



# The Mounts

## The Community Newsletter of Mount Wilson and Mount Irvine



**April 2015**

### Welcome

The first two days of Easter brought torrential rain; everyone now has their fingers crossed that the rains which have been so wonderful, and so welcome, over the summer months, will hold off for the Mt Wilson Autumn Festival. An amazing programme has been compiled by the organizing team - residents and visitors alike will surely find difficulty in fitting in everything that grabs their attention over the day. The guest speaker programme is particularly appealing; then again, so is the diverse array of open gardens, the abundant choice of quality produce and products on sale and the culinary temptations of the renowned school of Mt Wilson catering.

Less appetizing unfortunately is the sad story of the recent desecration of the beautiful avenue of trees between Davies Lane and Hillcrest Avenue by the contractor engaged by Endeavour Energy. One sees many instances of brutal tree lopping in their travels around NSW; it is particularly unpalatable that a magnificent stand of trees has been grossly disfigured in a heritage village that has an enviable reputation for attracting visitors from all over Australia who come to see these very avenues.

Whilst there is a need to maintain trees in an orderly manner in order to ensure the power supply we as residents and consumers depend so much on, surely there is a better way to meet the obvious environmental constraints. Residents are urged to let Endeavour Energy know their displeasure; it is the only way we can influence a favourable outcome.

**Tim Gow** Tel. 0412 133 559

e-mail: [timsgow@gmail.com](mailto:timsgow@gmail.com)

### Community Calendar

<b>April</b>	<b>Fri 10th</b> 9.00–12.00 Bush Care— Hay Lane	<b>Sat 11th</b> 4.00 pm Mt Wilson Village Hall AGM	<b>Sat 11th</b> 5.30 pm MWPA, General & Special Meeting	<b>Sun 12th</b> 3.00 pm Mt Wilson Church Service
<b>Fri 17th</b> Bushwalking Group— Darwin's Walk, National Pass	<b>Sat 18th</b> Mt Wilson Village Festival			
<b>May</b>	<b>Sun 3rd</b> 9.00 am RFS Training Mt Wilson Shed	<b>Fri 8th</b> 9.00–12.00 Bush Care— Hay Lane	<b>Sun 10th</b> 3.00 pm Mt Wilson Church Service	<b>Fri 15th</b> Bushwalking Group— Centennial Glen Blackheath
<b>June</b>	<b>Sun 7th</b> 9.00 am RFS Training Mt Wilson Shed	<b>Fri 12th</b> 9.00–12.00 Bush Care— Hay Lane	<b>Sun 14th</b> 3.00 pm Mt Wilson Church Service	<b>Fri 19th</b> Bushwalking Group— Mermaid Cave, Blackheath

### **Village Hall Jottings**

A reminder that the Mount Wilson Village Hall Management Committee AGM will be held on Saturday 11th April at 4pm in the Mount Wilson Village Hall.

The agenda of the meeting will give a report to the community of Hall activities in the past year and present the plans for the coming year.

The minutes of the 2014 AGM are available for viewing on [www.mtwilson.com.au](http://www.mtwilson.com.au)

Please join us at the conclusion of the meeting for afternoon tea before the start of the Mt Wilson Progress Association meetings.

There will be copies of the renovation plans available to discuss with the committee.

**Judy Tribe, Chair, Mt Wilson Village Hall**

### **MOUNT WILSON PROGRESS ASSOCIATION COMMITTEE NEWS**

#### **Coming Events**

- General Meeting – Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> April, 2015 at 5.30 p.m. at the Village Hall
- Special General Meeting – Saturday, 11<sup>th</sup> April, 2015 at 6.15 p.m.
- Autumn Festival – Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> April

#### **Village Maintenance**

The Mount Wilson Progress Association as agents for the Blue Mountains City Council is responsible for maintaining the reserves, verges, street trees, walking tracks and removal of fallen branches. At present the committee is reassessing the costs involved with this maintenance as it has become clear for some time the funds we presently receive from Council are not enough to do the work that has been agreed needs to be done.

