



QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE AVOCA BEACH COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

www.avocabeach.com

clean up day in avoca

SUNDAY 6 MARCH 2004

The Avoca Beach Community Association will again be supporting the lakeside sites being supervised by Mick Kilp, manager of Aquamuse. As usual, this will be a fun day for families keen to help clean up our parkland and bush from the Shark Tower to the Scout Hall.

We hope that the weather will allow more volunteers this year to take up his generous offer of free use of his boats, to clean up the rubbish around the lake foreshores. There's much more to collect this year because of the low water levels in Avoca Lake since the October vandalism.

All willing Avoca residents and visitors are warmly invited to come on Sunday 6 March. Registration will take place near the barbeque behind the tennis courts from 8.30am. Each worker will be given a collection bag, but **PLEASE BRING YOUR OWN RUBBER GLOVES, AND WEAR SENSIBLE SHOES OR BOOTS, HATS AND SUNSCREEN.**

The clean up must be finished by 12 noon at which time trucks will visit to pick up collected materials.

There will be a free barbeque lunch put on for all the volunteers from 12, towards which the Association will provide a \$100 donation. Once again, there'll be giveaways too!





president's message

IAN ESPLIN

In this first Newsletter for 2005 I welcome any new arrivals to Avoca Beach and also welcome back the existing readers that have supported our Newsletter over the years.

The main news over the Christmas break is that plans for the redevelopment of the cinema and the adjoining block have moved one step further along the long road to realisation.

Readers may remember the December 2003 issue where the necessity for rezoning of the land was discussed. In planning jargon the zoning of a block of land is controlled by the Local Environmental Plan or LEP.

Before a rezoning can occur the Council must decide that the proposal has merit. It does this by producing a draft LEP which is exhibited to allow the public to comment. After the exhibition period has finished and the submissions have been received then the planners must assess the proposed change in the light of this response.

Where we are up to is that the Council has now voted to go ahead with the preparation of the draft LEP. This plan will be exhibited for 60 days; however at this stage it is not known exactly when this will period will start.

The ABCA has been monitoring the proposals and discussing the pros and cons with a variety of interested parties. As a result we have agreed to co-operate in helping to arrange a public information night hopefully chaired by the Council where there can be the opportunity for members of the public to ask questions regarding the details of this draft rezoning plan.

Redevelopment of the theatre area was always going to be a controversial issue. I think most people in Avoca and surrounding areas seem to regard the theatre fondly. Apart from the useful function it provides showing films, it is also a reminder of a simpler time and way of life.

We seem to accept the loss of the modest old weatherboard cottages that characterised the history of this area, and their replacement with large, gleaming, new apartments. If this theatre and what it represents were simply erased in the same way, however, and replaced with something bland, then that would seem much harder to bear. (The current proposal retains the old theatre but incorporates it into a much larger totally new structure).

On the other hand it is not a publicly owned civic building but rather someone's private property. Amongst other things, the owners want to do the same thing that most people want to do - which is to use their land in the most economic way possible.

Anyone who takes the "nothing must change" view can ultimately expect to be side-lined in discussions about the future. We expect a high level of facilities in contemporary society and the real discussion should be what form development takes and what are the priorities.

In all the argument about this issue there seems to be a general agreement on some basic points:

1. the social and cultural function should be maintained and if possible enhanced.
2. the landowners should be able to make a viable economic return on their investment
3. some flexibility in the current zoning could be considered to achieve this.

The problem is how best to do this.

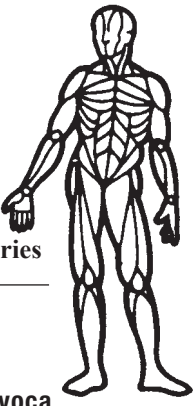
The owners have presented a proposal which the draft LEP will be based on. The ABCA has had some concerns about a number of aspects of this proposal. However, our opinion is only one among the many which the planning authorities may consider in their determinations.

We also firmly believe in a democratic process which works best when the public is well informed. We encourage you to come along to the information night and read the articles which will appear in future Newsletters written by people representing differing views.

