in her life. She will be in Canberra on an average of three days a week, three weeks in four, during Senate sessions and that will mean finding someone to look after her two youngest children, Stephen, 12, and Sally, 9, in Melbourne.

They are children of her second marriage; she and her husband are separated. She has four children by a previous marriage; 26-year-old twins, David and Jeanette, who are both married with children, Peter, 24, who lives with her, and Andrew, 22. Party politics were not part of Mrs. Melzer's background. Neither of her parents belonged to a political party.

"But when I was a little nipper at our home in Elsterwick, I remember sitting and listening to an old Scot who visited us."

"He was not a preaching kind of man. He cared for people. He had been born in the Gorbals (a poor area of Glasgow) and spoke about

## Ruth Coleman: an advocate for

GREEN-EYED effervescent Ruth Coleman came to politics via her second marriage, in 1967, to Jim Coleman, secretary of the Western Australian branch of the Trades and Labor Council.

As the wife of a prominent trade union man, she naturally joined her local A.L.P. branch: within two years she was a delegate to the party's state executive and, by May, 1972, she had won her first endorsement as a Labor candidate.

At the same time she was waging the battles in the Consumer Action Movement which have made Ruth Coleman a household name throughout Western Australia.

Before 1967 Ruth had been many things — shop assistant, clerk, bus conductor, housemaid, theatre usherette, telephonist,

copywriter, radio comper, and promotions officer with a television station — but nothing to suggest her ultimate status of senator.

She had also done some stage work ("a little acting in a little theatre in Victoria" and, in 1964, an appearance as a cafe proprietor in a segment of "Consider Your Verdict"), as well as some

By PAT PARKER

photographic modelling in her teens. It's easy to see why.

At 42, Ruth has few lines and an enviably slim figure. She laughs at herself a lot and said, as she hitched at her waistline, "I've got so thin during the election campaign my pants keep on falling off!"

She looks good in trousers and says she hopes to be able to wear pantsuits in the Senate chamber — as long as

it doesn't conflict with protocol.

She doesn't want to be a rebel but it gave her pause when someone teased that she would have to wear a hat all the time.

"I've got a really super hat," she said. "Jim got it for me in Russia," and she disappeared into a bedroom to come dancing back wearing a snappy cloche of wildcat fur.

Ruth is pleased and excited about her election and grateful to her family for their help.

Her student daughter, Terri (who turned 18 just in time to make her first vote memorable because it included one for her mother), has helped with the housekeeping and is what Ruth calls, "almost a built-in baby-sitter" for her lively, four-year-old, half-brother, Bradley.

Even he caught election fever.

He's quite a ham-actor

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