The Golden Elms on Mount Irvine Road have again been brutally pruned by Asplundh, the contractor for Endeavour Energy. Although the company follows the requirements set down by Endeavour for bushfire prone areas, the nature of a heritage village, as Mount Wilson is, should be considered and the natural foliage of such beautiful trees be allowed to develop. The committee will again take up the issue of underground cabling with Endeavour Energy. Please send letters to Endeavour with copies to Council to let them know the level of dissatisfaction.

#### **Council Matters**

After many years of lobbying, a gate has been installed at the Council dump site at the foot of the Zigzag to prevent illegal dumping of waste material which is a fire hazard underneath the power lines.

Negotiations are ongoing to place hand sanitizers in the public toilets to prevent the accumulation of paper waste in the toilets.

#### **Volunteers for Bush Care**

Please consider joining the Bush Care Group which meets on the second Friday of each month from 9.00 to 12 noon. The numbers attending have been dwindling over the last few years and we need your help to keep our beautiful environment free of weeds. This is an opportunity to work in the beautiful outdoors while enjoying great company. Contact Libby Raines for more information.

### **New Members**

Welcome to Sue and Steve Woolfenden of *Trelm*, Hay Lane, and Matt Mason of *Sefton Cottage*, Church Lane, new members of the Mount Wilson Progress Association.

All residents and property owners are eligible to join the Association. Please contact me on 4756 2162 or [rm.green@bigpond](mailto:rm.green@bigpond) if you are not members and wish to become members. The more members we have the better we can represent the community.

**Moira Green, Secretary MWPA**

### **The Sydney Morning Herald, Saturday 4th March, 1876**

David Howell has submitted the following titbit from an 1876 article on Mt Wilson from the *Sydney Morning Herald*:

*".... The mountain is reached from Sydney. Leaving by the train at 9am the visitor is set down at 2.30 at a platform lately erected by the Government at Bell's line, about seven miles beyond Mount Victoria, whence a leisurely ride or drive, as previously arranged, will conduct to the first summit level of the mountain, at from 4 to 5pm. This part of the journey is amply repaid by the scenery en route. A number of proprietors of land on the mountain contribute to maintaining a bailiff on the ground, and he has built for himself an hospice in which he can accommodate three or four gentlemen not disposed to rough it. A mountain tea, with a slice of pickled beef and delicious damper, followed by a short ramble, leads to retirement for the night and sound repose until aroused by the fresh cool air of the morning – fresh and cool but not cold – many people shudder at the idea of mountain temperature, forgetting the physiological fact that animal bodies, at low temperature, rapidly lose heat by the sea coast, while they generate it under the influence of inland or mountain air: this partly explains the rapid beneficial effect of change upon the human system, and why people feel vigorous under dry inland cold, while they are shivered up under the damp cold of a littoral position....."*

As David remarks, this may be the reason that we prefer the mountains in general, and Mount Wilson in particular, to the beach.

The writer concludes the article with the following:

*"As a place of resort from the drudgery of city life, it would be hard to find a more desirable spot than Mount Wilson."*

**Mt Wilson/Mt Irvine Rural Fire Brigade*****Pile Burn Procedure***

We know from experience that it is much easier it is to defend a property that is properly prepared. We have numerous instances now of fire stopping as it reached open cleared spaces but continuing to burn if it met undergrowth, leaf litter and mulch. Fence lines which have not been cleared provide 'highways' for the fire to travel towards your home. The bushfire season is now over and we have the opportunity, in cooler weather, to maintain our properties and dispose of dead vegetation through pile burns.

At this time of year, what concerns the authorities is not the risk of fire, but the risk of pollution, and the restrictions that are now placed on the burning off of garden waste are mainly an attempt to control that pollution. In the Blue Mountains this is the responsibility of Blue Mountains City Council and generally pile burns are not allowed.