If you have something to say and would like to participate in some way, please contact us. We will refer you to the organising group, which will be finalised when the Council advises us of the appropriate date for the event, during the public exhibition phase for the draft LEP.

I hope the year is a good one for you and also for Avoca.

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Avoca Lake's Green & Golden Bell Frog

KEN EASTWOOD, ASSOCIATE EDITOR, AUSTRALIAN GEOGRAPHIC

As part of the extensive research I was doing for an Australian Geographic feature story on the endangered green and golden bell frog, I had the pleasure of visiting Avoca Lake one night recently. In fact, it's where I caught my first (of many) green and golden bell frogs.

Like many Sydneysiders, I'd spent many of my teenage summers tooling around the lagoon: on canoes, swimming, bushwalking and just mucking around on family holidays. But I'd never really been there with a purpose before. So it was great to see it with new "frog" eyes.

Like many of our native frogs, the green and golden bell frog is struggling to hold its own in a world increasingly filled by concrete and steel. Yet, unusually for a frog, it seems to favour "disturbed" areas unlike by other frogs. Of the 43 key locations in which the frog is still found, many are old or existing industrial sites, or areas where water temperature, salinity levels, water levels, or pH fluctuate greatly.

Green and golden bell frogs still live in Avoca Lake – it's basically the only decent-sized population between the Hawkesbury and the Hunter. The beautiful creatures are quite large for a frog – up to about 10cm – and, as their name suggests, generally have a mix of beautiful gold and green, with brilliant blue flanks. The male's call is a bit like small bursts from a 2-stroke trail bike.

I accompanied a regular frog survey at the lagoon, organised by Dr Graham Pyke from the Australian Museum. Every six weeks or so, Graham and a team of volunteers grab every frog they can, microchipping, weighing and measuring them to check the health of the population. Despite often wildly fluctuating water levels, the population is actually relatively stable.

Compared to some of the other frog surveys I've been involved in, it was strange pulling these rare and endangered frogs out of people's backyards – rusty trailers, potplants, even dog bowls.

But once again, that seems to suit this unusual frog. (Many will remember that this particular frog became famous in the lead up to the Olympics, when a population of more than 1000 were found dwelling in the old Sydney brickpit which was to be incorporated into the Olympic building program. The whole site had to be reorganised around the frog.)

It's a rare privilege to have this endangered frog still living literally on your doorsteps at North Avoca. Hopefully it will continue to feel at home, and expand its range again, so it can once again become a common sight around the place.

I encourage you to learn more about your local precious frog and the ongoing efforts to save it from extinction. Pick up a copy of the next Australian Geographic (April-June 2005 which comes out in March) by either calling 1300 555 176, visiting your local Australian Geographic store in Erina, e-mail aussub@ausgeo.com.au or subscribe via our website, australiangeographic.com.au.



Green and Golden Bell Frog, *Litoria aurea*.
Photo: H Cogger, courtesy Australian Museum Online.

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bushcare's latest developments

ROMAINE RUTNAM

As we start implementing the second half of our two (Commonwealth and Gosford Council) grants, the Bulbararing Reserve Bushcare Group is busy with a range of new and interesting projects.

Design Competition

On Friday 11 February, Carol and Peter Gumley hosted a visit to the Reserve by 60 Stage 3 (11-12 year old) students from Avoca Beach Public School, accompanied by 2 of their teachers. The Gumleys were supported by Gosford Council's Bushcare Officer Robyn Urquhart, and experienced visiting bush regenerator Anne Mulford from MacMasters Beach. Visits by Stage 2 students (9-10 years) are scheduled for Tuesday and Wednesday 22 and 23 February.

This is the start of the design competition opened to our local school students as part of Gosford City Council's Community Development Grant, aiming to raise community awareness and create a favourable identity among the residents immediately adjoining Bulbararing Reserve.

As part of the conditions of entry, the design is to include the words "I'm a good neighbour of Bulbararing Reserve". The design, either hand-drawn or computer generated, could include a logo to illustrate a feature of the Reserve, and should be 175mm wide by 240mm high.

