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Small business issues

HOME AND COMMUNITY-based businesses are a large factor in Palerang, and electronic communication – internet and mobile phone – makes it possible while offering a more sustainable lifestyle – no commuting, no sitting in bad-air centralised offices. It just dawned on me this past week however, that increasing complexity in telecommunications and corporate efficiency drives make this lifestyle vulnerable to business disruption and loss.

The epiphany came when I was suddenly unable to correspond with colleagues and clients with Bigpond email addresses. Unfortunately, the messages didn't bounce for 4–5 days (trying to get through) so one can imagine the disrupted communication and potential losses (not to mention hurt feelings at being ignored!).

When finally the penny dropped and our service provider and Telstra were approached, the story was that new security/spam filters on Bigpond were blocking other servers as well. The problem has now been fixed, with a warning from a Telstra rep that with all the security assaults on the internet, this sort of thing could get worse. So be aware if your correspondents aren't replying.

Now if Telstra would just get onto their message bank service, which can lag a shocking 24 hours or more sometimes, we can all get back to business.

— Maria Taylor

Left to right: Linda Wheatland, Laura Wilson, Kevin Reardon, Steve Barraclough & Jill Hunter.

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FORGET NUCLEAR: BET ON THE BIOREACTOR

by Maria Taylor

With the amount of waste annually generated by humans, the bioreactor could be the sleeper technology of the 21st century.

Veolia Environmental Services at the Woodlawn waste management facility – featuring the giant mining pit near Tarago – announced a world class launch last month with its first 'green energy' generator going on line.

When fully operational, the cutting-edge bioreactor will have more than 20 electricity generators each capable of generating one megawatt of electricity, with an additional generator going on-line every 6–8 months. In 10–15 years this will generate power for some 20,000 homes, according to the company. The electricity is being sold to EnergyAustralia under contract.

At present Veolia is actively extracting 600 cubic metres/hour of gas including methane from the landfill. According to site manager Justin Houghton, the speed at which the bioreactor has achieved this capacity (within three years) is unusual – usually it takes 5–6 years to get to this state. Many sites extract methane (biogas) as it seeps from landfill but only a few so far are working on the active extraction with a bioreactor.

Ground-breaking technology

"There is no book on purpose-built bioreactors," says Mr Houghton. The technology being worked out at Woodlawn is like a giant open air experiment and has attracted world-wide attention.

Bioreactor technology works by breaking down waste with the application of moisture (nutrient-rich leachate), bacteria and nutrients to create ideal conditions for the bacteria to operate. PH and temperature are critical. Mr Houghton says managing the leachate, which can be corrosive and explosive, has posed the biggest challenges to date.

It could get bigger. The waste conversion is being applied to 400,000 tonnes of Sydney garbage annually under contract to various Councils. At that rate it should take another 50 or so years to fill the giant hole in the ground left by the Woodlawn mining operation. Extracting and selling the green energy makes the whole operation more financially viable.

The transport of municipal waste by rail is another national first – one which Veolia is pleased to tell you avoids 8,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide annually in transport emissions.

Eco-precinct

In fact, French multinational Veolia has ambitious plans for the Eco-precinct it is establishing on some 2,500 hectares at Woodlawn and the neighbouring Pylara farm. Besides the bioreactor facility, it has a permit to establish a 25 turbine windfarm that eventually could power more than 17,000 homes, (avoiding 120,000 tonnes of greenhouse gases from a coal-fired source). This is on hold, says Mr Houghton, until the promised Federal government mandatory renewable energy target kicks in, prompting energy retailers to look for more supply.

Also on the drawing board is a waste composting facility which would sort out recyclables – perhaps as much as 80 percent of the waste stream – and compost the rest, to be used to restore the severely degraded mine site.

Bioreactor saves a lot of greenhouse gas

The closed loop of re-use and recycle at the site is also represented by models for future fishponds and glasshouses. The latter would re-use the small amount of carbon dioxide and waste heat released at the end of the methane to electricity conversion.

The company estimates the active bioreactor collects more than 92 percent of the methane being produced by the decomposition of waste. Avoided methane emissions are good news for the atmosphere because methane is a greenhouse gas many times more potent than carbon dioxide.

Veolia estimates it currently avoids the equivalent of 192,500 tonnes of CO_2 entering the atmosphere annually, or, if you like the car equivalent, 42,770 cars off the road.

Left: Site manager Justin Houghton fronting the open cut mining pit at Woodlawn where 400,000 tonnes of municipal waste are being converted to green energy via a bioreactor process.
Photo: Marcele Martins

Below: Will Tarago boom with eco-energy and second time around mining?
Photo: Marcele Martins

Where to, Tarago?

The bioreactor facility now employs 22 people who live in the region and more will follow as all the Eco-precinct projects get underway.

Add to that the main road Tarago–Nowra now under construction, the ongoing mining feasibility study for extracting remaining zinc and copper laterally from the Woodlawn pit – not to mention tree-changers and people who find Bungendore too populated. It all adds up to the makings of a Tarago district renaissance.

