

## Pepe Schwegler

Pepe was born on the same day as Crocodile Dundee's alter ego. Raised amongst dairy farms in rural Switzerland, his father was a cheesemaker, which was handy as it provided the family with an unlimited supply of dairy products during the lean war years, either for consumption or trade.



Growing up, Pepe dreamt of being a truck-driver, but on his mother's insistence he became a bank clerk instead. After a couple of dreary years, a spot popped up in *Nestle's* export department and Pepe jumped at the chance. Fluent in 4 languages, *Nestle* could have posted him anywhere, nonetheless Pepe found himself truly through the looking-glass – trading the cool monochrome of Switzerland for the sultry kodachrome of Nigeria. Snowshoes for sandals. The refined polka for a primal jungle beat.

Pepe revelled in it. His boss was a big shot in the polo club, so he soon found himself atop a frothing thoroughbred in 30-degree heat, turning on a penny in the race for the ball. As if this wasn't hair-raising enough, car rallying then caught his eye, so next Pepe was navigating his Citroen DS19 across the Sahara, pitting machine and muscle against sand and sun. Beneath Pepe's Clark Kent exterior, beats the heart of Crocodile Dundee.

As much as Pepe loved Nigeria, the country sunk into civil war, so in 1967 he left behind 4 years of many fond memories, his pet monkey Maggi and 3-legged dog Milo to go back through the looking glass once more, to the girdled austerity of Lee Kwan Yew's Singapore. While still flogging chocolates, he pursued his love of Motor Sports, competing in his first Grand Prix event in Malaysia, When his co-driver spun out of control on the first lap, so did Pepe's dream of a Grand Prix championship.

In Singapore he also attended his boss's wedding, only to run off with the bridesmaid! When *Nestle* sent Pepe to Zambia in 1968, Molly followed. They were married in a small church ceremony, under the baobab trees.

Unfortunately, their time in Zambia curdled. Molly, being Malaysian, insisted on immigrating to somewhere warm. Australia was chosen and in the wake of Queen Lizzie's Bicentennial royal tour, replete with white gloves and panoply of fancy hats, the Schweglers arrived in Perth on 12 December 1970.

They loved it here. Pepe started work with *Berri* Fruit Juices, but wanting to get into computers, soon found himself at the forefront of Local Governments' emerging adoption of computer technology, as NCR's representative. Gaining a solid reputation for 11 years resulted in the City of Stirling asking him to plan and implement the conversion of their large Public Library Network from manual to

digital – the first WA Council to do so. This initial 1-year contract lasted 20 happy years. Pepe retired on his 65th birthday in 2004.

Tragically, Pepe's dear wife passed away in 2009. He did remarry, however this fizzled out so his daughter, then living on the Sunshine Coast, encouraged him to head east. In 2014, he pulled up stumps once more to settle here. Having already established himself in The Bridge Association of Western Australia as a player of mettle, he continued on. As we can see, Pepe has never shied away from a challenge.

In his relatively tame retirement, Pepe also enjoys history, a good Australian red,- Shiraz especially, jazz & Swiss folk music – he's still partial to a rousing polka! – and his loving extended family. He has lived in many dusty corners of the Earth, among Christians and Jews, Muslims and pagans and found the differences to be gossamer thin. People are people.

Pepe wears the threads of time very well indeed. And it's far from over yet.