

The Groovy Goanna



YHA SOCIAL AND OUTDOOR CLUB SYDNEY MAGAZINE - EDITION 8 - NOVEMBER 2006

Chairman's Report

Hi and welcome to the latest incarnation of the club magazine. It has a new title, *The Groovy Goanna*, named after one of the quirky titles featured in a previous edition and a brand new Editor in Melita Gizilis.

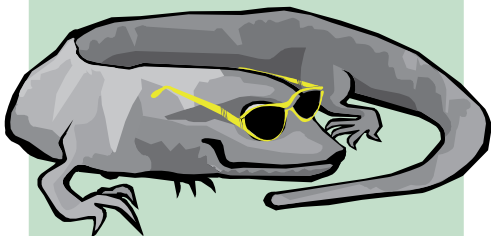
Melita is one of our hostel maintenance regulars and is also interested in bushwalking plus she has great taste in wine ie: she likes sweet, fruity whites like me! She brings skills in graphic arts to the Editors position and will give the magazine a great new look and feel that hopefully will be enjoyed by everyone.

For the magazine to work well, however, it will need contributions from club members. Articles about club activities or club identities are particularly welcome but anything that is interesting can be included and anyone can submit something without it needing to be a great literary masterpiece. Simply send submissions and any suggestions to Melita at gravitycreative@hotmail.com

Happy Reading!

Ian

(the original Groovy Goanna?)



Trivia at the White Cockatoo

You have probably noticed trivia nights at the White Cockatoo in Petersham to be a regular feature on the YHA Social and Outdoor club program. Like me, you may have considered going along but never got around to doing it. Well, I was in the mood for a fun, inexpensive night out so I thought why not go along and join the regulars and test my trivia knowledge.

Well, as I discovered, my trivia knowledge is somewhat limited. I think I ended up answering two questions correctly the whole night! Not enough to help the team win but still, it was a fun night out and a good chance to catch up with friends, have a good laugh and have some lighthearted debates over answers to questions.

The regular team have had a decent year - two overall wins and two jackpot wins. Prizes include cash, bar tabs and bottles of wine.

If you feel like good-quality food to fuel your brain power, the bistro serves inexpensive and generous meals. As one YHA member said, "I was going to order the marinated chicken but when they say chicken they mean the whole chook!"

Definitely a great night out!

HOW MUCH TRIVIA (HOWEVER USELESS) DO YOU KNOW???

1. What is the real name of U2 lead singer Bono?
2. What is the shared first name of well known screen villain and enemy of ancient Rome?
3. How many lines are there in a sonnet?
4. Who is the seventies / eighties rock star who has a dinosaur named after him?
5. What is the origin of the name Southern Right Whales?
6. Who is the actress daughter of screen star John Voight?
7. What is the largest animal ever known to have lived on earth?
8. Who were "teddy bears" named after?
9. What people first used the bagpipes in the British Isles?
10. What is Barbie's surname? (Double points if you know her middle name)
11. Roman numerals have how many symbols?
12. Who is the ex-disco king turned Qantas pilot?

ANSWERS ON PAGE 4 (no cheating!)

Anzac at Splendour Rock



Some people travel to Anzac Day dawn services by public transport and others by car but approximately fifty people including eight YHA members drove for many hours on 24 April 2006 and walked from Dunphy's (Green Gully) car park for 12km to the remote Wild Dog Mountains spot of Splendour Rock on Dingo Mountain.

Our journey was via Bellbird Ridge, Medlow Gap, and the eastern side of Warrigal and Merrimerigal Mountains, culminating in a dusk ascent of Dingo Mountain and a night walk to camp.

We arrived in the dark to join many others setting up camp amongst the trees on a knoll north of the "rock". Once tents were up and dinner cooked we caught up with members rarely seen from other clubs and remembered other walkers and their exploits in "our wonderland" - the bush.

