



NEWSLETTER

Working together for a better community

October 2007

EDITOR'S NOTES

When Europeans first came to Australia they thought the endless olive-green trees were drab and boring, in contrast to the varied greens and autumn colours of deciduous trees in Europe. My mother, when she came from Africa to live with us in Canberra, had the same opinion, remembering the m'sasa trees of the central African veldt that she grew up with; in spring they burst out in new foliage—beautiful red and russet leaves that transform the landscape before the rains come. (It's very difficult to say what triggers the flush.) Our eucalypts don't change colour in autumn, and spring flushes are dependent on rainfall, but when they happen they can be beautiful and also transform the landscape. You only have to look at the (unburnt) trees along the local roads, with their new leaves in a range of reds and greens and browns, shining in the sun, to see that, despite the tough life they live, on shallow sandstone soils, subject to droughts and winds, these trees too can put on a lovely show.

Which leads me back to my interest in the weather. You may (or may not) remember that in July '05 I put some rainfall data and basic analysis in the newsletter. The monthly averages for July to October are about 80mm/month. This year we have had (at Withycombe): July, 17mm; August, 113mm; September, 64mm; October, 41mm and November,, so far, 144mm. Very patchy. I think the dry periods in July and October (a lot of the rain we did get then was in rather useless little showers) contributed to the prolific flowering of azaleas and rhodos, and the burst of new growth on the eucalypts when there was good rain. Many plants flower more prolifically when they are a bit stressed, and a burst of vegetative growth when water stress is relieved is also typical.

This will be the last newsletter this year; Diana and I will miss the Christmas party, so I will take this opportunity to wish you all a Happy Christmas and all the best for 2008

Joe Landsberg

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PEASE SUPPORT COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES:

December	1	Christmas party
	9	Service at St Georges church; 3 pm
	16	Carol service; 7.30 pm
January	3	Bush care, Wynne Reserve
	13	Service at St Georges church; 3 pm
	18	Bush walk
February	8	Bush care
	10	Service at St Georges church; 3 pm
	15	Bush walk

IN THIS ISSUE

- Editor's notes
- MWPA committee news
- Village Hall Jottings
- Thanks to First Responders
- The future of pile burning
- Garden notes
- Olympian memories
- Neologisms
- Purple prose and Medical Priorities

MWPA COMMITTEE NEWS

Toilets at Cathedral Reserve

For so long now, **toilets** have been a constant topic of business and, might I say, of conversation at committee meetings and general meetings, and a continuous item in all newsletters and correspondence with Blue Mountains City Council. Finally, after many years of negotiation, requesting and pleading, Blue Mountains City Council has installed a block of two toilets at Cathedral Reserve. They are a country style toilet, light and bright, tucked away towards the rear of the reserve. We feel a great sense of achievement and hope that those might be sufficient for some time and that this item might be absent from business for the immediate future. Am I being too optimistic?

Anniversary Walkway

Another positive response from Council has been achieved. The closure of Anniversary Walkway, along a section of The Avenue, caused by the embankment collapse after heavy rain in February, has been a matter for concern. Fortunately the anticipated accidents to pedestrians forced to use the road have not eventuated. The embankment has now been stabilized and although it doesn't look attractive, it is now safe. In time vegetation will grow across it and the gap will not be so noticeable.

Marcus Clark Reserve

A walking track through the Reserve has been cleared and wood-chipped. This is the first stage and it will possibly be widened. The entrance from the road will be enlarged and a sign will be erected in this area. The next step will be to place plaques identifying significant trees and shrubs. Take time to wander through and see what has been achieved so far. Remember, this is your land, the title being held by the Progress Association for the Mount Wilson community.

Gold Lettering on the War Memorial

The lettering on the War Memorial in The Avenue has been re-gilded. This has been achieved by a grant from the Department of Veteran Affairs which the MWPA applied for. The timing for the completion of this project was excellent and was appreciated by everyone who attended the Remembrance Day Service.

