

Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine Community Newsletter

Working together for a better
community



August 2009

EDITOR'S NOTES

I had occasion recently to look back at the last issue of this newsletter and noticed that, although it came out in May 2010, the date on it was November 2009. That happened because I use the same template every time and, being a bit rushed with that one, didn't notice I hadn't changed the date. But it seems no-one else did either—at least if they did, they were kind enough not to mention it to me.

You may have noted, also in the last issue, that I indicated my intention of stepping down (if that's the appropriate phrase in this case) from doing this job. I asked for a volunteer to take over and am happy to tell you that my successor will be Tim Gow. (I'm not sure if this will be Tim alone, or Tim and Kim, but either way, I'm sure the job will be done well.) I understand that the Progress Association has agreed to Tim's takeover, but have appointed a small working group (?) to look at the way the newsletter is presented and, presumably, things like the information in it, how often it comes out, etc. So stand by for changes. Maybe they will eliminate the jokes!

Apropos of nothing much, except that this is my last issue of this newsletter, I noted that the average length of these things, over the last six years, has been six pages. There have been a few 8-pagers, at least one (November 2009, with its report of the Bushfire Forum) that got up to 10, and a few, like this one, that only managed four. I also did a special edition on poetry (December 2008), which included excellent anecdotes from Ray Harrington's poodle, and her antagonist, Wallace Wombat, but despite the quality of those contributions that issue disappeared without a ripple, so I was not encouraged to try that sort of thing again. (I had thought that some culture would go down well in the 'Mounts', but it seems not.) The more usual issues have included discussions and contributions about a wide range of subjects, including broad-band internet connections, fires—both pile-burning and bushfires—the weather, community toilets, European wasps, noxious weeds, a few obituaries and various community notices, as is appropriate for a community newsletter. We had a brief amalgamation with the RFS, but it was decided that it would be better to stick to separate newsletters for the RFS and PA, so the experiment was discontinued.

With respect to contributors, Ron and Moira Green have always been timely with their reports on the PA and its activities, and the Village Hall, and Libby Raines has contributed numerous interesting articles. In recent times John Holt has been contributing a regular feature about local identities—Ray and Kathy Harrington, in this issue—which was an excellent idea and contribution to community 'togetherness'. All these people have been exemplary in getting their contributions to me when they said they would, for which any editor or producer of any sort of publication is always grateful. The jokes started off as space fillers—there's not much point in distributing blank pages—and generally fill that role, but later became a feature that a number of people have told me they enjoyed. I have enjoyed collecting them.

Other than that: well, it feels like spring today, although no doubt we'll get some more cold weather; life rolls on and as long as we can remain vertical and mobile, have enough to eat (not much danger that we won't—this is NOT Pakistan) and drink—particularly if it's red—and can get through the current period of political pseudo-activity without debilitating paroxysms of irritation, I guess we shouldn't complain. Go well; I will see you around.

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In this issue

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Things to think about

A conscience is what hurts when all your other parts feel good.

A clear conscience is usually the sign of a bad memory.

If everything seems to be going well, you have obviously overlooked something.

The problem with the gene pool is that there is no lifeguard.

MOUNT WILSON PROGRESS ASSOCIATION COMMITTEE NEWS

MWPA Annual General Meeting will be held on 18th September, 2010, at 5.30 pm in the Village Hall. Please put it in your diary now.

Village Maintenance and BMCC

Very little progress has been made by Council in relation to the list of requests for maintenance relating to road and verges. With constant staff changes and requests being passed from department to department it seems sometimes that more time is spent searching for our correspondence than anything else. However, Richard Beattie is relentless in pursuing the goal and there will be action!

Clarence Colliery and Bells Line of Road

It has been brought to the attention of the Committee that Clarence Colliery has submitted a D.A. to increase the amount of coal mined from 200,000 tones to 500,000 tones. Coal for the export market is transported by rail but that destined for the domestic market is transported by road. This increase will result in an average of 94 vehicles on the road per day. Currently the trucks travel along the Darling Causeway, then turn on to the Great Western Highway at Mount Victoria. They are unable to turn on to the highway at Station Street because of the sharp corner so use Harley Street (past Mount Vic Flicks). However, the Blue Mountains City Council has imposed a weight limit for vehicles using Harley Street, which means that the only alternative route is Bells Line of Road. Letters have been sent to Council, RTA, Federal and State Members of Parliament, on behalf of the Mount Wilson community, to express our concern at the potential danger of the increased number of heavy vehicles on Bells Line of Road. Other commu-

nity groups along the road have made similar application. Responses from Council and Members of Parliament indicate that they are lobbying the Ministers of Planning and Roads for action in improving the inter section of the highway at Station Street and providing subsidies to facilitate the use of rail freight.

