

June 2010

Delegate Doings



\$1.20
incl. GST

ISSN 1446-6716

Volume 9, issue 6.

FOOTPRINT THEATRE BRINGS BANJO TO DELEGATE

The well loved poems of Banjo Patterson were brought to life by players from the Footprint Theatre Group at Delegate on Sunday 16th. May. The large crowd of over 100 people enjoyed every moment and showed their appreciation by much applause.

The old Delegate School of Arts building provided a perfect venue for A B Patterson's poetry and the afternoon tea of damper, Anzac biscuits, tea and real coffee was a fitting finale to an entertaining afternoon.

Highlights of the performance were stunning renditions of the *Man from Ironbark* by Karl Auer and *Mulga Bills Bicycle* by Peter O'Brien. A wonderful atmosphere was sustained by the incidental music and songs played by Steve Wilson with his button accordion.

All in all the afternoon was a pleasant stroll into the past and a reminder of the simple joys of live music and performance

This was the first time the footprint theatre had held a performance away from their usual coastal venues, and they were very pleased with the attendance and the audience's response.



Next Issue: 3rd July

then: 7th August

and: 4th September

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Dates for your Calendar

- 10th June—Christian Womens' Fellowship -Nurses Cottage.
- 12th. June—Music Delegate Hotel
- 22nd. June—General Meeting DPA
- 26th. June—Cob Oven Dinner
- 24th July—Christmas in July at Country Club.
-

COPY FOR PAPER

THE "DOINGS" COMES OUT ON THE FIRST FRIDAY OF THE MONTH.

IN FUTURE ARTICLES WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED AFTER THE PREVIOUS FRIDAY.

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KITCHEN AND GARDEN SPECIALISTS.

We are offering two casual positions for a passionate cook and a passionate gardener to deliver the innovative Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program at the Delegate Public School, and open our students' eyes to the possibilities of fresh home-grown food. Candidates must have the proven ability to relate to young children, possess initiative and excellent planning and communication skills.

The position is subject to NSW Department of Education and Training mandatory child protection checks.

Pick up or phone the school on (02) 64588183 for an information pack and application.

Applications close on Tuesday 22nd. June, 2010.

Seek and Find OP Shop Anglican Church Delegate

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DELEGATE PROGRESS

ASSOCIATION

GENERAL MEETING

22ND. JUNE, 7.00 PM.

ART ESCAPE WEEKEND.

Fifteen aspiring artists gathered at the Delegate Art Centre on 14th and 15th of May for a weekend of tuition by well known artist Lucy Culliton.. People came from Delegate, Bombala and over the border, as well as one from Tanja on the South Coast. Over the two days some participants produced two still life paintings, while others were content with one, while Lucy kept an eye on all, offering encouragement and helpful suggestions.

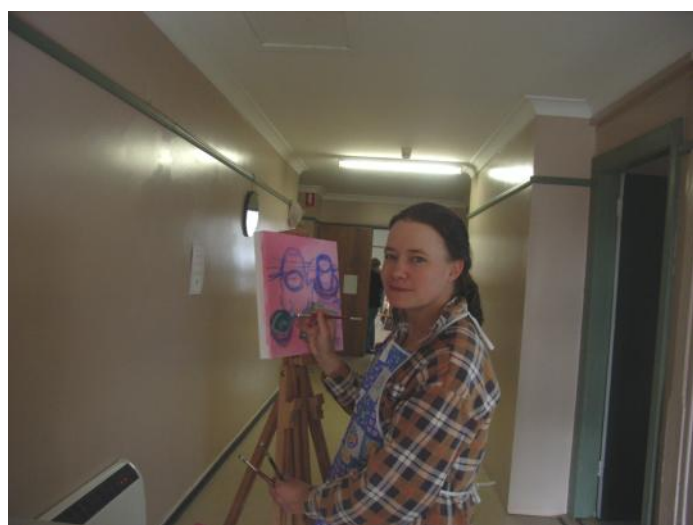
Before the classes commenced she said she did not want to see everyone painting like Lucy Culliton, as she preferred them to develop their own style. To get things moving, she then did a quick demonstration of a painting of two small figures.

