

Bend of Islands Conservation Association

Newsletter No 11

March 1985



What native's flowering?

Botanical name: Eucalyptus goniocalyx.

Common name: Long-leaved Box or Bundy.

Family: Myrtaceae.

- A small to medium-sized tree with a crooked trunk and large crown of pendulous branches with long tapering dark green leaves. Bark is greyish (often dark), rough, scaly and persistent on trunk and larger branches.
- A tree with irregular flowering habits. The flowers are pale lemon in colour, occurring from March through the winter sometimes up to August, and usually only every two years.
- The buds are found on the tree 18-21 months before flowering and are commonly in clusters of 7 or less, arranged in the shape of a star with one bud in the centre.
- Generally found growing in poor and stony soils on foot hills, in association with Red Box, Yellow Box and Red Stringybark.
- A useful shade or shelter tree and a good nectar and pollen yielding tree for honey production.

Cric Henry.

A.G.M.

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
OF THE BEND OF ISLANDS
CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION
WILL BE HELD ON
SUNDAY 24TH MARCH 1985

AT 2.00 PM

JANET MATTISKE NEW HOME

C TRACK

ON THE CO-OP

OFF SKYLINE RD

THE GUEST SPEAKER AT THIS

MEETING WILL BE

LANCE BAILEY

Lance is the Director of the Upper Yarra
and Dandenong Ranges Authority.

Strip the willow

A WORKING BEE

WILL BE HELD ON

SATURDAY 23RD MARCH

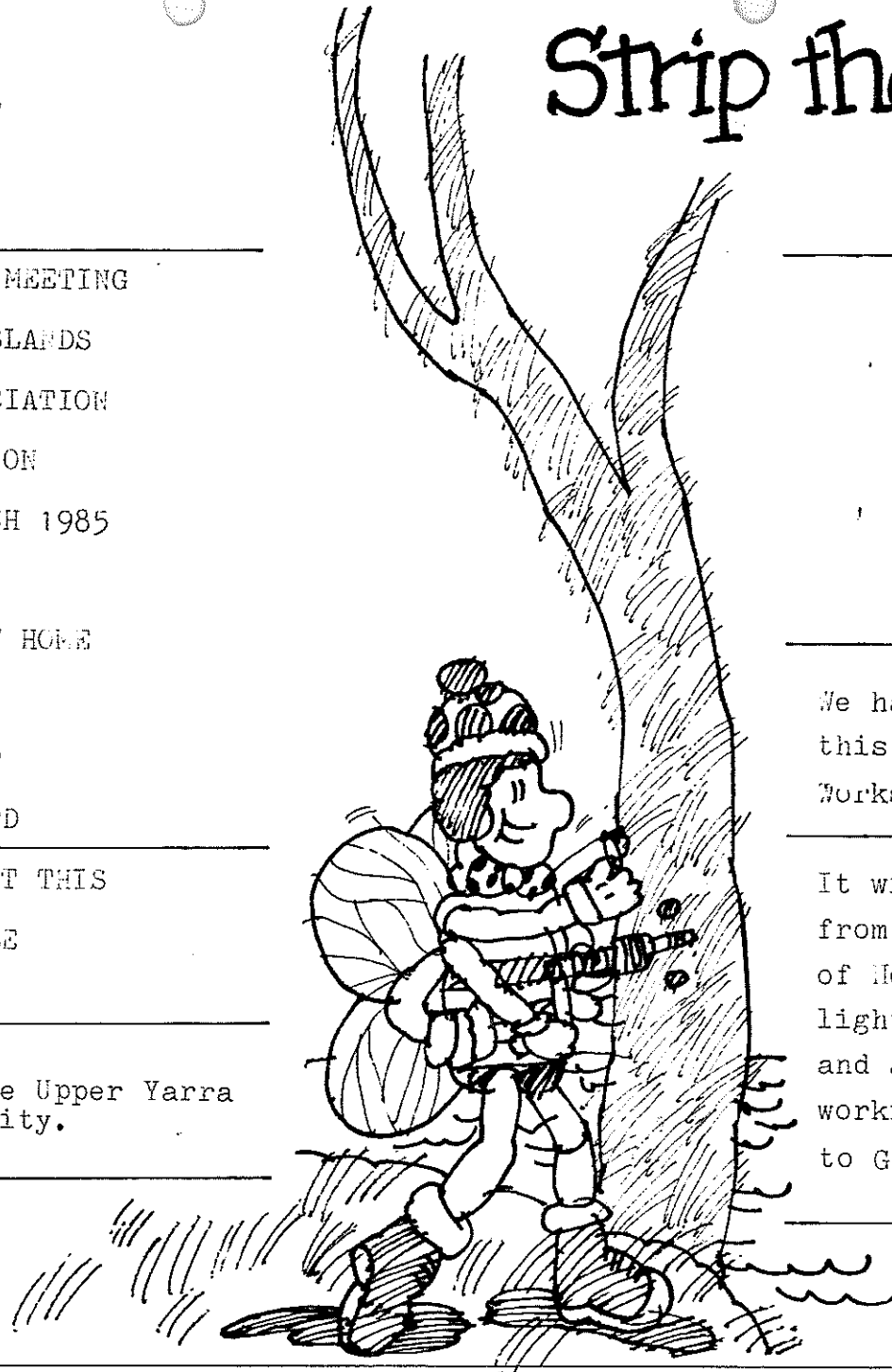
TO ELIMINATE

SOME OF THE

WILLOWS ON THE RIVER

We have obtained permission for
this project from the Board of
Works.