See Eco-living p9 for news on the carbon markets and offsets. Biogas is one of the options for travel or product purchase carbon offsets. >

LEST WE FORGET *Meanderings by Dougal Macdonald*

The Aussies at Villers-Brettonneux

Each year on Anzac day, the people of Villers-Brettonneux commemorate the counter-attack after nightfall on 24 April 1918 when the 13th and 15th Brigades of the 5th Australian Division, supported by British, Canadian and New Zealand units, re-took the French town two days after it had fallen to German tanks and infantry.

Australian Corps Commander Lieutenant-General Sir John Monash wrote next day, "They [the Australians] advanced 2,700 metres in the dark without artillery support, completely restored the situation and captured 1,000 prisoners…"

Compared with other World War I battles, re-taking Villers-Brettonneux was minor. But German Supreme Commander General von Hindenburg later admitted that it was a turning point in the war. History records it as marking "the end of the great German offensive on the Somme which had begun so successfully on 21 March 1918 and, as the historian of the 5th Division concluded: 'Thereafter, no German ever set foot in Villers-Bretonneux save as a prisoner of war'".

The Military Cemetery at Villers-Brettonneux holds the graves of 2,141 soldiers from Commonwealth countries, mostly Australian, of whom 608 are unknown.

On the ridge overlooking the cemetery, four days before the counter-attack, the Fokker triplane flown by the legendary Red Baron, Manfred von Richthofen, made its final landing. Who fired the fatal shot was never reliably established. Official records mention two Australian army cooks firing Lewis guns. Or perhaps it was Canadian Captain Roy Brown flying a Sopwith Camel. The diary, now in the Australian War Memorial, of Gallipoli veteran Eric Wilson who later married my father's widowed mother, describing the incident, stoutly avers

continued p8

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What's the big idea?

explained by Amanda Beasley

GLASSES != NERDS

Now, we all know, nerds wear glasses, right?

Researchers at Melbourne University have done a study to find out precisely this – whether being short sighted means you are more likely to be introverted (ie a nerd).

They worked with just over 633 sets of twins and their families, spending four years psychologically testing the group. They tested for such traits as Openness (includes an appreciation of variety of experience), Conscientiousness (including self-discipline), Extraversion (includes the tendency to seek the company of others), Agreeableness (including a tendency to be cooperative towards others) and Neuroticism (including the tendency to anger easily).

They were also looking at other possible links with short-sightedness, such as the environment and genetics.

In the end they found there was no link between being short sighted and being introverted. On the contrary, there was even a small link between wearing glasses and agreeableness.

So kids, don't put off wearing glasses because you imagine people will think you are a nerd. And the rest of you – please stop making assumptions about people with glasses! The evidence has spoken.

Source: http://www.sciencealert.com.au/news/20082703-17106.html and http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Big_Five_personality_traits

COLOURFUL CUBISM

For those of us of a certain age, the Rubik's cube… means not very much. My *parents* had one though, and I remember fumbling about with it, not really seeing the point.

The Rubik's cube is a 6-sided cube puzzle, just the right size to hold in your hand. Each side is made up of 9 smaller squares. When the puzzle is completed each side is one solid colour – red, green, yellow, blue, white or orange. When a bored child has been playing with it, each side is a multitude of colours. The idea is that you twist various rows of the cube until each side is one colour only. It was invented by Ernõ Rubik in 1974.

The latest news concerning the Rubik's cube comes from a guy called Tomas Rokicki from Stanford University in the USA. He spent no less than 1,500 hours (that's two months) clogging up a supercomputer to discover… wait for it… that whatever the original (bored child) state the cube is in, it will take a maximum of 25 moves to solve it.

Reassuring isn't it?

Source: http://arxivblog.com/?p=332 and http://www.rubiks.com/

THE END OF THE WORLD IS… NOT NIGH

By the middle of the year a new and shiny, and very expensive physics toy will be switched on. The Large Hadron Collider (LHC) in Switzerland will allow scientists to smash together, er, hadrons. They will use it to find things out about antimatter, hidden dimensions, and the embarrassing lack of knowledge about the makeup of 96 percent of the universe.

Hadrons are subatomic particles which will race around in a 27 km ring before colliding in a shower of other particles.

Of course though, doomsday fanatics have decided that the LHC is going to at the very least destroy Earth, if not the entire universe, the minute it is switched on. A couple of these people have even filed a lawsuit aiming to delay the opening of the LHC. They say that the machine could spawn such exotica as microscopic black holes, and 'strangelets' which could react with normal matter (ie stuff), causing an unstoppable chain reaction that would engulf the world.

The owners of CERN and physicists around the world are unconcerned however. As reported on the CERN website (http://press.web.cern.ch/public/en/LHC/Safety-en.html): "microscopic black holes will not eat you".

Source: http://www.newscientist.com/article/dn13555-particle-smasher-not-a-threat-to-the-earth.html and http://www.badastronomy.com/bablog/2008/03/29/no-the-lhc-wont-destroy-the-earth/

Amanda is completing a Masters degree at the Centre for the Public Awareness of Science at the Australian National University

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Make room, here comes the truffle

by Josephine Gregoire

CHAPTER ONE of the Australian Truffle Story has been written. As with any best-seller the chapter is filled with dream-weavers, adventures in uncharted territories, inspirational characters, confrontations with demons, the building of strong links, networks, resources and a national association.