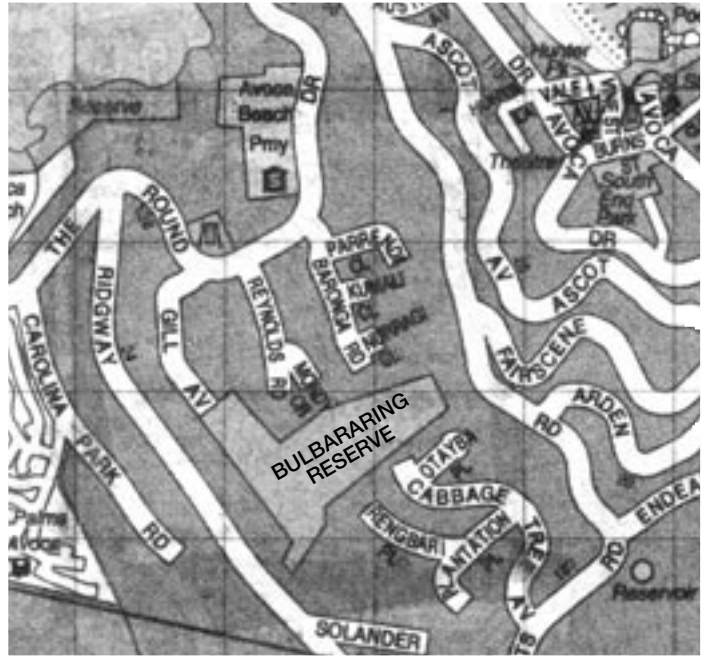
Category winners (in each age group) and the Overall winner will be announced at the Community Association meeting at 7.30pm on Monday 2 May 2005.

Category prizes will be supplied by Gosford City Council and presented by Mayor Malcolm Brooks or his representative at an Open Day at the Reserve to be held on Sunday 15 May 2005 (date to be confirmed). The overall winner's prize will be a \$100 gift voucher donated by the Avoca Beach Community Association.

Brochure for Real Estate Agents

The group has produced a new brochure describing the Reserve, which you should find distributed with the newsletter to Avoca residents. It will also be provided to local Real Estate Agents as part of a training package on environmental issues, in conjunction with the Community Environment Network. We hope these brochures will be handed out to future tenants and owners of the 40-odd properties adjoining the Reserve.

The brochure records that Gosford City Council is committed to protecting the reserve by providing ongoing support to Bulbararing Reserve Bushcare Group formed in 1996. If you want to find out more about the work involved, the training offered, the possibility of working at other times and dates, and the great satisfaction awaiting you if you join the group, please contact Council's Bushcare Officers on 4325 8195 or 4325 8169 (in business hours).



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an awakening to the energies of 'tai chi' and its partner **JOHN SHEEHAN**

Historians have traced the origins of tai chi to what we know as The Book of Changes published as we think around 1100-700 BC during the Ming Dynasty. Despite the fact that some uncertainty exists of its origins, we do know that it is very old. It is steeped in Chinese philosophy and culture and many of the forms of practice were developed from watching and observing nature and from the movements of animals.

Today we see many forms and types of practice, ie the yang style (founded by Yang Luchan 1795-1872), the chen style, the wu, sun and the hao styles. The yang style is perhaps today the most widely practised; it presents movements which are graceful, and the most common form is found in the Beijing 24 form.

For a practice to be undertaken a fundamental knowledge of some Chinese terminology is necessary – we find such terms as chi, yin and yang, dantian and meridians. One needs to come to it with an open mind and free from needless distractions where possible. We also are aware today of the benefits of tai chi, in helping with the reduction of excessive stress which may have been accumulated. The yang style's movements are slow, graceful and have a continuity flowing between them, and they are really enjoyable to do once learnt.