It will commence at 10.00 a.m.
from Felicity Faris's at the end
of Henly Road. Bring along a
light axe or brace and bit (sharp)
and a cut lunch. We will be
working downstream from Felicity's
to Gongflers Drive.



Food Co-op news

Wendi Henderson and Cric Henry have been to some meetings held by the Victorian Food Co-Operative Study Group and we supported the formation of the 'Moving Food Co-Operative', which consists of about twenty-five other food Co-Ops in Victoria, with the aim of sharing the running and use of warehouse to provide cheap and good quality food to all its members.

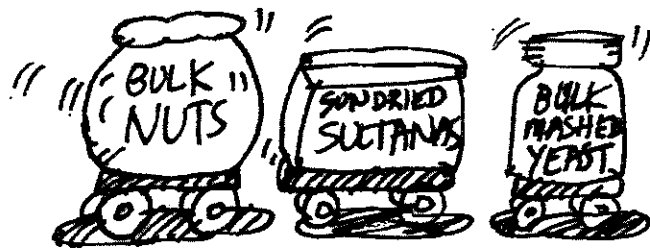
Rules for the Co-Operative have been drawn up and the first general meeting will be called close to the opening of the warehouse.

We have paid the \$10.00 minimum shareholding which will increase to 10 x \$10 shares once the warehouse is operating.

We see many advantaged to joining this umbrella co-operative, the main one being the wider range of good quality wholefoods at cheaper prices.

We will have a meeting soon to discuss the Co-operative's rules and operation, and also to organise our next APRIL buy.

New members are most welcome, ring Cric 712 0547 or Wendi 712 0393. Also thanks Barb we all appreciated your work as our co-ordinator.



Movie News

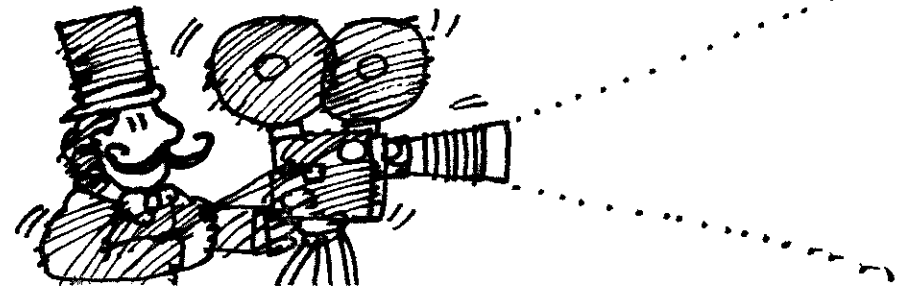
Christmas Hills Film Festival.

Last year before the restoration on the antique hall, a group of local residents, Veronica - Peter, Glennie, Caroline - Pierre conceived a great plan, as the Melbourne Film Festival was Rest in Peace.

We thought of having one in Christmas Hills. Plans were going great until the loss of the Hall. This autumn it will happen, perhaps over two week-ends, starting friday evening, with saturday afternoon films and cartoons for the children and a film in the evening. Supper could make it another social event as well. We could continue on Sunday for those with enthusiasm. This format could be repeated at a later date if successful.

We would like to show films that are not popular on video some classics like Milos Forman's the Fireman's Ball, (1967) or 27 A an Australian Film.

For any further information or further suggestions on format or film selection contact: Veronica and Peter 730 1823 or Meg McCallum 712 0319 or Caroline and Pierre 712 0390. All ideas welcome.



Romance in the stone

To appreciate our environment fully there is a basic requirement to understand the land upon which we stand. It together with climate determines largely the type of plant and animal able to colonise an area. Our shallow stony surface soils were formed by wind and rain from the sedimentary rocks below, which in our district are about 4,000 metres thick and of silurian age. This rock was formed from sand and silt washed slowly into a shallow ancient sea. In the Devonian Period these sediments were uplifted to form a land surface extensively folded into a series of synclines and anticlines. This landform, exposed to the action of wind and rain for millions of years was reduced to a low flat plain known today as the Nillumbik Terrain. An ancient river flowed across this plain following much the same course as the Yarra does today. This Nillumbik Terrain was in turn overlain with a thin veneer of terrestrial sands, deposits of which were extracted at Kangaroo Ground where the tip now is. These Red Bluff sands were protected from later erosion by the extrusion of lavas in the Pliocene (Greensborough Phase). The rich black soils in the fields around the Memorial Tower Hill and the basalt in the road cutting are evidence of this eruption. During the Mesozoic (Triassic) the land upon which we live was gradually uplifted and two fault lines developed. One, the Brushy Creek Fault runs from the intersection of that creek and the Yarra (Wittons Reserve) to Bayswater, the second (Yarra Fault) from Wittons Reserve to near Yarra Glen.

The Yarra was unaffected by this uplift until it reached the present day Sugarloaf Pumping Station, here the land was rising, yet so slowly that the river was able to cut down into the siltstone to form Yering Gorge. Further downstream at Brushy Creek it again flowed into the uplifting country, yet was able to maintain its course as a rejuvenated stream to carve out Warrandyte Gorge. An excellent view of part of this Gorge is from Catani Boulevard just west of Ironbark Road. The old flat Nillumbik Terrain of the present day E.L.Z. now began a new erosion cycle for its drainage systems now flowed into a rejuvenated Yarra and a newly created Watsons Creek, forming deep gullies. Along Skyline Road due to the capping of resistant Christmas Hills quartzites, erosion was not possible and an escarpment was formed by the uplift. Today we are able to enjoy these magnificent views of the Yarra Valley with the mature old river still meandering across the old plain as it has perhaps for 250 million years.