Romance is assured as the aphrodisiac powers of the central character, the truffle, "*can on certain occasions make women more tender and men more lovable*", 19th century Alexandre Dumas. Oh, of course, sumptuous food and excellent wine also feature! There is a strong and compelling need to read on!

The truffle (from the Latin *tuber* meaning outgrowth) is a subterranean fungus which lives interdependently with certain roots of trees, mainly the oak but also the hazel, chestnut and beech. It is found quite near the surface, less than 30cm deep. Pigs and trained dogs are used to find it.

Truffles are usually rounded, variable in size and irregular in shape, and come in different colours; mainly black, dark brown, grey and white. There are 70 varieties of truffles, 32 of which are grown in Europe. One of the most highly esteemed is the black truffle *tuber melanosporum – Black Perigord Truffle*. Before 1914, some 1,740 tons of truffles were harvested each year in Perigord, France alone. This year's total truffle harvest in France reached 15 tonnes.

Could we become the nation's truffle capital?

The good news is here in Australia and right here in our region, truffles are being methodically cultivated, (*trufficulture*). Trees are inoculated with the truffle fungus with the intention of producing a truffle industry.

The first black truffles to be produced in the southern hemisphere were harvested in Gisborne, New Zealand in 1993. The first Australian truffles were harvested in Tasmania soon after. With about 30 hectares already planted in our region, it is estimated that in 5 years 0.5 tonnes of truffle will be harvested. In Australia, more than 500 hectares have been planted with a potential 20 tonne harvest in the same period.

Wayne Haslam, President of the Truffle Growers Association Inc, is one of the inspirational characters in our truffle story. We visited his own *truffière* in Sutton Park – two hectares, 900 mixed crop trees, oaks and hazelnuts. Canberra as the *Truffle Capital of Australia* is Wayne's vision for our local industry. A truffle festival will be held in July.

Wayne Haslam on farm: Today Sutton, tomorrow the nation

What can be done with truffles

This *diamond of the kitchen (Brillat-Savarin)* is held in high esteem in *haute cuisine*, French, Italian and Istrian cooking. Truffles are eaten raw or cooked, cut into strips or slices, diced or shredded, in the form of juice, fumet or essence, or simply for their fragrance. Truffle flavoured oils, vinegars, pastes and sauces are also available. A sauce made with the Piedmont white truffles, butter, cream, garlic and anchovy is poured over spaghetti. A *coup-truffle* (a special utensil) can cut raw truffle into strips or grated as a garnish for grilled meat, chicken or risotto.

Linda's at Goolabri, Goolabri Country Resort – Sutton Park, serves a creamy and fragrant dish, *Wild Mushroom Risotto with Truffle Oil*, Chef John Neveceral's own creation.

Ben Luton, the General Manager of the family-run Goolabri Country Resort, takes pride in the fact that they source and serve local wines. We accompanied the risotto with a wine by Petit Winery – Border Blend: merlot, cabernet franc and cabernet sauvignon. A perfect blend to accompany any truffle dish.

Neveceral Petit Winery on the Sutton Road is, not coincidentally, the domain of Chef John's father, Peter – an accomplished duo indeed.

Where to find truffle products? They are thin on the ground in Australia, hence the growing industry getting them *into* the ground. However, look for truffle oil at gourmet delis.

The Australian Truffle Association offers its members and others collective knowledge and information on planting, management, harvesting and marketing of truffles. Their website is a *must visit:* **www.truffle growers.com.au**. Another website **www.trufflesaustralis.com.au** offers a complete grower information service. Two books that belong on our bookshelves; Gareth Renowden's *The Truffle Book* (2005, Limestone Hills Publishing) and *Taming the Truffle: The History, Lore, and Science of the Ultimate Mushroom* by Ian Hall, Gordon Brown and Alessandra Zambonelli.

Wild Mushroom Risotto with Truffle Oil

In the chef's own words... you will need:

- 2 cups finished riso/rice made with good bird or chicken stock (bird = duck, chook, quail etc)
- Quality mushrooms, rely on personal taste

Chop mushrooms, not too thin, sauté in extra virgin olive oil, colour slightly, deglaze with bird stock, add rice and season. Bring to simmer, add parmesan, butter and cream together (cream = mixing very briskly). Cook until liquid is absorbed and rice is nice and gluggy.
Finish with a drizzle of truffle oil and serve!

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FIRE SAFETY IN THE HOME: WHERE TO START!

by Doug Palmer

I'm still sitting on my hands. The fire season is still not quite over and the weather is showing the classic pattern of a dry, still autumn. If I make triumphal comments at this stage I might as well just go and stand on a lightning rod and insult every god of thunder that ever existed.

Instead, as the nights close in, I'd like to talk about fire safety in the home. Given the number of fire hazards in the home, I sometimes feel that coming down from the trees was a bad idea. Or even leaving the oceans in the first place.

