

BANJO BITES

**Newsletter of
The Friends of the Marine Discovery Centre Inc**

SPRING, 2009

MEETING NOTICE

The next three meetings are:

Monday, 21 September, 2009.

Monday, 19 October, 2009.

Monday, 16 November, 2009.

Meetings commence at 7.30 pm at DPI ,
2a Queenscliff Highway, Queenscliff.

ALL WELCOME.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

At the recent AGM the following office bearers were elected:

President	Noel Emselle
Vice President	Helen Mair
Treasurer	Margaret Smith
Membership Officer	Amanda Bianco
Committee	Trish Emselle
	Heather Brown

This leaves openings for a Secretary and at least two more Committee Members. Please contact a member of the Executive if you can help out in either area.

The AGM was held on the same day as the Information Day for potential new volunteers where 40+ people attended. Many of those attending also expressed interest in the Certificate III (Interpretation) that can be part of the volunteer training.

NEWS FROM RECENT MEETINGS

POLO SHIRTS

Polo Shirts for FOMDC members can be purchased by ordering from the committee. Form attached. The shirts are red with white piping with a FOMDC logo designed by Jenny Laidlaw and Keith Smith.



Friends proudly wearing the new Polo shirts

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SAND DUNES PROJECT – the funding acquired for the ongoing sand dunes project is now being put to use. The first area to be worked on was around Pt Lonsdale, commencing in mid-July. This project involves a number of schools and up to 1,300 students, and covers a wide coastal area. The project ran over a four week period and the MDC staff are now moving into the second phase of the project.

THE ELAINE TINGAY MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP has now been fully established with a donation from the Tingay Family. This will have the theme “Living by the Sea” scholarship. The first round of publicity is being sent to the three schools in the area involved in the award.

MDC STAFFING

Two new staff members have been welcomed to the MDC – they are Anne McLaughlin and Duncan Thomas.

BROCHURES

The Friends brochures have been delivered and we aim to distribute them far and wide to advertise our support for the MDC and encourage new membership of the Friends group.



FUNCTIONS

Sustainable Seafood Supper & Auction – Friday, 30 OCTOBER
– 7.00 pm- Cost: \$65.00 pp.

Come along and enjoy taste tempting seafood prepared by a local Queenscliff restaurant, accompanied by wines from Bellarine Estate and soft drinks from Foodworks Queenscliff, and join in the fun of the auction when items from local businesses will ‘go under the hammer’.

The auction will again be conducted by James Gladman from Fletchers Real Estate, Queenscliff. Funds from the auction will go

towards special programs in support of the MDC. Enquiries and tickets from Amanda – Phone:

5255 2727 or drop a note into the Friends PO Box 127, Queenscliff 3225. A fun event not to be missed. Flyer included with this Newsletter for display.



OPEN DAY SAUSAGE SIZZLE – The Friends will be supporting the DPI Open Day on Sunday, 8th November by offering a sausage sizzle at a very reasonable fee to the many expected guests. If you have some

time to assist on that day please contact Alex Giannuzzi at the MDC – Ph: 5258 3344 who will roster you on for a short period. All help will be greatly appreciated as we expect to be kept very busy.



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President's Report to AGM, 9 August 2009

It is my pleasure to report on the activities of the Friends group for season 2008-09. Over summer "friends" volunteers helped out with promotional displays at the Queenscliff Seafood Feast, Barwon Heads Festival of the Sea, Portarlington Mussel Festival, and the Ocean Grove Rotary Market. I also spoke to several community groups about the role of the friends in support of the environment and the MDC activities.

In the past year The FOMDC has been the vehicle to obtain grants for the MDC to deliver some of its programs. These were;

- Sand Dune Rehabilitation Project - \$49,500 – which involves almost 1,000 school children, and rejuvenation of sand dunes in association with local schools and councils
- Junior Rangers Program - \$2,840.00 for a program covering three primary schools in the Queenscliff area focusing on sea safety and snorkelling
- Fuel funding to assist volunteers with travelling costs
- A grant from Metricon Homes for two marine biology cruises for children from Cottage by the Sea

Fundraising this year was concentrated on the Sustainable Seafood Supper held on 25th October and sales of the Entertainment Book - both initiatives of Anne Hillis of Benambra B&B – and a Sunset Cruise. The SSS and auction was very successful both financially and in raising public awareness of the FOMDC.

Our status as a Registered Environmental Organisation was confirmed in November 2007 and the Tax Office listed us as a Deductible Gift Recipient, but our Public Fund has yet to be widely promoted. We have one member so far of the "500 Club" that being the Rotary Club of Ocean Grove. We thank them for their 3-year commitment. Our plans to solicit more "500 Club" and general donors were put on hold with the onset of the GFC, but I am hopeful that we can be more effective in the next 12 months.

I thank Kevin Purcell, John Fox and Remo Bianco for volunteering to be trustees of the Public Fund. What we need now is an exciting environmental project that we can "sell" to prospective benefactors so the trustees will have some decisions to make.