After community consultation, the BMCC has granted certain outlying areas (including Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine) approval to conduct pile burns as long as certain conditions are met. Oversight of this process has been handed to the Blue Mountains District Office of the NSW Rural Fire Service in Katoomba. It is vitally important that these conditions are abided by as failure to do so could see the withdrawal of this concession. During the non-bushfire period (usually 1 April to 30 September) the process, in brief, is as follows:

- Give your neighbours and District Office (4784 7444) at least 24 hours' notice of your intention to light up. District Office hours are 9.00 am -5.00 pm, Monday to Friday. Please remember this if you plan to burn at the weekend. You can advise District Office of up to a week of days if you are unsure of exactly which day will be the most suitable for a pile burn.
- On the day of the burn, advise District Office that you are lighting up and when you have put out the pile burn (do not burn overnight). These calls can be made at weekends as volunteers staff the phones at this time. There is a requirement for a responsible adult to be present at all times, an adequate water supply to be available and the pile must be 20m from the nearest residential building.
- Ensure that your pile burn abides by the document *Standards for Pile Burning*, available from the RFS website, District Office or your Brigade Community Engagement Officer. In brief, material must only be vegetation from your property, the pile should be no greater than 2m in length or width and must be no greater than 1.5m high, material must be dead and dry with no logs over 150mm in diameter.

The 10/50 legislation allows residents in designated areas to clear trees 10 meters and underlying vegetation (not trees) 50 meters from their home without seeking approval. There are conditions and a Code of Practice so please check the online tool, Code and FAQs on the RFS website first.

Although the vegetation clearing entitlement allows you to clear, it does not provide for an approval to burn that cleared material. Our BMCC approval allows us to burn but only that material which arises from the maintenance of our APZs (Asset Protection Zone). This could mean that, if residents are undertaking new clearing, then they may not be covered under the Council's deemed approval. Last year we sought clarification from the RFS who advised that it was a matter for BMCC to determine and that they would support Council in amending the deemed approval to provide for burning of material derived from the 10/50 clearing. We have heard nothing further.

Your local brigade will do their best to protect properties in the event of a fire but they cannot be everywhere and there is no guarantee that crews from other areas will arrive in time. You need to give your property the best chance of surviving on its own and being able to protect you and your family.

Even if your brigade can get to your street, if they have to choose between properties, crew safety dictates that they will have to choose the better maintained and safer property to protect. So, please:

***Give us a break – along your boundary, around your house and water supply and through your property entrance***

### **Smoke Alarms**

In case you missed the message, Fire and Rescue NSW (FRNSW) recommend that you change the battery in your smoke alarm when you turn back your clocks at the end of daylight saving. Smoke alarms save lives but only if they are working!

FRNSW data reveals 13 per cent of the 3,900 home fires firefighters responded to last year occurred in properties that did not have working smoke alarms. These 3,900 home fires resulted in 490 injuries and, tragically, 11 deaths.

More than half (56 per cent) of fatal house fires between 2000 and 2014 had no smoke alarms present. The majority of these deadly fires also occurred between midnight and 6am when people were asleep.

It is also important for us, living in more isolated, rural areas, to have working smoke alarms as your brigade is not on standby at the station and may have to travel some distance to respond to a house fire.

FRNSW and the NSW RFS recommend householders install photoelectric, interconnected and hard-wired smoke alarms. If your smoke alarm has a small yellow and black radiation symbol on the back, it is an older, less effective ionization alarm.

In addition to the legal minimum requirement of one smoke alarm per level, smoke alarms should be installed in all bedrooms for maximum protection. Smoke alarms are also mandatory for all caravans, campervans, and other moveable dwellings where people sleep – even if the vehicle is kept off the road.

### **Six Foot Track Marathon**

Early one morning, several Saturdays ago, a crew from the brigade set out for their traditional role managing the drinks, fruit and sweets stall at Jenolan Caves House at the noisy (much cheering) finishing line of the Six Foot Track Marathon.

This marathon is one of the premier long distance events in the world. The first race was run in 1984 with 7 runners (there are now over 850 entrants) and follows the 45 km historic bridle track from the Explorers Marked Tree, on the outskirts of Katoomba, to Jenolan Caves. Over the course of the marathon the elevation changes 800m – it is gruelling!