Key hazards in the house are kitchens, open fires and electrical faults. Kitchens are the home of hot stuff. Unattended cooking, particularly frying, can start fires. So can a build-up of gunk in filters and grills. If a fire starts (and you feel that you can safely put it out) turn off any source of heat and try to smother it with the pan lid or a fire blanket.

Wood fires need a regular sweep, to prevent chimney fires and a proper fire guard to prevent burning bits and pieces rolling onto the carpet.

Frayed wiring, overloaded sockets and chains of plugboards are all obvious causes of electrical fires. It is worth regularly checking your wiring for signs of wear and tear.

The humble electric blanket can cause fires in a number of ways: by somebody forgetting about it and the heat building under a nice warm doona or by faulting internally as folding and bending wear the wires. Electrical fires are difficult to handle, unless you have a CO_2 extinguisher or something equally safe.

But a first step is always to cut the power, which removes the energy driving the fire.

Prevention: smoke alarms step 1, escape plan step 2

However, the first things, before any fires start, are smoke alarms and an escape plan. All houses, by law, must have smoke alarms installed, at least one on each level of the house. It's a good idea to replace the batteries when daylight saving ends (on the grounds that it's an easy day to remember and just coming up to winter). Change the clock, change the battery.

It's also a good idea to check them at regular intervals – those of us with children will often find that they're checked for us, whether we want it or not.

As for an escape plan, make sure that everybody knows at least two ways to get out every room. If you have a multi-storey house, you'll also need to consider what to do if the stairs are blocked. Crawl low to the ground to keep under the smoke layer.

Once you get out, choose a place to meet up, so that you can count heads. And never go back into a burning building. As well as heat, carbon monoxide and toxic gases will confuse, stupefy and eventually kill you – this is the reason firefighters wear breathing apparatus.

The last, last line of defence is to have adequate insurance. 'It's OK, it's insured' ultimately puts people before property, since it gets rid of the temptation to try and rescue something valuable.

Can't tell a food allergy from food intolerance?

Read on ...

by Tracy Harb, Accredited Practising Dietitian

How often do you hear people say that they are allergic to certain foods? It seems more common today compared with 10 years ago. A **true food allergy** is an immune response to the protein in the food item. Symptoms often include: skin itching and eczema, swelling of body tissues, vomiting, diarrhoea, and breathing difficulties. A severe allergic reaction can result in potentially life threatening anaphylaxis, and requires immediate attention.

True food allergy should be confirmed by immunological testing through Skin Prick and Radioallergosorbent test (RAST), these tests are reliable and scientifically validated; and are carried out by a medical practitioner.

Foods that commonly cause allergy in young children include: dairy, wheat, egg, peanuts, tree nuts, soy seeds and seafood. However, most children will usually grow out of their food allergies by age three.

Symptoms of food intolerance

In contrast, a **food intolerance** does not produce an immune response. Symptoms of food intolerance include: migraine headaches, skin rashes, stomach upset and irritable bowel. Food elimination diets are a reliable way to identify the foods causing intolerance, and should be conducted under the guidance of an Accredited Practising Dietitian or a Medical Practitioner.

Common food intolerances may be caused by chemicals naturally occurring in food. These include: *Glutamates* — found in strong cheeses such as parmesan, tomatoes, soy sauce and mushrooms, *Amines* — found in pineapples, bananas, red and white wine, baked meat, chocolate, citrus fruits and mature cheeses and, *Salicylates* — found in some fruits, herbs and aspirin.

Food additives including artificial flavours and colourings, can cause food intolerance in sensitive people, and are also known to exacerbate asthma symptoms. They may reflect in behaviour in children, but there is no medically accepted evidence to suggest that these items *cause* ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder). But if in doubt, avoid foods containing artificial colours and flavourings.

Families affected by ADHD are encouraged to eat well with a wide variety of wholesome foods, including plenty of fruit and vegetables in their diet everyday, and limit the amount of sugary, high fat, nutrient poor snack foods.

Other adverse reactions to food can be caused by enzyme deficiency: eg lactose intolerance is caused by lactase deficiency. People with lactose intolerance cannot digest dairy foods properly and may need to substitute dairy with soy milk products.

Coeliac disease

Coeliac disease is not a food allergy or intolerance, it is an autoimmune disease. Gluten, the protein in wheat, rye, barley and oats cause the body to produce an immune response in people with Coeliac Disease. This immune response results in the destruction of the intestinal lining. The damaged intestines are unable to absorb nutrients, which can lead to nutrient deficiencies. A gluten free diet is recommended for people with Coeliac disease.

Further information can be found at:
www.coeliac.org.au
Other useful websites are:
- **www.allergy.org.au**
- **www.allergyfacts.org.au**

Across the radar screen...

Food for thought

1. A day without sunshine is like, well, night.
2. Change is inevitable, except from a vending machine.
3. Those who live by the sword get shot by those who don't.
4. The 50-50-90 rule: Anytime you have a 50-50 chance of getting something right, there's a 90% probability you'll get it wrong.
5. It is said that if you line up all the cars in the world end-to-end, someone would be stupid enough to try to pass them.
6. Give a man a fish and he will eat for a day. Teach a man to fish and he will sit in a boat all day drinking beer.
7. Flashlight: A case for holding dead batteries.
8. The shin bone is a device for finding furniture in the dark.