Remembrance Day Service

This was held on Sunday, 11th November. Approximately 45 people attended. The service is usually led by the Rector of St. George's Angli-

can Church but because he is involved in Church services on Sundays was not available this year. Ron Green presided in the Rector's place. The Village Choir, led by Beverley Thompson provided a beautiful rendition of "Let There Be Peace on Earth". Bill Childs, a student of Blue Mountains Grammar School performed bugler duties, Richard Prentice laid a wreath and Milba Mewburn did flag raising duty. After the service everyone adjourned to the hall and enjoyed another in Arthur Delbridge's series of interesting talks about servicemen named on the War Memorial. This year he spoke about Frederick Mann and George Valder. Morning tea was then enjoyed by all. Our thanks go again to Robert Chesney for organizing this event with his usual efficiency.

Christmas Party

Don't forget the Christmas party on Saturday, 1st December at 7.00 p.m. in the Village Hall. Please let me know if you are coming, for catering purposes. Dinner is provided but please bring your own drinks.

Corrections to Phone Book

There are three changes to the Mount Wilson/Mount Irvine Phone Book. Please alter your copies accordingly.

1. The Sydney number for Davies/Hoskin is incorrect. I do not know the correct one, but I believe that they can be contacted by ringing their mobile numbers.
2. Gow, Tim and Kim. Please delete their Sydney and mobile numbers. They are both at present residing in Bulgaria.
3. On the front page the correct number for B.M. WIRES is 4577 2669.

New Property Owners

It seems to be a busy time for property sales on the mountain. If you are a new owner, and wish to become a member of the Mount Wilson Progress Association (or are an established property owner and are not a member) please contact me on 4756 2162 or rm.green@bigpond.com. Even if you do not wish to join, it would be appreciated if you could give either myself or the Rural Fire Service your name and contact number. This is important for times of emergency, particularly during the bush fire season. With all this wonderful rain we are enjoying now, fire seems to be a remote possibility, but seasons can change so rapidly it is best to be prepared.

Moira Green

MOUNT WILSON VILLAGE HALL JOTTINGS.

Much has happened since the August Newsletter. Thanks to BMCC we now have 15 new tables and a trolley for them. The tables look great and about half the weight of the old ones which are gone for good. We are now talking to Council about new chairs.

We have been successful in a combined BMCC and Hall Committee application to the Federal Government for a generator which will make the Hall entirely independent as an emergency centre and not subject to electricity failures. This will involve considerable electrical work and we are hoping to install ceiling fans, move the audio/visual wiring into the ceiling, provide more power points in the kitchen & hall and we have asked for a proper gas hot water system connected to a hot water tap for the kitchen sink.

Something which has come up in considering rewiring is that if we don't have to go to three phase wiring we can save money on the wiring and the generator. The only reason we need to go to three phase wiring is that we have very energy-hungry heaters in the hall so Council is looking at the possibility of replacing the electric space heaters with gas fired under-floor

central heating. We will know more on that shortly.

On Tuesday 6th we had our first Melbourne Cup luncheon, beautifully organised by Judy Tribe. Thirty-two people attended and enjoyed the event on the big screen. Judy and Moira prepared the chicken & champers luncheon and were enthusiastically helped in the kitchen by Maureen Ryan and the hard-working Julie Townend.

Everyone seemed to enjoy themselves and many said they would come again. The food was beautifully prepared and the company convivial.

Two comments. A big thanks to Judy and her helpers and expect another luncheon next year.

We have published the plans for the Stage 2 Restoration work and have had a few suggestions so that plan is almost ready to be submitted to Council and I expect that will be done before Christmas. Cheers for now,

Ron Green

THANKS TO FIRST RESPONDERS

The First Responders had their first call out when Peter Richey felt seriously unwell on Saturday evening a couple of weeks ago. The call-out system worked and five people turned out to help. They did the right thing(s), including guiding the ambulance to Gowan Ross without delay. Peter was taken down to Lithgow hospital. Happily he checked out OK and was not hospitalised.

Peter would like to thank the First Responders. He says he felt they did a good job and that it's reassuring to have them here. He also contributed to the debriefing, held later in the week with the ambulance officers, to see what can be learned from the incident.

Peter's experience indicates that we can all, probably, rest a bit easier about the prospect of help with sickness or an accident. We hope Peter doesn't need them again.