Tai chi's partner, qi gong, teaches us in a particular way to learn how to harness internal energy, and it means 'energy or chi work'. As we know chi or prana is held present in everything, the rocks, the sea, the trees, ourselves and the cosmos. The combining of these practices can help to restore balance in our bodies and minds and lead us into more peacefulness. Qi gong and tai chi in China have always

played a major part in health care and maintenance and is widely used today alongside traditional medicine.

A tai chi and qi gong group practices at the Avoca Lake each Saturday morning. If you have further inquiries, please contact the writer on 4381 1002.



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the function of an executive

DAVID MOELLER

Editor's note: Avoca Beach aquarobics instructor Steven Delves provided this story, written by one of his pupils who died in November 2004. His farewell message was "Exercise, make love and be happy".

I read of the Hardie executives and their pornographic pay-outs for their services to board, bankers, fund managers and shareholders and the collective God "Greed". It is nothing to do with service contracts, as business leader Hugh Morgan with an interest in such things would like us to believe. If they were not guilty of telling lies and cheating they could not have demanded and would not have been paid so much! Investors and bankers are not benefactors. They pay for service. QED.

I was an executive. I joined a large multi-national as a graduate trainee. I worked with carbon black and asbestos sheeting while studying the production processes. I also smoked. I worked in Frankfurt, Germany and Calcutta, India and came to Australia in 1972. I changed industries and I worked in the Media.

In the 1970's, I bought a small company and made it grow and in the early 1980's became a managing director, aware of shareholders, their friends (and funds), banks and their loans. My focus had to change from suppliers, customers and employees their needs, satisfaction and well-being to obeying the constraints of the money men. I had more meetings, tighter schedules, more traveling, more stress, more cigarettes and more evenings in hotel bars at Conferences and Trade Fairs. Everyone told me I had a fantastic life. Lucky man ... and I believe I was.

In the 1980's we did well and I let my staff do the traveling. I had a maturing family. Envious managers became a threat because they wanted to be part of 'our action'. Their bosses were happy to take the money without the risk. But the bankers, shareholders and investors became worried about security, cash flows and contracts. The 'scorers' and the score book now became more important than the players and the game. Lawyers and accountants appeared with "schemes".

Last night I perched on the edge of my bed in Room 8 of the Respiratory Ward. For an hour and more surrounded by nurses and a doctor I struggled for the one thing we take for granted... the breath of life. I replayed every cricket shot I could remember that went for four or six, every catch held and every ball that took a wicket... to make myself breathe. I got through.

An old man with asbestosis in the opposite bed was the only colleague who attended this crucial 'Meeting'. He had been there, knew what I was suffering but he can no longer get his words out.

This morning the Grim Reaper tapped my shoulder again, I replayed the best nine holes I have ever played, shot by shot and all the tries I ever scored.

I had smoked, I drank and I had a good time and the family benefited. I will not say I would have done it differently. That would be hypocritical. I could read the messages on the packet and eventually I gave up smoking eleven years ago.

But I look at my co-patient, colleague now, with terminal asbestosis who had no choice, was given nothing to read, that he could understand, about the dangers of his work environment and was condemned to death. He is a real victim.

I know what went on in those meetings at Hardies, with catered lunches and silver service, where alternatives were discussed with financiers, actuaries, lawyers and accountant.

Today, the bottom line numbers that matter for me and my colleague with asbestosis are real, blood pressure, oxygen level and temperature. We know what it feels like to be told that your Deathday has been brought forward and that you might not pass "Go"... with the only consolation that the \$200 you should have collected is in dispute anyway.

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ABCA is a community group for residents and non-resident property owners which tries to protect the relatively relaxed lifestyle that Avoca's village character and natural beauty offers. We support and initiate plans which promote this lifestyle and work to oppose proposals that threaten it.

ABCA meets at 7.30pm on the first Monday of each month in the CWA Hall (next to the Bowtells Garage).


The Association's newsletter The Avoca Beach Review is published every three months and hand delivered to all households.

It is financed by advertisements from local businesses who can show their support for the community and promote themselves to the community through the advertising. Rates \$40 for 6cm x 6cm.

Contributions and letters are welcome. Please send to:
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