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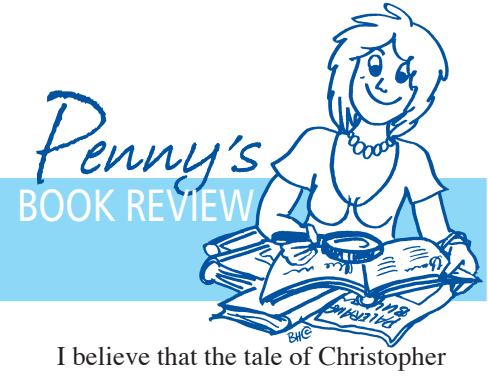
A LOVE STORY WITH A DIFFERENCE

by Penny Poore



The Good Good Pig: The Extraordinary Life of Christopher Hogwood
by Sy Montgomery. Published by Hachette Livre, ISBN 980340910092, Retail Price $24.99

My brother lives in Yorkshire; one of his friends keeps pigs as pets. What I find unusual is that this guy is a farmer, highly sentimental for a farmer and a Yorkshireman to boot! When he related this fact I remember being quite amused and quite taken with the idea. Fortunately, I was living in a flat at the time in the middle of a city, so acting on my enthusiasm would not have proved practical.

But from this conversation I learned that pigs are intelligent, affectionate and loyal creatures, and you may experience a not dissimilar level of adoration from them that you'd receive from a pet dog.

I should suggest to the author that her book needs a warning on the cover – if you are a confirmed carnivore and do not wish to be converted to vegetarianism do not read this book! Having said that, ***The Good Good Pig: The Extraordinary Life of Christopher Hogwood*** is a really good read.

It tells the true story of the fourteen-year life of an enormous yet lovable pig who lived with the author Sy Montgomery and her husband (also a writer, Howard Mansfield).

As a well-published and respected author and naturalist, the study of animals is both Montgomery's passion and her profession. Her other exploits have involved trailing emus in Australia, swimming with pink dolphins in Brazil, and avoiding close encounters while studying man-eating tigers in India.

The couple live in a beautiful part of the US in New Hampshire. This state is a large farming area, but as a couple their previous experience of handling livestock was limited to raising a few chooks.

The 'ailing runt' who changed their lives

The couple did not consider the potentially life-changing effect of a visit to two of their 'hippie farmer' friends. They were handed an ailing and unwanted runt pig and told that they were the animal's last hope. They didn't think twice, simply took the pig straight home with them in a shoebox.

The piglet was named 'Christopher Hogwood' in honour of the musicologist of the same name. The pig had "enormous ears and black and white spots, and a black patch over one eye", and he lived for fourteen glorious years with the couple, an unusually long life for a pig.

Surprisingly he was so successful in growing and putting on weight that when he finally died a serious piece of earth-moving equipment was needed to dig his grave as he had reached 750 pounds.

Caring for an animal of Christopher's size – that is the feeding, housing, and grooming, presented a rather serious challenge. He became almost impossible to confine against his wishes, and he could not be stopped once he cleverly worked out how to escape from both his pigpen and harness.

Neighbourhood cheer and joy for living

Chris took to taking regular strolls through the neighbourhood in search of food and companionship. While you'd consider this would make him very unpopular with the locals, the opposite proved to be true. His cheerful demeanour made him very popular indeed and he became a great spokes-pig both for his own pig kind and for his human family.

"a great soul can appear among us at any time, in the form of any creature."

The author comments that she is not 'a people person'. ("My innate idea of a great conversation starter is something like: 'A blue whale's tongue weighs as much as an elephant,' " she confesses.) But the pigs' innate charm and huge joy of life brought him many friends, and inevitably the love and friendship flowed back to Montgomery.

It brought her new friends who were children, new neighbours, and a tenant, and it even brought a beautiful garden into her life. Her life became so full, and the realisation dawned that previously there had been many empty spaces there.

I believe that the tale of Christopher Hogwood is actually a love story. Yet having stated this, the author does not allow the story to slide into any form of slushy sentimentality. Montgomery includes the story of parts of her life, the devastating loss of both her parents and their stubborn and painful attitude towards her marriage, their unwillingness to acknowledge her wonderful husband due to his 'unacceptable religious faith'.

These themes of acceptance underlie the whole story, and balance the light-heartedness of the pig's story.

Rural setting not unlike Palerang

Read this book to get a great glimpse of life in rural New Hampshire. You can certainly draw parallels with life in Bungendore (in New Hampshire "the only reason you'd lock your car was if you didn't want people leaving zucchini in the backseat of your car while you were at church"). More importantly, you will gain an interesting and fascinating insight into the life of pigs. (They appreciate classical music, pumpkins, and belly rubs — who knew?) Corny as this may sound I found the greatest enjoyment I gained from reading this book was the understanding that "a great soul can appear among us at any time, in the form of any creature". Christopher Hogwood was such lovely being.