Mount Wilson Postal Service

Some discontent has been expressed about the quality of postal deliveries in Mount Wilson. We have made inquiries and as an Association we cannot make a complaint on behalf of residents, but individuals are encouraged to lodge complaints under their own names and addresses.

War Memorial

Our thanks go to Kim and Tim Gow for the wonderful work they have done in cleaning and pruning the trees and bushes around the War Memorial. Have a look as you pass if you haven't already noticed.

Mount Wilson Leisure Library

New books are always being added to the library shelves so come along and check them out. The library is open every Saturday morning from 10am to 11am. If you wish to come at another time, please contact Moira on 4756 2162 and it can be arranged.

Join the Mount Wilson Progress Association Inc.

If you are a property owner or reside in Mount Wilson you are eligible to be a member of the Association. If you are not a member and wish to join please contact me.

Moira Green

VILLAGE HALL JOTTINGS

On 3rd July the Village Hall looked splendidly Christmassy for our Yulefest, thanks to Beth. The evening was most enjoyable and thanks to Ron as MC, Tim Gow for running the quiz, Beth, Moira, Leith, Milba and Margaret Dean for all their help in the kitchen, and the wonderful 'Yulefest Troubadours' led by Bruce Arnold and Duncan Peppercorn with Robbie Arnold playing his clarinet. Thanks also to Mary Reynolds and her team of Anne Mayall and Suzanne Bassett from the Historical Society for making up the beautiful baskets of treats for the raffle and Mib for the 'pudding auction'. All up the night raised \$3000, so a big thank you to everyone who came along and made the night such a success.

Our next event will be a Melbourne Cup lunch on Tuesday 2nd November.

Spring is approaching and following on from the pruning and cleaning up work done in April we will be having another working bee on Friday morning 24th September. All helpers will be gladly welcomed.

At our last meeting Ron Green announced he is standing down from the position of Chairman. He will forward a letter of resignation to council. Ron has done a wonderful job as Chairman steering the improvements made to the Hall and we are pleased that he is happy to remain on the committee where his expertise and experience with the Stage 2 renovations will be very much appreciated. The committee will elect a new Chairman shortly.

Judy Tribe (Acting Chairman)

Sometimes, when I look at my children, I say to myself, "Lillian, you should have remained a virgin."

Lillian Carter (mother of Jimmy Carter)

I had a rose named after me and I was very flattered. But I was not pleased to read the description in the catalogue: - 'No good in a bed, but fine against a wall.' *Eleanor Roosevelt*

Last week, I stated this woman was the ugliest woman I had ever seen. I have since been visited by her sister, and now wish to withdraw that statement. *Mark Twain*.

The secret of a good sermon is to have a good beginning and a good ending; and to have the two as close together as possible. *George Burns*.

Santa Claus has the right idea. Visit people only once a year. *Victor Borge*

Money can't buy you happiness... But it does bring you a more pleasant form of misery. *Spike Milligan*

BOOK LAUNCH

Allison Halliday and Jo Hambrett are delighted that their book on the gardens of Mount Wilson, Mount Irvine and Mount Tomah is now complete. It has been, as many of you would know, a very long process with plenty of challenges but also wonderful experiences as so many of you shared your ideas, your love of these mountains and opened the gates of your gardens to us. Ian Brown's photographs look absolutely beautiful, capturing the gardens in the wider mountain landscapes. We have included 31 gardens and touch on the history and houses.

The official mountain launch will be on Saturday 16th October at 5pm. We will be putting an invitation into your letter box closer to the time but if that goes astray please take this as a warm invitation to come and join us at the Mount Wilson Village Hall to launch *A Passion for Place*.

Allison Halliday

THE WINTER GARDEN

August is always a very busy time in the garden in the mountains. Winter is still with us with its cold frosty mornings and some glorious cool, still, sunny days.

The trees are bare letting in the sunshine to the gems of the winter beneath them—*Galanthus* (snowdrops) *Cyclamen coum*, *Crocus*, tiny *reticulata* iris, winter aconite and helleborus are all flowering freely while the sweet scent of the *Daphne odora* hangs in the air. The daffodils and other spring bulbs are emerging from their slumbers, and the camellias are starting to flower.

Beneath the soil the roots of the shrubs are just starting to move again so azaleas and rhododendrons can be fertilized with compost, blood and bone or organic soil improver fertilizers, and mulch.

The hydrangeas, perennials and roses should have been cut back by now but it is still not too late to do it—fertilize and mulch well. Mulch is needed to help our rich soil (for centuries the soil has been fed by the decaying leaves and fallen timber of the rainforest trees and fern fronds) so we must continue to add compost and mulch—this also helps keep the weeds down and the moisture in.