The race is run every March and starts with billy tea, damper and syrup. The first recorded journey was in 1887 and took approximately 8 hours. This year's winner took 3 hours, 14 minutes and 14 seconds.

The marathon is managed by the Sydney Striders Running Club with the Blue Mountains RFS providing 17 aid stations and logistical support. It raises funds for the RFS (\$40 – 50,000 pa) and for the Six Foot Track Heritage Trust. Every brigade in the Blue Mountains is involved and it is a great, although long, day. Thank you to the crew who contributed their time this year.

**Kathleen Oakes**  
**Community Engagement Officer**



### **The Mt Wilson Autumn Festival**

The Mt Wilson Autumn Festival on April 18 is almost here and promises to be a fabulous day for the village. All proceeds from the Festival will be used by the Mt Wilson Progress Association to maintain the beauty of the village.

The autumn leaves are just beginning to turn and the Festival will be a wonderful day to wander the gardens of Mt Wilson. We have several gardens open on the day including four rarely open to the public – *Jalscene*, *Wildenstein*, *Wollemi* and *Carmarthen*. The well-known and much loved gardens of *Nooroo*, *Merry Garth* and *Bisley* will also be open. All have kindly donated their gate proceeds to the Festival. Tickets are available at the Village Hall or garden gates. Cash only on the day or you can book online and avoid the queues on [www.trybooking.com/126739](http://www.trybooking.com/126739).

If you have any questions on the Open Gardens, please call Lorraine Barrett on 4756-2018 or 9362-8874.

Or listen to one of our speakers at the Speakers Forum held at the Mt Wilson Study Centre. Speakers include Michael Bates, Barbara Landsberg and Paul Kirkpatrick on garden design and Meg Halcroft on Australian native bees.

Please see the website ([www.mtwilson.com.au](http://www.mtwilson.com.au)) or our Facebook page for details of the times and speech titles.

Book early at [www.trybooking/126390](http://www.trybooking/126390) as numbers are limited. Any questions, please call Elizabeth Montano on 4756-2115 or 9988-0241.

Then, attend the Village Market at the Village Hall. Shop for plants from our local nurseries, garden tools and accessories, and garden sculptures. Local artisans will show a range of products, including ceramics, hand-printed tea towels, origami flowers, preserves/jams, handmade jewellery, pashminas and more. Hills District Farm Equipment will also have some shiny new equipment on display, to tempt those of you who like bigger toys.

And it wouldn't be a Village Festival without our cafe featuring morning and afternoon teas, light lunches and home made sweet treats. Why not take home a cake? Or have a seat in our pop up bistro (kindly sponsored by iRIS Property) and let singer Toni Farlow entertain you?

We have been promised a crisp, clear perfect autumn day so no excuses!

Any general enquiries, or if you would like to volunteer to help on the day, please call Nancy Fox on 4756-2106 or 0411 251 743.

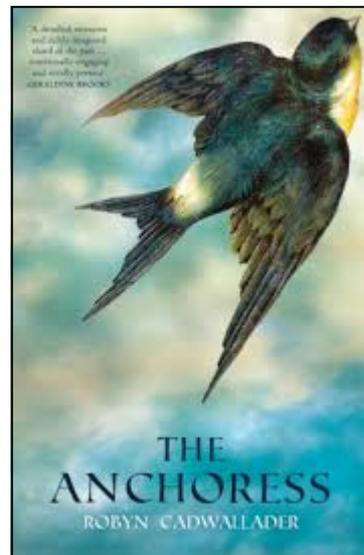


**Book Review - *The Anchoress***

In the mid 13th century a young woman is enclosed in a small stone cell. There is a narrow window which opens into the church, a small square window with a curtain through which she obtains her meals and talks to the women of the village and confesses her sins to her Father confessor. The door is nailed shut. She lives in darkness, she has forsaken all worldly things and people, she is dead to the world and her life has become one dedicated to prayer. Sarah has gone willing into this life and through Robyn Cadwallader's wonderful novel *The Anchoress*, we learn what has driven her to desire such an existence. Sarah has to learn to cope with sensory deprivation, to offer help to the village women, and to dedicate every minute of her life to God.