The website has a great photo gallery of Christopher Hogwood and his human family.
www.goodgoodpig.com

and...

MORE sightings by our US cousins

I was at the airport, checking in at the gate when an airport employee asked, "Has anyone put anything in your baggage without your knowledge?" To which I replied, "If it was without my knowledge, how would I know?" He smiled knowingly and nodded, "That's why we ask."
– Happened in Birmingham, Alabama

It happened at a good-bye luncheon for an old and dear co-worker. She was leaving the company due to 'downsizing.' Our manager commented cheerfully, "This is fun. We should do this more often." Not another word was spoken. We all just looked at each other with that deer-in-the-headlights stare. This was a lunch at Texas Instruments.

"they walk amongst us"

(Thanks to Dougal and family for the tipoff.)

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Native daisies – tough and pretty

by Jo Walker

During the recent years of drought it was interesting to note that the local daisies not only survived but flourished – in fact, they were sometimes the only remaining patches of colour on the landscape.

Olearia tenuifolia can grow to over two metres

Daisies are extremely hardy, and we have a wealth of them in the local region ranging in size from the tree-like *Bedfordia arborescens* which grows in montane wet forest to the minuscule *Isoetopsis graminifolia*, a fairly common but not often noticed grassland species.

In this article, I'll describe some of the larger, bush-sized daisies, some of which are suitable as colourful additions to local gardens as background plants – or, if you have acres, to add some colour to shelter belts.

Post-drought abundance of cassinia flowers

Daisies, like other plants, vary in the amount of flowers they produce from year to year depending on the sort of weather we get. This year, the Cassinias have been particularly floriferous – some of the *Cassinia longifolia* (Cauliflower Bush) bloomed so heavily that the leaves on some of them were hardly visible under the dense white flower clusters.

At present, *Cassinia quinquefaria* is bearing masses of loose conical heads of silken yellow-green buds. In flower, this species emits a honey-like perfume – sometimes quite noticeable on a warm day. These two Cassinias grow to about two metres. They can get a bit straggly after a few years, but an annual pruning after flowering will keep them in good shape.

Cassinia longifolia (Cauliflower Bush) massive blooms this year

Olearias, blues, mauves and whites

Olearias, unlike the Cassinias which have tiny individual flowers, bear typical daisy flowers – a circular cluster of tiny disc florets surrounded by ray florets (the 'petals') of a contrasting colour. One of the larger local Olearias is *Olearia tenuifolia*. It can grow to over two metres and has large blue or mauve flowers with a yellow central disc and narrow linear leaves.

Olearia montana is a smaller shrub with toothed, elliptic leaves and mauve flowers with a darker purple disc. Two other blue-flowered Olearias are *O. iodochroa* (which has small, glabrous, dark green leaves) and an un-named species from the mountains south of Canberra which bears pale blue flowers massed along its stems. Both of these grow to about a metre tall.

There are several white-flowered Olearias worth growing too. *Olearia megalophylla* is found in wet sclerophyll forest and grows to over two metres. It bears a profusion of yellow-centres white flowers, contrasting with the long, elliptic, dark green leaves. *Olearia stellulata* (previously *O. lirata*) and *O. phlogopappa* are two rather similar plants with soft, slightly toothed, elliptic leaves and white flowers with yellow central discs. Blue and pink forms of *O. phlogopappa* have been found.

Bushy daisy favourite

One of my favourite bushy daisies is *Ozothamnus diosmifolius*. It has short, bright green, narrow leaves and often blooms profusely. The individual flowers are tiny and pill-shaped, but are borne in large domed heads. The buds of some plants are pink, sometimes deeply so. This species grows to only about a metre, but, because the buds and flowers are present over a long period, it is a good one for the garden.

These are just a few of the many attractive daisy bushes that grow locally and further afield. Not all of them are readily available for garden use, but special sales like the Australian Native Plants Society (Canberra Region) are worth a look.

Getting started

Because the viability of the seed of some of these species is sometimes unreliable, I mostly grow them from cuttings about 5 cm long. Cut the stem cleanly with scissors or secateurs, dip the end of the stem in a hormone powder (available at garden shops or even some supermarket gardening sections), and place in a pot of cutting medium. A mixture of 1:1 perlite: coarse sand makes a suitable medium and 10–20 cuttings will fit into a small pot. Keep them watered, and, within a month or so, new plants should be ready to pot up.

Daisies will grow in a range of well-drained soils, in full sun or semi-shade and appreciate a bit of native plant fertilizer at planting time. Mulch should probably be kept away from the base of the plant to prevent rotting – many of these species grow naturally in fairly dry soils. It's usually a good idea to prune daisy bushes after flowering to keep them dense and to produce more flowering shoots for the next year.

Resource: website of the Australian Native Plants Society Canberra Region Inc.**www.nativeplants-canberra.asn.au**

STRUGGLE WITH ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Continued from p7

Part of the problem is that the enabling legislation is ancient. How can the *Water Act 1912* or the *River and Foreshore Act 1948* deal with 2007 demand and climate conditions?)