Winter is the best time to move plants and to plant new ones. Always dig a large hole, remove the rocks or stones, add compost, mulch and most importantly water well for the following season.

In the vegetable garden the brassicas—broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower and brussels sprouts are all producing well. These are planted in mid summer with the exception of the sprouts which should be planted out in early December to do well here. Peas and broad beans which are sown in autumn, are up now and will be ready for eating in late spring. It is too early to plant most other vegetables, which need the soil and the weather to be warmer. One can lime the areas for them with dolomite or garden lime in readiness, and fertilize the asparagus bed now.

Raspberries and blueberries do very well on our mountains and are well worth growing as they are delicious. Raspberries need to be grown on a wire so the canes can be held together, while blueberries make neat bushes. They both must be netted or grown in a cage to keep the birds away otherwise, alas, no berries for the grower!

Now is the time to tidy up untidy areas, and burn fallen branches (remember to ring fire control 4784 7444 for permission).

Besides all the many jobs to do in the garden don't forget to enjoy the seasons as they come and go. Take time to wander around and marvel at the beauty of the flowers, shrubs, trees, the birds and the bushland which surround us on our two beautiful mountains.

Libby Raines

THE WOMBAT PROJECT

Nikki Selles, the student from the University of Western Sydney who carried out the wombat project, with support from John Holt, has completed her field work. She did a postal survey of Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine residents (I think it included people who are not full-time on the 'Mounts'), to which she had an excellent and generous response, and some field work. Nikki, who came up here a couple of weeks ago to give John and me an outline of her results, has asked me to thank you all. The survey has provided some interesting information about the interactions between people and wombats, and peoples' attitudes to these animals. She also had an overwhelming number of offers of locations where she could put her infra-red movement-detecting cameras; unfortunately, being only one student with a limited amount of time, there was no way she could get around every property and survey all the burrows. The number of cameras was also limited and, as is normal with these things, they didn't always work very well. However, she obtained more than 100 photos of wombats moving around, with a record of the time each photo was taken. There were not enough observations to allow detailed analysis of movement patterns, and estimates of wombat populations will have to be based on number of active burrows, but the data will provide some insights into the activities of these animals in our area.

Nikki is now writing up the results of the project. She is getting married at the end of the university year, so is a fairly busy girl right now, but she will come up and make a presentation in the Mt Wilson Village Hall sometime early next year, when we can discuss her results with her. We'll let you know the date.

Joe Landsberg



KATHY AND RAY HARRINGTON

"Chalumeau" - Mount Irvine

For Ray Harrington, his first great opportunity in life came at the age of 22 when he immigrated from London to Australia in 1958. He came as a 'ten pound Pom' with a background in advertising art. He was employed as Art Director of an advertising agency in Brisbane, and it was there that he met Kathy, who was a freelance fashion artist. After a stint up north they moved to live at St Ives.

The second major breakthrough came in 1979 when they bought "Chalumeau" from Bill Scrivener. A magnificent piece of land of over 11 acres running down to the fire trail, covered in beautiful bushland with several waterfalls.

Initially their introduction to staying there was rugged indeed. First a tent, later upgraded to an unlined smallish garden shed (one can imagine the winters!). They eventually built their home in 1985, but it was not until 1995 that they moved up to live there permanently. Ray, then wanting to paint full time, built his studio in 1997, and in the next year he decided to commence giving art classes. His teaching subsequently proved a great drawcard for people, not only on the mountain, but also as far away as Hazelbrook. Local pupils included Ellie Gunn, Ann Pigott, Tony Wardell, Libby Rains and Liz Harding. Libby's talent was shown vividly in Michael Pembroke's splendid book *Gardens of Romance*. For Ray, teaching students first to draw and then to progress to various media, is immensely satisfying, as it must be to his many students.

Kathy continued with water colours of still life and I must say we have one of her creations of a wonderful Banksia flower which is greatly treasured. Kathy often paints from photographs with stunning detail (and enormous patience). She regularly exhibits at the Royal Botanical Gardens art show.

For Ray, who paints in oils, his great interest is in impressionistic style and he rarely uses photographs. Modern and abstract art has no appeal. Ray exhibits at the Shipley Gallery, the Royal Art Society at Lavender Ban, and the Katoomba Edge Gallery.

Both are humble in their approach to their great skills, always conveying the feeling that art is music for the soul.

Living in Mount Irvine provides constant inspiration for Ray's creations—a ray of sunshine late in the evening on an escarpment; a bank of great clouds on the horizon; all are there and constantly changing.

They are unrelenting in their never ending search for artistic perfection.

John Holt