She is only permitted male contact through her confessors; first the humble and wise Father Peter and then through the the much younger and rather troubled Father Ranaulf. Sarah and Father Ranaulf are linked through the book of a saint's life that he has coped for her and then by slowly coming to understand just what Sarah can give to her community. Their stories are told through alternating chapters. In the background we see the life of a feudal village unfold with delicate and precise detail - harvest, child birth, marriage, and duty to their lord.

Sarah yearns to experience weightlessness through a life of prayer and abstinence; wanting to be like the travelling acrobat who 'seemed to be able to swoop through the air like a swallow'. She achieves her aim but not without nearly dying, and questioning her faith.



This is a wonderful portrait of a life and time very remote from our own and it shows how much may depend on self awareness and a life devoted to the well being of others.

**Alison Halliday**

**Not just a pretty tail: The lyrebird is a superb firefighter**

*Reproduced from The Age, March 4, 2015, written by Darren Gray, the Rural Affairs reporter for that newspaper, and kindly submitted by Janet McDonald:*

Victoria's forests have an unlikely fire warden: the superb lyrebird.

New research has revealed the iconic songbird reduces the risk of bushfire by spreading dry leaf litter and digging safe havens that help other species survive fires.

The lyrebird's foraging reduces forest fuel loads, which in turn can reduce the risk of life-threatening fires, researchers from La Trobe University have found.

With feet like garden rakes, and an appetite for worms and bugs that live in the soil, lyrebirds sift the forest floor, burying the leaf and other forest litter, speeding up leaf decomposition, and reducing the amount of fuel for bushfires.

Their foraging was also found to inhibit the growth of ferns, grasses and other plants which would otherwise contribute more potential bushfire fuels.

The research, an honours project for student Daniel Nugent, quantifies the lyrebird's role in forest litter reduction.

Conducted in burnt and unburnt sites in the footprint of Black Saturday's two most devastating blazes, it showed that lyrebirds reduced forest litter by a massive 1.66 tonnes per hectare over a nine-month period.

Researchers produced these measurements by comparing the amount of litter in unfenced plots of the forest, with neighbouring plots that had been fenced off.

"Lyrebird foraging areas may therefore suppress the horizontal and vertical spread of fire, limiting the extent and severity of fire events. Our modelling suggests that the reduction in litter fuel loads brought about by lyrebird foraging has the potential to result in markedly subdued fire behaviour relative to that predicted in the absence of lyrebirds," the report said.

"The loss of lyrebirds from forests adjacent and within urban areas could result in higher fuel loads and an increased likelihood of wildfires threatening human life," said the report, published in the CSIRO's journal Wildlife Research.

Steve Leonard, research fellow in the Department of Ecology, Environment and Evolution at La Trobe University, said lyrebirds performed their protective role as they searched for food.

"They forage like chickens, they've got big feet with really long toes so they've basically got rakes for feet. They rake through the litter looking for worms and little bugs, stuff to eat. They're digging through that humus and litter layer looking for little invertebrates and whatever they can find," he said.

"Through that process they reduce the litter fuel load by, on average, 25 per cent, or about 1.6 tonnes per hectare. And we put those figures into a fire behaviour model and found that that level of fuel reduction is enough [that] in low fire-danger weather conditions it excludes fire, fire that is not possible under low to moderate conditions. But even in more extreme conditions the fire behaviour will be more moderate, [with] lower rates of spread, lower flame height, so a less intense fire," he said.

"Our conclusion is that lyrebirds are reducing the chance of fires occurring in the areas where they forage and the ecological significance of that is that unburnt patches within large wildfires are really important sites for animals to survive post-fire," Dr Leonard said.

Alex Maisey, convener of the Sherbrooke Lyrebird Survey Group, welcomed the research.