The file also contains examples of how enquiries are diverted: eg respond to a question that wasn't asked and say the matter is not relevant.

What's *not* on the file

Re water

In conversation with this writer, some NSW officials used the terms "irresponsible" and "unsustainable" in regard to current and previous subdivision density in the over-allocated Yass River catchment but emphasised that their hands are tied.

Re endangered species

The then NSW Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) prepared a letter of advice to the developer regarding threatened species and says a copy was sent to Council in response to a request for advice in late 2004. The Council planner says it was never received.

The *Bulletin* has a copy of this advice regarding threatened species habitat protected by State and Federal law.

A Rosenberg's Monitor visits a property in Bywong. The goanna is listed as a threatened species in NSW. Possible effects of a road building exercise were noted in advice from the NSW Department of Environment and Conservation to the property developer along with alternative recommendations. This and related advice was not seen by Councillors or the public.

Photo: Jean Pierre Favre

Significant adverse impact

About the subdivision design it states: "It is DEC's view that the proposed intensity of the subdivision is highly likely to have a significant impact on EECs (*endangered ecological communities)*, threatened species known to occur in the area, and also on habitat of other threatened species likely to be present " The letter specifically mentions "substantial areas of habitat that have high conservation significance …in particular the Natural Temperate Grassland Community has high fauna habitat values".

The advisory letter goes on to discuss the likelihood that remnant native vegetation will be further fragmented in the landscape context, and suggests the design be reconsidered with more sensitive areas retained as public reserves. Larger block sizes were a less preferred alternative.

The letter also advised that standard clearing widths for a proposed road access would affect a woodland with significant ecological value – old growth trees and a complex understorey structure. (The access route that was not assessed for two years.)

"These features are important habitat for Barking Owl (*Ninox connivens*) Speckled Warbler and Rosenberg's Goanna," it stated, suggesting an alternative route be chosen.

The plan presented to Council six months later ignored the road access advice and had only a minor design alteration to the intensity of the subdivision with one treed area left as 'public reserve'. This was welcome but, in context, left a lot of issues unresolved.

– HEALTH –

Australian Breastfeeding Association
Contact community educators Belinda 6236 9979 or Sharon 6238 0821 or phone ACT & Southern Helpline on 6258 8928. Website www.breastfeeding.asn.au

Bagels in Bungendore/Palerang
Family and Carers Support Program for mental health. Meets 3rd Friday of the month. Phone 0428 434 407.

Bungendore Carers Group
Providing support to all carers. Meets third Friday of the month. Contact Claire Mitchell on 0428 434 407.

Bungendore Outreach Program – Rehabilitation Service
Service for Bungendore residents. Includes home visits by therapists for initial assessment, provision of a home exercise program, advice about equipment and home modifications, fall prevention information and information regarding other community services. We also run a weekly exercise group for people whose health status prevents regular exercise. Phone 6298 9312.

Child and Family Health Clinic
Offers support and information on feeding, weight and developmental checks. For appointments phone Karabar Health Centre on 6298 9363.

Community Nursing
If you require nursing care phone 6298 9233 for information or help.

Home & Community Care (HACC) Voluntary Driving
Drivers are available to take anyone disabled or elderly to the doctor, specialists, or the hospital. There is a cost involved with this service and conditions apply. Contact the Community Transport Co-ordinator on 6298 0107. At least 2 weeks notice is required.

Home and Respite Care
Contact Home Care Service of NSW on 6200 7360 or through your doctor or the community nurse.

Immunisation Clinic
Phone 6298 9363 to book an appointment.

Meals on Wheels
Delivers meals to elderly or incapacitated people. Contact the community nurse on 6298 9233 or your family doctor.

Oxygen and Emergency First Aid
Contact Patti Dahlitz on 0412 964 567.

Parents Group
Guest speakers covering a range of childhood-related topics. Contact Karabar 6298 9363 for details.

Queanbeyan Post Natal Depression Community Advisory Group – Pram Walking for Wellbeing
Mondays during NSW school terms. Only Bungendore and Jerrabomberra. Contact Community Health on 6298 9233.

Compiled by Bungendore Community Aid Inc. Items for Community Services may be emailed to lmwill@alphalink.com.au or phone 6238 1359.

– COMMUNITY GROUPS AND ASSOCIATIONS –

Bungendore Bridge Club
Contact Lynn (President) on 6238 1431 or Di (Secretary) on 6238 2065.

Bungendore Carriage Driving Club
Contact Dot (President) on 4842 7164 or Terry (Secretary) on 6238 1869.

Bungendore Community Aid Inc.
Contact Michelle (Secretary) on 6238 1375.

Bungendore & District Senior Citizens' & Pensioners' Club
Contact Grace Newick (Secretary) on 6238 1891.

Photo: Marcele Martins

*Set dancing demonstration at the Bwyong Community car boot sale in April. If you want to know more about social Irish dancing classes based in Bywong, contact Nora on 0431 862 853 or **nora@setdancing.com.au***

Bungendore Evening VIEW Club (Voice, Interests and Education of Women)
Phone Debbie Hudson on 6238 1571, 0418 622 369 or email hudson2@vtown.com.au

Bungendore Playgroup
Contact Chris Campbell on 6238 0895 for Monday's group. Or contact Elizabeth Miiller on 6238 0435 for Thursday's group.

