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Home Economics School "Down Under"

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Home Economics School

"Down Under"

LET'S TAKE a long trip to that far away country of Australia. Known to many Americans only as the home of kangaroos and koala bears, this country has something to teach us in presenting home economics to future homemakers.

As we enter Sydney Harbor we see a modern three-story, red brick building. This is the Dover Heights Home Science School, one of the outstanding schools of the New South Wales State Education Department of Australia.

Primarily designed as a home science school, the 760 girls - usually aged 11\(\frac{1}{2}\) to 16\(\frac{1}{2}\), who attend it - may choose either the home economics, the commercial or the higher education arts course.

The interior, as well as the exterior, is modern and up-to-date. The sound-proof air-conditioned classrooms have polished parquet floors and pastel tinted walls. Colorful prints and flowers break up the schoolroom atmosphere. The wide entrance hall is furnished with round seats upholstered in terra-cotta leather which combine well with native Indian rugs on the floor. On the landings between floors and along corridors are tall Cantonese brass and glazed ceramic vases. Windows running the whole length of the four sides of the building look out over the Bay and the five acres of playing field.

The home-science curriculum is a three-year course and is similar to the curriculum at Iowa State even though it is for younger girls. They are taught cooking, home management, hygiene and home nursing as well as dressmaking and designing.

Home management

Instead of home management houses, the Australian girls receive practical experience in a completely furnished apartment right in the school. It consists of a lounge, dining room, bedroom, bathroom, kitchen and laundry. Groups of four girls look after it at one time. Two do the cleaning, including the laundering of the linen, and the other two cook and serve the meals. They are all trained to act as hostesses, and visitors to the school are entertained in the apartment.

White foods uniforms are standard apparel in Australian foods labs just as they are at Iowa State. Lectures on nutrition and food values, meal-planning and dietetics are included in the foods courses as well as actual food preparation. Starting out with scones and rice pudding in their first year, the girls progress to catering and preparing invalids' and children's menus.

More emphasis is placed on handwork in the sewing courses than is found in American schools. Advanced girls make the costumes for the school plays. These are elaborate with beads and sequins and hoop ed crinoline skirts. All classes make baby clothes and layettes which they donate to the United Nations or charities.

by Mary Kay Pitzer

Physical education is another must in the curriculum. The school is well equipped with tennis courts, a running track, cricket pitches and a basket ball and hockey field. Swimming is available at the near-by beaches.

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Veishea
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the Saturday night dance, the eagerly-awaited decisions for parade and open-house winners are given and trophies awarded.

The Veishea parade is Saturday’s main feature. All organized houses on campus, college organizations, and departments may enter floats in the parade. High school bands are spaced between floats. The largest Veishea trophy, which stands 40 inches high, is awarded to the sweepstakes winner with trophies also awarded to the best floats and winning bands.

Tapping ceremony

In the afternoon, the honoring of the outstanding students on campus takes place at the Mortar Board and Cardinal Key “tapping” ceremony. As the chimes of the carillon ring out to call spectators to the ceremony, members of Cardinal Key and Mortar Board will walk across the lawn to find the unsuspecting men and women they are to tap. A hearty slap on the back reveals a new member of Cardinal Key, while a mortar board is placed on the head of each new member of the women’s honorary. Membership to these two honoraries is the highest honor an Iowa State student can achieve. Only junior women and junior and senior men who have been outstanding in scholarship, leadership and service to the school are eligible for initiation.

Veishea history

Veishea began in 1922. The word Veishea has a meaning all its own. It is a combination of the beginning letters of the five divisions at Iowa State: V, Veterinary Medicine; E, Engineering; IS, Industrial Science; HE, Home Economics and A, Agriculture. The purpose of Veishea is not student participation in the festival; rather an exhibition of the college to between 80,000 and 100,000 high school students, friends and visitors throughout the state.

About thirty of the outstanding high school students in Iowa will be special guests of Veishea this year, and will receive a complimentary pass which will admit them to all of the scheduled events.

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Girls attending the school are from middle-class homes in adjacent suburbs. Dressed in their navy winter uniforms or grey linen summer dresses, they ride special school buses to class each day just as any American students do.

The aim of the New South Wales State Department of Education in building schools like the Dover Heights School is to “create a harmonious, cultural atmosphere and to eliminate the stereotyped austerity usually associated with state-built schools”. As we look over the curriculum and equipment in this school it’s hard to believe that the students are junior high and high school aged girls instead of college women. Certainly the Australian government is preparing its young people for their future as successful homemakers.

MARCH, 1952

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