Further committee achievements worthy of note are;

- Hosted a welcome function for a national MDC seminar
- Integrated the membership of the MDC and the FOMDC
- Designed and produced a promotional DL brochure for the FOMDC
- Designed and purchased a FOMDC banner
- Developed a logo for Tee-Shirts for volunteers when assisting with MDC functions at markets etc and when conducting FOMDC activities

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- In conjunction with the Tingay Family established the Elaine Tingay Award for a grade 6 student in a local school
- Provided four newsletters per year to members
- Joined the Victorian “Friends Network”
- Developed a better website (on going)

I sincerely thank my small but very enthusiastic committee and in particular Vice-President Helen Mair and her helpers for the 4 newsletters that she has produced (as well as the minutes and other secretarial support when we lost the services of Kay Widdowson due to work).

Noel L Emselle

Public Officer

NEWS FROM HARRY

For those who know (and miss) Harry Thorman who has taken leave from the MDC for a bit more than 12 months. As you will see, Harry has undergone a major change to his environment.

A bigger beach!

So how do you build upon the skills and expertise gained whilst working at the Marine Discovery Centre, Queenscliff to broaden ones horizon and continue the journey to enlightenment? Perhaps a bigger beach with red sand and a sea of prickly Spinifex between endless sand dunes will present a new challenge.

During volunteer training at the MDC we emphasize the sheer vastness of our unique continent and marvel at its awesome biodiversity. We focus on the unique characteristics the create our landforms and invariably the habitats that sustain life in and on the land, on the shore and under the waves. If there is one theme that underlies the MDC’s mission, it is to provide a connection between the community and our coast. The Bellarine Peninsula is fortunate to have a diverse array of varying marine and coastal ecosystems supporting an



Poor Neville, nobody escapes the Harry cuddle

incredible diversity of organisms and providing the basis for our high quality fisheries. MDC volunteers, Friends and staff alike take great delight in sharing knowledge and local secrets about our environment engaging and inspiring generations of visitors and school students. My journey to the north west of Australia has revealed that the Martu also want to share their knowledge with visitors and are equally as generous and passionate about their

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understanding and connection with country. Of course the region is 13000 square kilometres in size, slightly more massive than the Bellarine or entire Victorian coast, but the Martu have an incredible knowledge of their homelands captivated through stories, song-lines and Jukurrpa (their spiritual culture). It is my grand fortune to be amongst the Martu Rangers visiting and working on country applying their traditional land management practices and facilitating aspects of modern ecological techniques such as GPS tracking, datalogging and engaging tourists on the Canning Stock Route. The Rangers are extremely patient and careful with me as I stumble through my own understanding and mangle their ancient language.

The Martu are renowned as being amongst the last 'traditional' people on earth to encounter European settlers and were still 'walking' the desert up until the late nineteen seventies. The



Face to face interpretations draws an appreciative crowd.

movie Rabbit Proof Fence brought part of the Martu story to prominence and later this year a

documentary on ABC TV called "Contact" will tell the story of Yuwali and her family encountering a desert patrol searching for people living in the desert where rockets launched from Womera might have crashed.

When we mention a connectedness with community, then I could not conceive of anyone being more fully connected with their environment, physically, mentally and spiritually than the Martu and the Ranger team. At every opportunity families and communities venture into the 'bush' and there is a collective euphoria upon returning to country, in our case



Traditional mosaic burning of Spinifex on the Puntawarri track.

Jilakuru along the foreboding Puntawarri Track. Smiles broaden, eyes mist and the volume of banter escalates as the older Martu recount people, place and dreaming to their family. It is an infectious contagion of well being and contentedness that might be the secret elixir of life. Asking questions of Martu often results in a

silence that is not avoidance but a reflection.

Quietly the Rangers sing the country in their mind,

an encyclopaedic knowledge of place that was passed on over long summer nights as elders chant the lessons from dusk to dawn. Some places are Ngulu, only told to the initiated boys or to girls and are for Martu only. In the short three months I have lived here my own

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conceptions of astrology, ecology and community have been challenged as the Rangers relate their understandings.

My office, field station and main workplace is under the stars camped out in a swag at night under numerous galaxies with too many satellites a constant reminder of the world beyond.

“Look up there” AS says to me. “See that, you call him the southern cross, that’s old emu, see his head and down there are that cunning Dingos teeth marks”

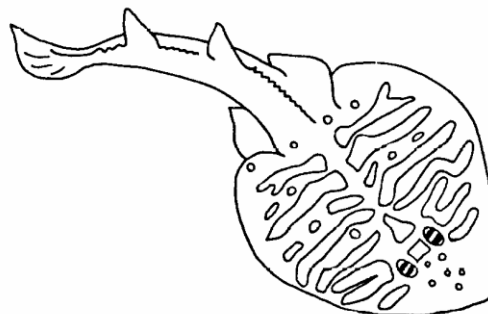
Everyday there is something new to learn and there is a constant exchange of information and perceptions, although I seem to be receiving the lion’s share of knowledge. My position is not without its frustrations, challenges and inevitable politics but it happily lacks the multilayered complexities of the public service. Resources can be applied to directly eliminate shortfalls and planning is immediately followed by implementation with constant evaluation of progress. It is rewarding to be able to be creative and apply innovative ideas to develop sustainable, meaningful outcomes. The pace is much slower and the focus is on now and a little bit of tomorrow, an almost alien concept to our 3, 5 and 20 year strategic planning processes. As with most life experiences the true import or deeper meanings will not surface until much later on, so for now I hope to be making the most of my short sojourn.

Harry Thorman.

LIFE’S LIKE THAT

Murphy’s Law – Fishing

You just caught your limit of smalls when the big ones start to bite!



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