NOTE

If there is a medical emergency of any sort, and you need help

dial 000

not the number of one the First Responder team. That will get the First Responders and the ambulance in the shortest time

THE FUTURE OF PILE BURNING

After one aborted attempt BMCC organised a public 'consultation' meeting in Mount Wilson on Saturday 27 October to discuss their future open burning policy. Present were Peter Belshaw and Frank Garofalow, council's Bushfire Technical Officer and Manager of Environmental Management, about 30 locals, two Mount Tomah residents, and an independent facilitator.

Residents objected strongly to council's procedure for setting up and advertising the meeting, the aborted attempt being the result of that procedure. Council employees had arbitrarily selected a date then advertised that date in the Blue Mountains Gazette, a magazine not delivered to Mount Wilson, Mount Irvine or Mount Tomah! Fortunately one resident had spotted the ad just prior to the intended meeting.

The new date was chosen and again advertised in the Gazette. At least this time MWPA was aware and subsequently ensured that all residents were notified with a letterbox drop.

That frustration being clearly aired the meeting proceeded

Peter and Frank explained the amendments to the State Protection of the Environment Operations Act. They were now consulting with various communities as part of the review of their policy and prior to drawing up a draft for council approval - hopefully before next autumn.

With respect to open burning of dead garden vegetation, options available to council were

- not to allow any burning
- to have individual applications to burn separately processed by council
- to give one-off 'class-of-person' approval to burn in certain areas, subject to certain conditions
- to allow anyone to burn at any time

Apart from one resident who voiced her concern about global warming (an obvious concern to us all) the general consensus of opinion at the meeting favoured option 3.

Options 1 and 4 were not discussed, although many vocal Blue Mountains residents favour option 1. Option 2 is basically 'where we were at' before pile burning was originally approved several years ago and where we had returned to earlier in the year. Criticism of option 2 included: - the waste of time involved with both the paperwork and the man hours needed for every burn to be individually inspected prior to being lit; the time delay meant that conditions had likely changed when approval was finally given; the fact that all approvals were given by the responsible council employee of the day, and, in the past that employee had been anything but helpful or constructive or even consistent!

Option 3 is what we know as 'pile burning'. Much discussion was had about the various conditions surrounding pile burning, with the main criticism of past procedures being the actual reporting prior to and after burning. It was generally agreed that a more streamlined system could be set up.

By the conclusion of the meeting I think it would be fair to say that the council officers involved seemed to be more open minded than perhaps we had expected. They urged us all to make a submission re our preferred option and any suggestions we had relating to that option. Their deadline for submissions was 9 November. They did however confirm that they would accept late submissions. It was the sheer volume of letters from our residents that originally won us the right to pile-burn so if you haven't yet 'penned your opinion' please do so soon (BMCC, Locked Bag 1005, Katoomba NSW 2780).

The e-mail address for submissions is council@bmcc.nsw.gov.au

Susie Hope

Can I add my voice to Susie's: if you haven't sent in a submission, please do so NOW. We really don't need to go through all this again.

Ed.

Neologisms: Alternate meanings to ordinary words:

- Coffee (n.), the person upon whom one coughs.
- Flabbergasted (adj.), appalled over how much weight you have gained.
- Willy-nilly (adj.), impotent..
- Esplanade (v.), to attempt an explanation while drunk
- Testicle (n.), a humorous question on an exam. .
- Negligent (adj.), describes a condition in which you absentmindedly answer the door in your nightgown.

GARDEN NOTES

What a wonderful spring it has been this year—one of the most beautiful Keith and I can remember. Galanthus and hellibore herald the spring; pieris, camellias, magnolias, daffodils, and cherries follow and a magnificent display from the azaleas and rhododendrons highlight the season.

As summer slowly creeps in we have periods when we are shrouded by thick mist, with everything dripping softly, branches hanging low and green, in its many shades, the dominant colour.

Amongst the green the dogwoods (*Cornus kousa*) stand out, with their many white flowers (of which the bracts are the conspicuous part) poised on slender, erect stalks covering the branches. These bracts slowly turn pink as they age. This lovely small tree comes from Japan and Korea and the form *chinensis*, as its name suggests, comes from China. It does not seem to be affected by the dogwood disease and it turns a lovely bronze and crimson in the autumn.