The oldest outcrops of rock in our area are along Henly Road where it meets Caldwell's Road. Stop there sometimes and examine the ground on the roadside. You will find rounded quartz pebbles, angular grits, chert, flint and quartzite. This is the eroded crest of the Warrandyte anticline. These rocks were once tossed around in the surf along the shore of an ancient Silurian sea.

Romance in the stone, cont'd

PERIODS	EPOCH	MILLIONS OF YEARS	FURTHER EROSION
QUATERNARY	RECENT PLEISTOCENE	1	FURTHER EROSION AND UPLIFT
TERTIARY	PLIOCENE		GARDEN HILL BASALT
	MIOCENE		KANGAROO GROUND SANDS
	OLIGOCENE	21	EROSION OF UPLIFTED BLOCK
	Eocene	58	
	PALUOCENE	70	
	CRETACEOUS	130	UPLIFT ALONG NORTH SIDE OF YARRA FAULT
	JURASSIC	160	
	TRIASSIC	200	
PERMIAN		235	SEDIMENTARY ROCK ERODED TO FORE PLAIN
CARBONIFEROUS		260	SEDIMENT UPLIFTED ABOVE SEA & FOLDED
DEVONIAN		285	
SILURIAN		350	SEDIMENT FORMED IN SHALLOW SEAS
ORDOVICIAN		400	
CAMBRIAN		500	
PRECAMBRIAN			

The Yarra too has been forced to alter its course through the Bend of Islands. It once flowed close to the intersection of Fenly and Oxley Roads. There is also evidence that it crossed Gongflers Drive near the Catani intersection. Don't blame the road makers for all the twists and turns in Fenly Road they simply followed the only ridge available, the ridge that separates the Yarra and Watsons drainage systems. That ridge was a long time in the making.

lick Boiwod



The bite's worse than the bark!

There came down a spider and sat down beside him!

Residents keep telling me that the divorce rate in the Bend of Islands is exceptionally high; in fact, that divorce here is a kind of cottage industry, like pottery or spinning. But I hear that some of us haven't yet experienced the delights of untying the knot. For those unfortunates, lumbered with a worn out spouse they can't even trade in, science has a solution. Tried and proven, and easy as can be. I should charge you for the secret, but humanity's need cannot be my gain (and besides, it was invented by a friend).

This friend is a naturalist, well-known in Sydney, whom I suspect of being the original Miss Muffet, grown up. (Miss Muffet is a true story). Like all persons of discrimination, she loves spiders; even funnelwebs. But her husband didn't. In the course of her work, this lady adopted a beautiful barking spider by the name of Suln. As big as your hand. Suln moved in, and after a very brief interval, husband moved out. No messy fights, he just quietly stole away. Now, if that isn't the ideal divorce.

Spiders are really fascinating, we've a lovely big black house spider in a corner of our bathroom window. She's the neatest, quietest, most amicable lodger you could wish for (we've named her after our friend). We don't have to feed her, and she never leaves her web. You'd wonder she ever gets enough to eat, but a blowfly

every month or so is plenty for her as long as she is sprayed by the shower occasionally. She just sits in her web, dreaming of food, until bzzzz.... one day the dinner gong rings.

The web of the black house spider is untidy looking, constructed of sheets of web with cylindrical retreat tubes. If it is damaged, the spider will repair rather than rebuild it. The web material is not sticky, the spider relies on its prey becoming entangled in the structure, rather than stuck.

There is a fair diversity of spiders in the E.L.Z., enough for us to observe the different methods they employ to earn a crust. (Imagine how crunchy an insect must be, and squashy inside, like a chocolate liquer cream!) The house spider is a typical sedentary trapping species. The garden spider, the lovely fat one with a body like a garlic clove and pretty markings, is typical of the orb web spinners. She builds her web well up from the ground, in open spaces between shrubs, and destroys it after by following the single line of web which most spiders lay down as a guideline while they move about. Thus, Amannes females don't only eat the males of their own species, as other female spiders do; they aim to catch any male they can.