"It really shows that it's an important species to maintain through predator control of the fox, even deer control, for maintaining the habitat in those key areas where the lyrebirds breed," he said.



### Endeavour Energy and Tree Pruning

Electricity came to Mt Wilson in 1940. It was a great advance for this little community, as people gradually replaced old kerosene lamps, heaters and candles; the scrubbing boards, wringers, coppers and chip heaters became a thing of the past and away went the old drip safes and kerosene fridges.

It was war time and the residents of the time allowed the poles and wires to go through their properties as the easiest route through the village was used.

During the 1970s, Prospect Electricity took over the responsibility for electricity supply from Blue Mountains City Council and insisted on a wide easement beneath the wires. The residents concerned objected as they were not allowed to grow anything, or have any constructions, in these wide easements. Prospect decided the wires and poles would have to go down the main roads of the village.

The residents were appalled, but we were given a chance to find an alternative. Bill Smart and I, representing the Progress Association at the time, poured over the old village maps and saw we could use the unmade back roads for access in many areas.

It is interesting to look back at these maps and see where the wires did go. Many properties were affected and some had many wires and poles going in different directions.

We came up with a plan with the main wires through the village using the Gregson Lane, Applecot Lane and Walford Lane to Waterfall Road. In order to save the large Beech and Oak trees in *Bebeah*, Prospect agreed to place the wires underground to Founders Corner; underground was also agreed for Queens Avenue to save the large Cherry trees in that section.

To reach Church Lane, we were able to use an easement which went straight through what is now *Ashridge* and Wynne Reserve, but which was, at that time, part of *Wynstay*.

On Mount Irvine Road, the avenue of Golden Elms and Copper Beech, which was planted during the early 1960s, was only young. Although the potential of this section becoming another wonderful avenue over the road was apparent, the then small size of the trees prevented Prospect from putting the wires underground as we had hoped and asked for. They did move the wires over the Copper Beech to the opposite side of the road above the Golden Elms which were only head high at the time.

Over the years, Prospect morphed into Integral Energy and, more recently, Endeavour Energy. The company has bundled many of the wires through the village but, despite many requests from the Progress Association, they have always refused to bundle the cables over the Golden Elms between Davies Lane and Hillcrest Avenue.

They did however promise to trim them very carefully.

This last season Asplundh, the contractor company responsible for the tree trimming on behalf of Endeavour Energy, has come three times to "trim" these trees.

The trees were very carefully trimmed for the first time in October but on the two most recent times they have come, they have been very severe on both the Golden Elms and the Copper Beech, disfiguring many of these beautiful trees. They will never make an avenue if "trimming" like this allowed to be continued.

A section along Church Lane at *Withycombe* was also very badly trimmed by the same contractor.

This avenue is unique in Australia. Where else would one see a magnificent avenue of Golden Elms and Copper Beech? In other countries, authorities would be doing their utmost to save these trees by placing the wires underground so they need not be trimmed but allowed to grow and form another beautiful shady avenue.

Over the years, Mount Wilson has become a very special place, quite unique in this great country of ours.

It is known and loved by many for a number of reasons: for the glorious avenues and lovely gardens, but also for its setting, surrounded by National Park with its deep gorges and ravines, the native temperate rainforest and pristine bushland.

Hundreds, if not thousands, of visitors come each year to enjoy all this beauty in all its many forms. The village is a heritage village and it should be treated as such by Endeavour Energy and the Blue Mountains City Council.

We urge you to write to the General Manager, Endeavour Energy (PO Box 6366, Blacktown, 2148) to stress the importance of these trees for future generations to enjoy and to admire and to ask them to please place the electricity wires underground in this area of the village.

**Libby Raines**



**Are you going to express your concern to Endeavour Energy?**

### Raffle tickets

Over Easter raffle tickets were put in your letter box. These are to raise money for MWPA as part of the Autumn Festival. If you missed out and would like some, or if they got wet or eaten by snails, or you want more to offer to family and friends, please contact Alison on 47562060 until 12 April or (02) 9389 1848 after that date until the 18 April when I will also be selling at the Village Hall on the day of the Festival.