Some other intrepid walkers arrived at 9.30pm and still later at nearly 11.00pm after an ascent - almost vertical - of the western side of Dingo Mountain. Definitely not for the faint hearted. The night was mild with little wind but the morning was quite fresh as we made our way to "Splendour Rock". We parked ourselves just back from the depths of the valley and

watched the flag flutter and in the far off east the twinkling lights of some town or mine. Others soon joined us and all were in total awe as the morning half-light gradually lit the abyss in our near foreground.

The service began with a short eulogy of the significance of the plaque cemented on this place of splendour, the rest of the service followed that of all others around Australia except this was in the wilderness and the little tape player with its bugle "sang out" over the

depths of the valley, we sang The Recessional, the Ode of Remembrance, then finally our anthem. Sprigs of rosemary were also placed on the plaque. A very moving and sombre service in a surreal setting!

The sun had risen enough to reveal spectacular views to the east and Lake Burragorang, and south to the walls of Kanangra - this wilderness area is truly spectacular!

Some of us caught up with friends before breakfast then our return off the steep western face, past Mobb's Soak and the turn off to Knight's Deck.

During the morning a mini mutiny had occurred led by an unnamed fellow leader and instead of the shorter, more scenic, and less height to climb route via Blackhorse Ridge and a stretch of nettles in Carlon's Creek, we all returned via Medlow Gap and the previous outbound boring fire trail.

We all have a perception of what Anzac services are all about, but I think eight people from the YHA now have a different view - thanks to a single service held in the Wild Dog Mountains at SPLENDOUR ROCK 2006.

Keith



An easy 2km into the hike and the team are all smiles (unaware that the difficult part was yet to come!)

Camp Stove Cuisine



VEGETABLE PASTA FOR 2

250g pasta of your choice
1 can tinned tomatoes or 4 fresh tomatoes
1 cup chopped celery
1 red or green capsicum
250g button mushrooms
1 cup pitted olives
1 tsp chilli flakes or 1 fresh chilli
1/4 cup basil
Salt and pepper

- Cook pasta in boiling water for 8-10 minutes in saucepan until al dente. Drain. Transfer to serving bowls.
- Chop tomatoes and vegetables then cook for 10-15 minutes in saucepan.
- Remove saucepan from heat and stir through chopped olives, chilli and basil.
- Season with salt and pepper to taste.
- Combine sauce with pasta and serve.
- This dish is best followed by chocolate and a well-earned beverage of your choice!

Christmas in July at Hawkesbury YHA



Volunteers having a jolly ol' time at the Christmas-themed dinner

Initially I came along to these work parties to check out the facilities, and get to know the people. At the time I remember thinking to myself, "What are you doing? You have more maintenance work at home than you can cope with, and you're doing someone else's for free!".... But something inside me said GO!

Now, I am a regular part of the TEAM! That is the difference. You are not alone, battling a mountain of work which seems to never end.

At the end of the day, you sit around with a group of new friends, sharing a meal, a joke and sometimes a song. Reg allocates the jobs and brings the equipment, and as Social Club Treasurer he even pays you for your food and travel costs. If John brings his guitar, there is a sing-along, and Melita and I sometimes cook up a group meal. Tom and Murray are regulars too, and we all enjoy catching up and meeting new people.



"Silent Night, Holy Night..."

At the last Hawkesbury Heights YHA work party we made plans for a Christmas in July theme. With a little extra effort and imagination we turned that beautiful mountain setting and chilly weather into a festive scene, complete with decorations, a Christmas (gum) tree, carols, presents, authentic German Gluvin, and a fantastic spread of Christmas fare. Everyone contributed and somehow I baked the chook in a saucepan! And we also managed to get heaps of work done.

It was a good roll up. We had some eager new faces, and we even had John's young grandson along to charm the girls and add to the Christmas amusement. He couldn't charm Reg though - he just managed to keep Reg occupied. After all, it is a work party, not just a party....!

Thanks everyone, cya next time.

Bronwyn

There were nine of us on another fantastic and successful workparty.