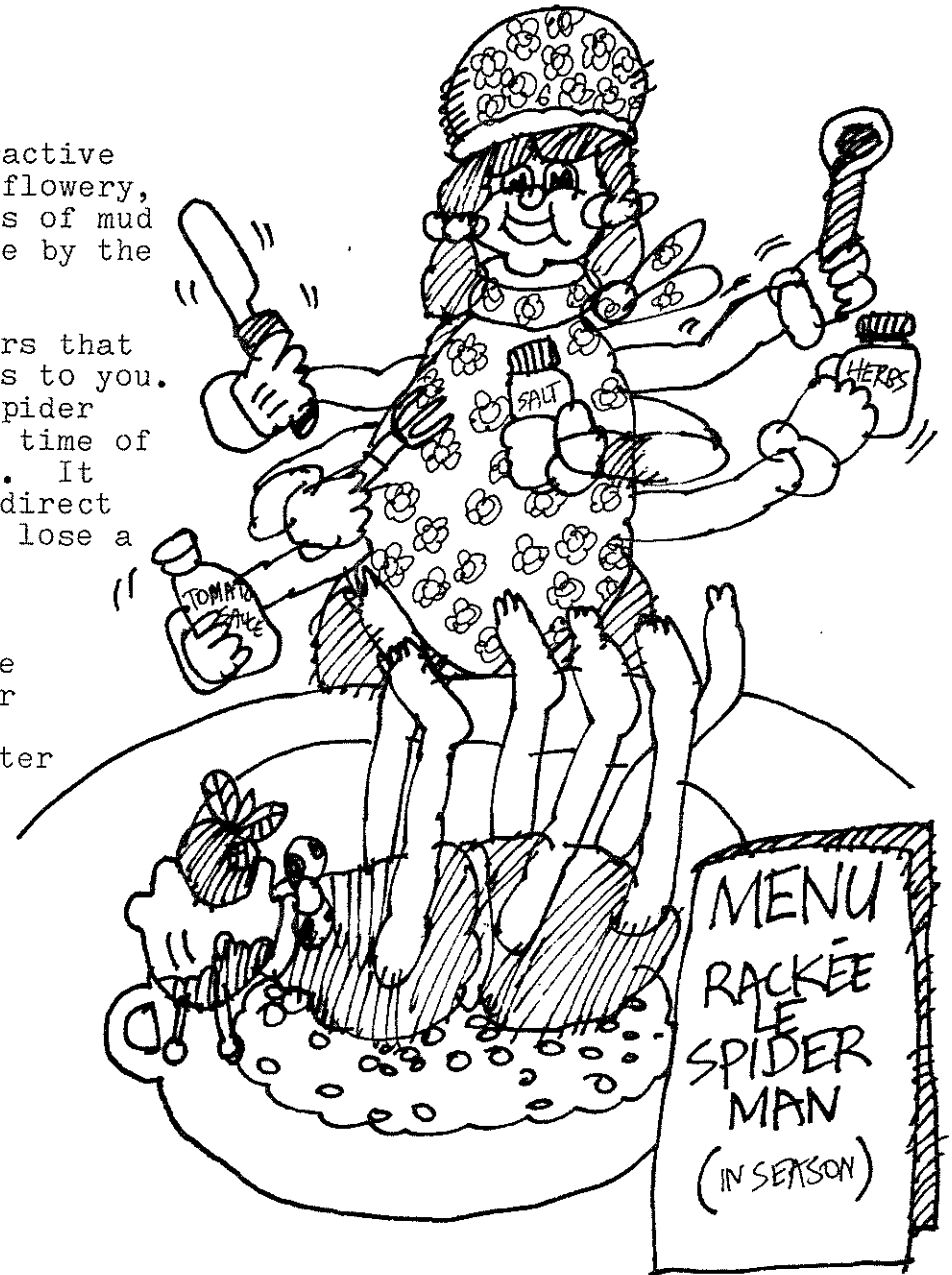
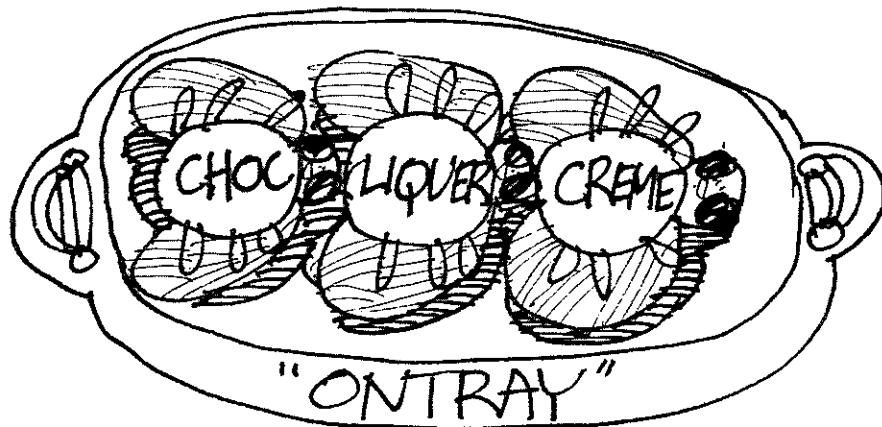
Other groups of spiders don't make webs at all. These fall into two categories; the active hunters, such as jumping spiders, and the ambushers, which take up a position and wait for the prey to come to them.

"The bite's worse than the bark!" cont'd

Around the E.L.Z. these are typified by the many attractive genera of flower spiders. If your garden's not very flowery, you've probably seen these most commonly in the cells of mud dauber wasps, paralysed and being consumed from inside by the wasp larva.

You may have noticed I have only discussed spiders that live above ground; I'll leave the ground dwelling ones to you. But the point of all this discussion is that no two spider species catch their prey in the same way, at the same time of day (or year) and in the same position of the habitat. It seems logical and inevitable that there should be no direct competition in nature over aeons, someone is bound to lose a drop out of the race.

But meanwhile, for all you would-be divorcees; I recommend a nice sedentary tangle-web dweller like the redback. They are elegant and easy to feed, and their fearsome reputation will enhance yours no end. Mine lived happily in a flowerpot on the kitchen table, after the divorce.



There's no place like home!

"You're very brave bringing such a tiny baby away on a camping holiday" observed a lady in the caravan park. She would never understand the irony of her words.

The caravan park at Safety Beach where we had chosen to stay a few days boasted all amenities. And all amenities it had. The park was supplied with hot showers, toilets, laundry - with washing machine and ironing facilities. There was power and water to every caravan and a games room with pinball machines and table tennis, not forgetting the mini golf in the garden.