Bungendore Show Society
Contact Bob Robertson (President) on 6238 1011.

Bungendore Stitchers
Contact Anne Lok on 4849 4336.

Country Women's Association – Bungendore
Contact Trudi Tritschler (Secretary) on 6238 1679.

Home Education Network
Canberra & Southern Tablelands (HENCAST). Contact Sue McKendrick on 6238 1750.

Lake George Day VIEW Club (Voice, Interests and Education of Women)
For bookings phone Pauline on 6238 1996.Visit our blog: http://lgdview club.blogspot.

Queanbeyan & District Dog Training Club
Contact the Club on 0422 729 162. Website www.queanbeyandogs.org.au

Rotary Club of Bungendore
Contact Colin Elder (President) on 6238 0879 or Garry Cook (Secretary) on 6238 0173.

Wildcare Queanbeyan Inc.
Wildcare Helpline 6299 1966 (24hrs). Website www.wildcare.com.au

– LANDCARE GROUPS –

To find out how you can get involved with a local landcare group, monthly and special activities, here are the contacts for groups in Palerang and regionally (listed below). If we have missed any, please let us know.

Bungendore
Contact David Watson (Group Convenor) on 6238 1234.

Geary's Gap/Wamboin
Contact Chris Fowler (Secretary) on 6236 9189, chrisft@spitfire.com.au or Roger Good (President) on 6236 9048 **roger.good@bigpond.com**

Gundaroo
Contact Cec Burgess on 0429 930 628 **cecil.burgess@bigpond.com.au**

Jerrawa Creek
Contact Bob on 4845 8217 **spillersbandr@bigpond.com**.

Murrumbateman
Contact Lynn Bain on 6227 5762 **lynnbain@dragnet.com.au**.

Sutton
Contact David Vincent on 6230 3584 **gollion@dragnet.com.au**.

Taylor's Creek
Contact Ruth Corrigan on 4849 4543.

Yass
Contact Mike McKenzie on 6227 1329 **nanimagold@harborsat.com.au**.

Queanbeyan Area/ Molonglo Catchment Group
Molonglo Catchment Coordinator, Zoe Wood on 02 6128 3376 **coordinator at molonglocatchment.com.au**
Molonglo Catchment Group President, Lynton Bond on 02 6238 2368 **contact us at molonglocatchment.com.au**

NATIONAL PARKS AND WILDLIFE ACT 1974

Scott Nature Reserve
Plan of Management

A draft plan of management for Scott Nature Reserve has been prepared and is available free of charge from the NPWS offices at 6 Rutledge Street, Queanbeyan (ph 6299 2929). The plan may also be viewed at the Palerang Council offices at 144 Wallace Street Braidwood and Majara Street Bungendore and is on the NPWS website: www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au. Written submissions on the plan must be received by The Planner, Scott Nature Reserve Plan of Management, PO Box 472, Tumut NSW 2720 by 30 June 2008.

All submissions received by NPWS are a matter of public record and are available for public inspection upon request to NPWS. Your comments on this draft plan may contain information that is defined as "personal information" under the NSW *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998*. The submission of personal information with your comments is voluntary.

PALERANG COUNCIL

EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST INVITED FOR SECTION 355 COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Council recently resolved to form a s.355 Committee *to develop strategies for the future of the existing village of Bungendore and the Turallo Creek green space*. The committee will act on behalf of Council in accordance with s.355 of the *Local Government Act 1993*, to carry out specified functions of Council.

The Committee will be responsible for coordinating studies and development of plans and controls that would achieve identified outcomes. These plans may include:

- **Bungendore Urban Design Concept and Structure Plan;**
- **Outdoor Recreation and Open Space Plan;**
- **Built form controls;**
- **Retail and Commercial Strategy;**
- **Fundraising to carry out and implement the studies and plans.**

Expressions of interest are invited from members of the community wishing to serve on the Bungendore Town Centre and Environs Committee (BTCEC) s.355 Committee for three community positions. Council is seeking at least one representative from the sporting community and at least on representative with knowledge of environmental issues.

Expressions of interest should include supporting information as to the persons' suitability and any relevant previous experience. They should be addressed to the General Manager, Palerang Council, PO Box 348, Bungendore 2621, clearly marked "Confidential" with the name of the Committee clearly identified and will be received up until close of business on 16 May 2008.

Full details about the s.355 Committee, including its purpose and delegated authorities, are available from Council's offices in 10 Majara Street, Bungendore and 144 Wallace Street, Braidwood, during normal business hours of 8:30am to 5.00pm weekdays. These details may also be downloaded from Council's website at www.palerang.nsw.gov.au under "Community Services" on the home page, then "Bungendore Section 355 Committees".

For further information, please contact Louise Menday on 1300 735 025 during business hours.

Peter Bascomb
General Manager

Council Chambers
PO Box 348
Bungendore NSW 2621