On Saturday, we were able to paint the cedar windows and doors and give the hostel a general clean. On the outside we were able to cement some sandstone blocks along the pathway from the carpark to the front door and also were able to do everyone's favourite activity, the natural plant management (some people call it weeding!) of the Mother of Millions and African Love Grass.



Saturday night was the inaugural Hawkesbury Yulefest. Although it was impractical to have a turkey with all the trimmings as there is no oven, a great feast was prepared and then we retired to the BBQ shelter for a singalong, complete with songsheets and guitar around a fire. There was a Kris Kringle to add to the atmosphere, although there was no volunteer to be Santa Claus.

Of course, everyone went off to bed at a reasonable time (well, maybe not everyone) as there was more work to do on Sunday, including more natural plant management and further work on the unofficial bushwalk with more chain railings attached and clearing of the pathway.

This was the first workparty where my ever reliable blue Honda was not in attendance as it is now with my eldest niece on the Gold Coast! It made it up there without missing a beat! I have purchased my parents more modern car as they can no longer drive it.

All in all, a good time was had by all.

At the next Hawkesbury workparty, everyone will see the lights installed along the pathway and the floodlights at the back of the hostel.

Reg

Winter Hiking in New Zealand

The circular Kepler Track begins and ends in the small town of Te Anau in the South Island of New Zealand. It is the newest track in Fiordland National Park and traverses some of the most majestic passes and vistas.

We began our Kepler experience on 11 June 2006. The weather was cold and wet - not the most ideal weather to hike in, but we weren't going to let that deter us!

After registering at the Department of Conservation (DoC) office and being advised to complete only part of the track due to dangerous conditions on the higher passes, Tracknet provided us with transportation to the start of the track where we proceeded to walk along the shores of Lake Te Anau through mountain and red beech trees before reaching Brod Bay. After a short rest we began our long and arduous hike up to Luxmore Hut. Each hour of walking uphill - by then in heavy rain - left us exhausted and weary. Switchback after switchback greeted us, numerous mud patches had to be negotiated and our heavy packs were taking their toll on our muscles.

Once we reached treeline the rain turned to sleet and then to snow. Finally the lights of Luxmore Hut beckoned like a mirage. Inside a warm fire greeted us as well as four American trampers who we had first met at the DoC office that morning.



MAIN: Luxmore Hut 1085m. INSET: The local kea bird (who tried to steal our hiking boots!)



View of Lake Te Anau

As the indoor water and gas supplies were turned off for the winter season, we had to venture outside for running water and use our own camp stoves to prepare food with. After dinner the six of us huddled close to the fire, talked, laughed, ate M&M's and played cards until late into the night. We retreated to our sleeping bags and had a very long and restful sleep (even though it was zero degrees inside the hut!) to be woken up the next morning by the sounds of a native and very cheeky kea bird.

The day dawned bright and sunny, and a beautiful blanket of fresh snow covered the landscape. The spectacular view around us was of the Te Anau Basin and the Takitimu, Snowdon and Earl Mountains. Gorgeous.

During the day we explored the Luxmore Caves - a ten minute walk away and a spectacular wonderland of stalactites and natural formations in sometimes quite tight confines (for the first time I was thankful for being short!)



After another fun, cosy night in the hut we hiked back to Te Anau - thankfully, mostly downhill! - where we checked back into the DoC office to register that we had returned safely.

There are many YHA hostels in New Zealand. Te Anau has a Qualmark-rated 4 star plus hostel (a great place to stay for those about to attempt the Kepler Track). Visit www.yha.co.nz for more information.

My ambition is to complete many more tracks in the South Island of NZ - I'm already planning my next trip!

Melita

TRIVIA ANSWERS - 1. Paul Hewson 2. Hannibal 3. Fourteen 4. Mark Knoppler (from Dire Straits) - a Knopplersaurus? 5. They were easy to hunt so were known as the "Right" whales to kill 6. Angelina Jolie 7. Blue Whale 8. Teddy Roosevelt 9. The Romans (not the Scots) 10. Barbie Millicent Roberts 11. Seven 12. John Travolta

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For program updates visit the website www.yhaclubsydney.org.au

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