All the caravans were permanently parked and all have a very permanent looking annexe. They all had a little garden, a fence and a name. 'Rita's Retreat', 'Captains Corner', 'Crawley's Creep Inn', are but a few.

There was not a van on site without a television antenna and the relatively few occupied in late February glowed nightly with that peculiar light which indicated that all activity and conversation had been suspended while big brother ate a few more brain cells.

Our little cabin was supplied with a fridge which could turn butter to stone and render fruit and cheese tasteless in little more than an hour. It had an electric jug which could bring water to the boil in about three minutes. By the time we pulled the cord and figured out how to open the top we were guaranteed a lousy cup of tea. Added to this we had a toaster which could blacken the whitest of bread even faster than the jug could boil water. What I'm actually

saying is - we had it good.

At home we have no fridge and must keep our butter in a little stoop down the cellar. As we have no electricity we make our own tea on a kero cooker or on the open fire, toast is made over glowing coals and showers are had whenever and wherever the opportunity presents itself. The nearest to a flush toilet we've achieved is in winter when we kick the nearest burjan bush and duck.

Nicky's nappies are washed in an elaborate system of soaking and rinsing buckets. The water comes from the dam and ends up in the garden.

If the friendly lady in the caravan park could see us at home she'd probably be of the opinion that the more often we took our baby camping the better would be her chances of survival. Mind you at home we don't spend all day battering our -selves half unconscious in an attempt to drive off the persistant little flies and we don't spend our nights playing search-lights with a torch trying to track down mosquitoes.

After due consideration we decided she was right, we were very brave.

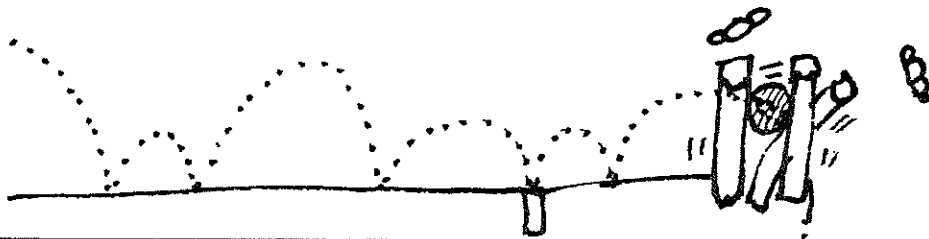
Peter Dougherty

Hit below the green belt.

The Annual GREENIES V's REDNECKS Cricket Match was again a huge success. The match started at Bob Lawrence's paddock in bright sunlight with our own two star opening batsmen John Roberts and John Holladay facing an onslaught by the Rednecks fast bowlers Mattiske and McMahon. In true form our men hit them for fours till a lucky ball from McMahon had Roberts out.

Holladay soon followed due solely to the rough wicket prepared by the boys of the Xmas Hills (Rednecks) Fire Brigade. One by one our team went into bat to the cheers of the capacity crowd, all giving fine exhibitions of every stroke in the book. The colourful Veronica (a Redneck) kept the score meticulously whilst the kids were busy catching Yabbies in the nearby creek. Then it was the Rednecks turn to chase our huge score. Unfortunately our bowlers had been sampling the copious supplies of grape juice and had some difficulty with their run up.

Excellent wicket keeping by Ross Henry kept the Rednecks on their toes but when Stan Bishop, who rumour has it was born and bred on the property at the turn of the century strode out to bat we knew we were beaten. The day finished with a barbeque and presentation of trophies by Hillary and Veronica.



Debutante Ball

Christmas Hills Fire Brigade Auxiliary

Debutante Ball on
March 16th at 8 P.M.

* Official Opening of the New Christmas Hills Hall will be performed.

DRESS - VERY FORMAL

BYO Glass, Grog, O.J.
Supper provided

Tickets \$10.00 each, purchased from
Judy Pierce, Shane Pariss, Dee Pelling
Vic Hurphy, Marg Daverington,
Robbie McMaster and Annette Fuonholz



Our local "emu"

RATES!!

MEMBERS ARE ADVISED THAT IF THEY ARE NOT HAPPY WITH THE SHIRE OF HEALESVILLE RATES THIS YEAR, THEY SHOULD WRITE TO THE TOWN CLERK,
SHIRE OF HEALESVILLE,
BOX 222,
HEALESVILLE 3777

CHRISTMAS HILLS/KANGAROO GROUND BABYSITTING CLUB

OUR MEMBERS ARE DWINDLING,
ANYONE INTERESTED IN JOINING,
PLEASE CONTACT:

PAM McMAHON
730 1652

Yes!. Believe it or not, we have a local native animal in the Bend of Islands resembling the emu. Somewhere between an Emu and a Quail. It is the Painted Button Quail which strangely is not a true quail. Its unique similarities to the Emu, that it has only three toes all facing forward also the fact that like that bird the male incubates and rears the young. Only 190mm (7 inches) high this bird of rich shades and patterns nests on the ground in the shelter of a rock, log, tussock or low shrub. Unfortunately this makes it very vulnerable to straying predators such as owls, hawks, foxes, dogs, cats and cars etc. Obviously it is important for we who live here to limit the threat posed by the unnatural ones. Its colouration ensures survival from its natural enemies. The beauty of the Bend of Islands is much much more than the countryside, its trees and larger animals. Look a little closer, discover and enjoy the beauty of the Painted Button Quail. More importantly protect its habitat for that is also where we build our homes and roads.