In November the shrub which catches the eye is *Kalmia latifolia*, or Mountain Laurel, a charming evergreen shrub from eastern North America. Although it has been grown on Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine for many years it is a little known shrub in most parts of Australia, partly because of its late flowering. The buds of the flowers are bright pink, rather like small peaks of icing sugar, and open into exquisite, pale pink, saucer-shaped flowers, a bit like an upturned umbrella. It is a hardy shrub in the mountains; the flowers last for a long time when picked and it cuts back well if it gets too big. It needs winter sun to flower well and does not seem to have any problems here.

Over the years plant breeders have created new forms of *Kalmia*. 'Clementine Churchill' has rose pink flowers; 'Olympic Fire' and 'Osbos Red' have iridescent red buds opening to pink flowers; 'Bullseye' has a maroon banding on the inside of the flowers; 'Freckles' has ten maroon spots and 'Carousel' has an intricate pattern of maroon markings on the inside of the corolla.

Both these beautiful November-flowering plants (*Cornus* and *Kalmia*) are worth a place in any garden.

Libby Raines

OLYMPIAN MEMORIES

It is remarkable to have two Olympians in a family, but that's the case with John Holt and his brother Neville. They both represented Australia as shooters—Neville at the 1948 London Olympic Games and John at the 1960 Rome Olympics. In 2000 they participated in the Sydney Olympic torch relay together, and remember that occasion well. Neville, who is now 95, but apparently in very good shape, has a framed photo in his nursing home room of him and John with the Olympic torch. He is apparently the oldest living Olympian.

It's great to have such people in our community.

(Based on an article in 'Olympians of Australia'. Oct.2007.Provided by Graham Thompson)

PURPLE PROSE

The following come from the English Department of San Jose University, who ran (date unknown) a competition in which contestants had to write the first sentence of a bad novel. The first ten, in reverse order:

- 10) "As a scientist, Throckmorton knew that if he were ever to break wind in the echo chamber, he would never hear the end of it."
- 9) "Just beyond the Narrows, the river widens."
- 8) "With a curvaceous figure that Venus would have envied, a tanned, unblemished oval face framed with lustrous thick brown hair, deep azure-blue eyes fringed with long black lashes, perfect teeth that vied for competition, and a small straight nose, Marilee had a beauty that defied description."
- 7) "Andre, a simple peasant, had only one thing on his mind as he crept along the east wall: 'Andre creep... Andre creep... Andre creep.'"
- 6) "Stanislaus Smedley, a man always on the cutting edge of narcissism, was about to give his body and soul to a back-alley sex-change surgeon to become the woman he loved."
- 5) "Although Sarah had an abnormal fear of mice, it did not keep her from eeking out a living at a local pet store."
- 4) "Stanley looked quite bored and somewhat detached, but then penguins often do."
- 3) "Like an over-ripe beefsteak tomato rimmed with cottage cheese, the corpulent remains of Santa Claus lay dead on the hotel floor."
- 2) "Mike Hardware was the kind of private eye who didn't know the meaning of the word 'fear'; a man who could laugh in the face of danger and spit in the eye of death—in short, a moron with suicidal tendencies."

And the winner was

"The sun oozed over the horizon, shoved aside darkness, crept along the greensward, and, with sickly fingers, pushed through the castle window, revealing the pillaged princess, hand at throat, crown asunder, gaping in frenzied horror at the sated, sodden amphibian lying beside her, disbelieving the magnitude of the frog's deception, screaming madly, 'You lied!'"

Medical priorities

Two patients limp in to two different medical clinics, with the same complaint. Both have trouble walking and appear to require a hip replacement.

The first patient is examined within the hour, is x-rayed the same day and has a time booked for surgery the following week.

The second sees his family doctor after waiting three weeks for an appointment, then waits eight weeks to see a specialist, then gets an x-ray which isn't reviewed for another week. He finally has his surgery scheduled for a month from then.

Why the different treatment for the two patients?

Answer: the first is a golden retriever; the second is a senior citizen.

Next time take me to a vet!

Thanks for that George, I guess you're not looking for custom