And many thanks to all those who have contributed prizes...things delicious, useful and garden oriented!

**Alison Halliday**

### 4th Annual Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine 2015

#### Spring Art Festival

#### Photography and Art Exhibition

This year's exhibition will be held on Saturday 10th & Sunday 11th October at the Mt Wilson Village Hall.

The scope of the exhibition has been widened slightly to accommodate subject matter of Mt Wilson or Mt Irvine, or the local area.

Full details of the exhibition can be found at [www.mtwilson.com.au](http://www.mtwilson.com.au) in the **Latest News** or **Things to Do** menu sections.

For those wishing to exhibit, Conditions of Entry and Entry Forms can be found there.



### Another item on MWPA - BMCC's 'to-do' list is ticked off

A locked gate has been recently installed at the BMCC holding yard on the Five Mile.

This should finally resolve the long-standing problem of illegal dumping of building and garden waste on this site.



## Ask the Neighbours

It's frenzy. It's pandemonium. It's excitement plus, Tim.

Preparations are underway for RAATS' next "showing" at the Sydney Fighters' Festival. Faithful readers (yes Tim, there are quite a few if the fan mail delivered to RAATS headquarters is anything to go by <sup>1</sup>) will recall last year's triumph as RAATS speakers entertained thousands with our enthralling tales of epic duels with our nemeses (that's the plural for nemesis, Tim. That night class has really helped get my grammar much betterer).

What's that, Tim? Well, OK, it wasn't thousands. Yes, if numeracy is more important than grammar to you, Tim - it was only two people, one of whom only came in to get of the rain after his umbrella had a rain penetration malfunction. But it was lovely of your auntie to come, Tim. The point is - it would have been thousands if our Trybooking endeavours hadn't been so,,,,,trying. And, if the opposition- the Sydney Writers' Festival - hadn't chosen the same week for their little show.

Anyway, I digress. We are calling for volunteers to assist with this year's RAATS' offerings for the Festival. I'm thinking - "RAATS: a retrospective tail on three years of furry struggle". Catchy, isn't it? I'm sure we'll be able to workshop many good ideas over the next month or so. In preparation, the first question for this edition of "Ask the Neighbours" is: What contribution do you think RAATS should make to this year's Sydney Fighters Festival?

Our second question is - "Which of the following three uniform concepts do you prefer for our new RAATS uniforms? " Faithful readers (let's not get into that again, Tim) will also recall that Australia's best designers have been commissioned to design our new up to the minute, hip, catchy, sexy (but not too sexy- we are a family organisation after all) uniforms. As we hope to unveil our new uniforms at the Fighters' Festival, we need YOUR feedback, people - pronto.

So, is it:

- Design A by Carla Z: the flowing, cream toga style ensemble which falls gracefully to ankle length with ranks displayed along fine linen edging? And for the ladies, the equally flattering orange version (orange is the new black, Tim);
- Design B by Allanah H: the retro 50's look of velvet waistbands around pastel coloured frilled blouses with double cuffs and tailored culottes with matching Mary Janes (the shoe style, Tim). Again, with our lady members in contrasting yet compatible colourways; or
- Design C by Mal L (a new entrant to the world of haute couture, Mal formerly travelled all over the countryside with his brother): a striking unisex leopard print safari suit with jackets featuring multiple pockets and the form fitting shorts set off by richly textured leech proof knee high socks. This design screams versatility plus.

I think RAATS members will agree there's a lot to think about there, Tim. And, when you model them for the membership next week, I'm sure they'll be able to select the design which will take us through the next decade. Now, Tim, what's your size? Tim? Tim?

## Elizabeth Montano

<sup>1</sup>I especially appreciate the funny little torpedo-shaped brownies some people leave inside their letters - and it's always the anonymous correspondents who make this kind gesture, Tim.

**Suggestions, comments or contributions warmly welcomed!**