Ray Howell

I would like very much to publicly congratulate my wife Ligaya for giving me a handsome son - Renae.

Ray Howell



THIS IS YOUR NEWSLETTER. ANY SUITABLE ARTICLES OR STORIES WELCOME. RING OR SEND TO MICK WOIWOOD,
% KANGAROO GROUND, P.O. 3097 OR PH: 7120 563

THANKS:

TO ALL CONTRIBUTORS WITH A
SPECIAL THANKS TO DEBBIE, GEORGE, CRIC.
AND YOUR ORGANISERS:
MICK W, WENDI & SYD.

Autumn in the veggie patch

Under our climate vegetable may be separated into cool and warm weather crops. With the arrival of autumn it is essential a) to plant the varieties of vegetables suitable for the season and b) harvest them at the right stage of maturity, (eg. not to plant summer growing Great Lakes Lettuce now; pick radishes before they get woody).

Preparation of garden-beds.

A generous amount of composted organic matter dug in will not only ensure a supply of nutrients for the plants, but will also keep the soil friable - and should we have a wet autumn - winter will speed up the drainage of excess water from the garden beds. Remember vegetables are aerobic plants, and need oxygen in their root-zone to, as under water - logged conditions the roots will be damaged. If there is not enough leaf compost, other organic fertilizers (blood and bone, sheep, cow or horse manure) should be added.

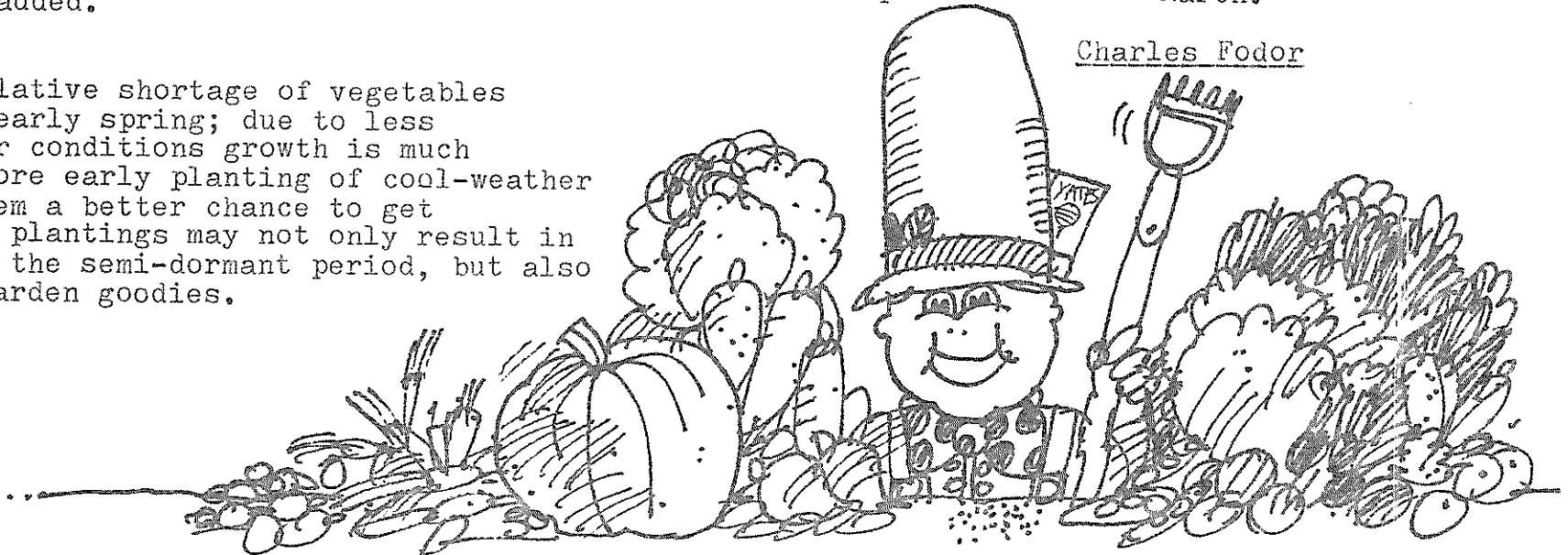
Planting.

There is a relative shortage of vegetables during winter and early spring; due to less sunshine and colder conditions growth is much slower, and therefore early planting of cool-weather crops will give them a better chance to get established. Late plantings may not only result in slow growth during the semi-dormant period, but also in a shortage of garden goodies.

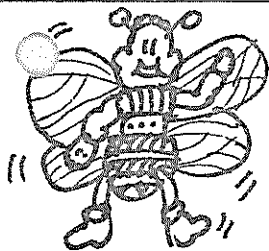
Here is a seasonal reminder of what can be planted routinely - but plant only the things you like to eat - and try some of the unusual vegetables too (bok-chay, chinese celery, corn salad, salsify etc).

<u>Vegetable</u>	<u>Months</u>
Broad beans	March - April
Broccoli	March - April
Cabbage	March - April
Herbs	April
Lettuce	March - April
Onions	March - April
Parsnip	March - April
Radish	March - April
Silverbeet	March
Spinach	March - April
White turnips	March.

Charles Fodor



A bit of a b...



Mushie gardening

Notes for Bend of Islands bee-keepers.

If you or your friends keep some hives of bees at your place consider whether you are getting the benefit of your efforts - or whether you could do better.

There are basically two strains of bees in this area; the brown (Italian) - with orange to pale yellow stripes across their abdomen, and the grey (Grey Caucasian). Both strains have their advantages and disadvantages (depending on what your program is). The browns breed more freely - but they are more aggressive, especially as the weather gets cooler. They also tend to swarm more to work better in dryer, warmer weather.

The greys are more gentle, but tend to glue down the frames with propolis more. They swarm less, but work in cooler, wetter weather which is more often than not the case during spring here south of the Dividing Range. Individual bee-keepers changing their queens (thus eventually the strain of their bee-population.) will be affected by the cross-breeding with the bees in their neighbourhood. However if there is enough interest in changing over to the gentler greys - we could make a co-operative effort next spring and change this area to predominantly grey strain; we could get reliable queens (from a commercial queen-breeder) especially if we order in bulk; so please let us know - you may get less stings and more honey if you do.

Charles Fodor.

If you have patches of tee-tree or shrubs that provide shade enough to stop grass growing and it's an eastern slope it's likely you will be able to grow mushrooms in the following manner. Next time you find some wild mushrooms remove the stems and put them on a sheet of paper for a few hours - frills down. The spores will drop and form patterns on the paper.

The mushrooms should not be left more than a few hours because grubs, that can't be seen at first, grow very quickly into slaters and drop down and eat the spores.

I've often wondered why mushrooms don't seem to spread very easily - the grubs must be one reason. Take the sheets of paper to the chosen ground and after raking the leaves and humus aside and either rub the paper directly onto the ground or onto your hand and then onto the ground. Then cover the patch with about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch of light humus, or whatever other soil there is.

I've started new patches where mushrooms have been seen previously and giving nature this helping hand have harvested incredible quantities of market garden quality mushrooms. They come up thick and fast after a couple of wet days. The still dark dampness under thick teatree is ideal it seems. Five minutes work is well rewarded.

Michael Daunt



SOME THOUGHTS ON THE 'ENVIRONMENTAL LIVING ZONE' from Felicity Faris

Ten years ago, I set out to find a patch of bush to live in! Having grown up in Warrandyte I was a confirmed bush lover and each weekend for 6 months I travelled 50 miles from Melbourne in a planned grid, looking for bush blocks.

My appetite was constantly wetted by descriptions such as "bush haven .. natural forest .. untouched .. abounding in native flora and fauna .. sparkling creek frontages". Real Estate Agents euphorically showed me "wildflower gardens alive with native fauna" and were annoyed and bewildered when I pointed out boneseed, onion weed, pasture grasses, sparrows and starlings, not to mention pollution-choked creeks. In 6 months I saw more bugged bush than I ever wish to see again. There were trees .. but nothing else! Every other living thing which should have been there had long since vanished. Empty forest!

Imagine my delight and relief when unexpectedly, I found the Bend of Islands. Only a stonethrow from where I grew up and just 26 miles from town. My favourite 'oz' bush. Dry .. sparse .. untidy .. covered with orchids and still home to a multitude of insects, birds, reptiles and mammals. Better still .. the river .. still moderately clean and not a willow in sight. It was like finding Paradise.

My delight was complete when a quick walk revealed so many of the delicate and tiny wildflowers of my childhood and signs everywhere of resident roos, wallabies, wombats and birds. That evening, for the first time in my life, I saw a hopping mouse. It boinked about in front of us and made me very glad I'd found this tiny space in the world where people would allow my mouse to live unharassed. By then I'd discovered what was in store .. a residential conservation zone.

After the usual trials and tribulations of building I relaxed and realized just how unique and beautiful and special this little corner of the world is. A never-ending variety of birds became daily visitors, at night I was entertained by possums, bats, owls, gliders and tuans. I was surrounded by scraggy, scruffy, peeling gums, creaking branches, rustling leaves and no house for a mile. Paradise! My first swim made me realize just how magical this area is .. I could have been hundreds of miles from anywhere.

To me the Environmental Living Zone offered a completely new and achievable way of living in the bush, enjoying all these things yet doing my utmost to ensure that it was all protected. Multiply my own 8 acres by another 200 allotments or so and we had a real chance of making residential conservation work. A real chance to prove we can live in the bush without destroying it and the things it supports.

So much of Australia has been changed to suit whatever vision individuals might have had as to what is pleasant. Mostly that has been a vision of England .. greenness! Lately it seems many hanker to live in W.A and quickly eradicate all things local to surround themselves with W.A. natives. There's nothing wrong with that of course, its just that there is so much of Australia where people can do that and the E.L.Z is so tiny. Why do it here?

So little of Australia provides real refuge for its own creatures and plants. Excluding National Parks for instance, domestic pets can be kept in every single part of Australia except the E.L.Z. People who need pets have the whole of Australia to choose from so it bewilders me then that they should choose to live in the one tiny residential area which excludes them. I personally find it hard to come to terms with people who buy into the ELZ knowing full well what land-use restraints apply. Why deliberately choose to live somewhere knowing that the things you want to do and have are in conflict? Obviously it creates tension. I guess its just part of the great Australian ethos of 'change everything to suit ourselves' rather than entertain the notion of adjusting and accepting what exists around us. Just doesn't seem fair to me .. the bush has no standing .. no rights!

Obviously for those who lived here prior to Gazettal of the zoning, it is natural and right that they should continue to enjoy whatever uses they had established and that right is spelled out in the provisions of the zoning. Even without E.L.Z these uses would be subject to controls. It's also a 'right' of other residents to expect that pre-existing uses will not create 'nuisance' nor interfere with their right to live under the provisions of the zoning.

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SOME THOUGHTS ON E.L.Z. cont'd (2)

"Going bush" is no longer an open ticket to do anything we like, like it was once. Wherever we live in Australia there are rules, regulations, provisions and social controls, designed for particular purposes in the interests of all. The E.L.Z. provisions were specifically designed for the purpose of allowing people to live in the bush without destroying it. They were not designed to fulfill an individual vision, nor to inconvenience or upset people or to tell people how they should live. It is a way of saying there were many creatures and natural objects here when we came, let's give them some rights too. Let's see if we can co-exist. Let's see if we can intergrate with our own landscape instead of fighting it.

People are important, but in the end so is our environment. It nourishes us in so many practical, cultural and spiritual ways. There are millions of acres out there where people come first. Here, I feel, we're saying people are still important but so are other things .. our animals, birds, plants and streams. They should have some standing too! We fill our homes with paintings and pictures and books about them .. why not cherish the real thing! Of course to do this requires some thought and adjustments on our part by and large the E.L.Z. provisions are pretty easy to live with. In my view the provisions don't really prevent us from doing most things. I lived in Carlton before coming here and there just as many do's and don'ts .. they were just about different things.

Many of us have a different notion as to what "conservation" means. To some its trees .. to some plants .. to some birds and to others soil erosion. The point is that it is the combination of all these sorts of things. One landowner doing something on his/her property probably doesn't have much impact .. multiply that by many landowners on many properties and the total affect does have major impact. Look at Warrandyte .. the gradual change from natural bushland supporting its own wildlife and plants has taken very little time. Almost without noticing it has changed from its natural state to an empty 'treed suburb'. No-one saw a sudden change, it just crept up quietly and inevitably, the result of the combination of many individual actions over a period of time and no restraints on land-uses.

Of course change is inevitable here too. Its a question of 'how much' and 'in what way' we allow changes to occur. Those of us who want to see the E.L.Z succeed on a conservation level and those who want to see it go altogether will probably not be satisfied. By living here at all we are having an impact. Its then very much a question of the 'degree' of impact and what ways we can lessen it. For me, the ELZ provisions are eminently sensible given their purpose of protecting flora and fauna. Though some of the restrains seem hard to some people I feel okay about them because those here prior to gazettal can continue whatever uses they had and those who came after knew full well what was required.

Recently the provisions seem to have drawn criticism with regard to sale of property on the basis of ELZ lowering values. It seems to me that zoning of any sort is always a factor in real estate whatever it is and wherever it is. Perhaps some owners have obtained less than they wanted for property but others have obtained more than they asked for. It happens anywhere. There has also been concern expressed about restriction of 'freedom'. To me freedom is a difficult one. Here I am not free to alienate all of my land .. in Carlton I was not free to extend my kitchen. Here I am not free to plant pines .. in Carlton I was not free to plant gums. Here I suffer bad roads .. in Carlton I was not free to park my car outside my own house. Here I am not free to do some things .. in Carlton I was not free to do others. Our freedom is restrained by many things .. money, time, skill, work, education .. whatever. All sorts of restraints, obvious and less obvious, inhibit our freedom yet we buck at other small things we see as limiting our freedom. My point is .. freedom is an illusion.

I look at it this way. All the little freedoms I am disallowed here amount to many little freedoms allowed for our wildlife and natural objects. Seems fair to me!

Perhaps sometimes in the course of meetings, submissions, issues and other bureaucratic business, we lose sight of how we affect others. Perhaps we offend each other over some issue or another, even unwittingly. One thing is certain ... we will never all agree on everything. Most us came here because we love the bush .. the space .. the environment offered. To that extent we have a great deal in common. Some, like me, came because The Bend of Islands offered a rare chance to live in the Australian bush, respecting its right to exist and flourish and later liked the idea of

the Environmental Living Zone .. again a new and exciting way of preserving our landscape. For me, that is the most important thing. We (the people) can argue our rights, agree or disagree .. our forest and its dependents cannot. They are subject to our whims and fancies and notions of what is right or best. We can stay or go .. whether they stay or go is entirely up to us. The bush is powerless to protect itself. For me the E.L.Z. zoning goes some small way towards offering some protection but pieces of paper alone just aren't enough .. it will depend upon our willingness to abide by the provisions. Enough is known about the sorts of activities and actions which threaten bushland and the provisions of the zoning embody that knowledge. The thing is ... every single step we take towards 'change' needs to be taken with care and thought whether it be as individuals or as a community, if we seriously wish to ensure that our environment suffers as little as possible.

I'm certain that most of us came here to enjoy all that the area has to offer .. the trees .. the birds .. the streams .. fresh air .. space .. the animals .. the tranquility. We certainly didn't come here for the convenience of shops, roads, the usual sorts of suburban services. What the area becomes in the future is very dependent upon the sorts of decisions we make now as individuals and as a group. All I'm really saying is let's take care ... its much easier to create rifts than it is to heal them ... its very easy to make quick decisions now which have a dreadful impact later.

I'd love to think that for years to come I, and whoever comes after me, can drive along Henley Road giving and receiving friendly waves, slowing down for our roos to cross, noticing a koala, enjoying the sight of our silly choughs and roadside wildflowers. E.L.Z is there so our birds, animals, trees, reptiles and plants can enjoy a minimally disturbed habitat. In turn I benefit because they are all there for me to enjoy. I truly can't see any other way of doing it!

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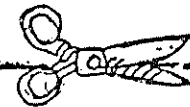
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