The whole weekend was wonderfully catered for by Lesley Smith, the group enjoying hot soup, sandwiches and other delicious goodies. Two people also took advantage of the accommodation in the adjoining Nurses Cottage, and dined at the Hotel on Saturday night.

There are more Art Escape weekends planned within the next few months, the first one being glass slumping with Sharon Buckman, followed in July by pottery with Janna Ferris.

Pictured below L. To R: Rachel Butterworth starting her still life, R: Louise Stephen ,Tracy Romans and Jo Haggar relax at morning tea.

L. Lucy Culliton demonstrates her method of painting, R: Part of the group ready for action.



‘OUT OF THE SHED’ AT BORDERLINE GALLERY.

A wonderful collection of local art and craft is on display at the Borderline Gallery’s “Out of the Shed” collection which officially opened on Thursday 6th. May and will continue until 16th. July, 2010. A new committee which comprises Jo Haggard, Alma Reed, Tanya Ponsford, and Evelyn Walker has been formed to co-ordinate the gallery displays.

Before calling on Mayor Bob Stewart to officially open the gallery, Natalie Armstrong thanked Lesley Smith for the professional and capable way in which she has organised the twelve previous gallery displays, and passed on a Certificate of Appreciation for Lesley who was not present.

Natalie also thanked Karen Cash, Council’s Project Officer for her initiative in setting up the gallery, and for the support she gives through Council to this and other Delegate projects. She then introduced the new Committee, saying they had done an excellent job in setting up the new display. Gloria Cotterill’s book 20,000 miles was then officially launched, and is now on sale at the RT/CT Centre.

Mayor Bob Stewart in officially opening the new display said it gives him great pleasure to support projects such as this, which is a venue for local artists to display their talents, and Councillors know that when a Delegate Committee receives funding it will be spent well and to the greatest advantage for the Community. He then declared the thirteenth Gallery display officially open.



Pictured: Bob, Natalie and guests.

TONELLE LEWIS GRADUATES FROM CHARLES STURT UNIVERSITY.

Congratulations to Tonelle Lewis who recently received a Bachelor degree in Early Childhood Teaching (birth to five) from Charles Sturt University, Bathurst. Present at the ceremony was Tonelle’s mother Evelyn, husband Ben and children Chantelle and Ryley.

The Guest speaker at the Graduation Ceremony was Professor Sharon Mcleod who specialises in Linguistics and Phonetics, and this held special significance for Tonelle who was born profoundly deaf. Her early education was at the Shepherd Centre for the hearing impaired in Sydney.

For the past three years Tonelle has been Director of the Delegate Pre School, having worked on the staff for seven years.

Many of those who have known Tonelle for years were unaware of her hearing impairment, and she is to be congratulated for her perseverance in achieving her endeavours.



Above: Tonelle with her degree.

Delegate Café

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MOTHERS DAY IN DELEGATE

The Delegate Hotel hosted a Mothers Day lunch this year and around 50 people dined out in the open area on a beautiful Autumn day.



Pictured are some of the diners enjoying the sunshine.



COB OVEN FULL MOON DINNER.

The next full moon dinner will be held on Saturday June 26th. Being winter, we will light the cob oven early and the oven will be ready for cooking by 1.00pm. If you would rather come early during the warmer daylight hours, feel free to do so.

Visitors will notice some changes at the park. Thanks to Council and Jo Hagger, we now have some garden tubs for planting herbs and veggies. Spring will be busy in the park this year

POISONED BIRDS.

There are some dead birds around town, and there are fears that they may have been poisoned.

Be aware if you have pets



20,000 Miles by Gloria Cotterill

One of the joys of reading comes from the capacity of a book to allow you a glimpse into the lives and experiences of others. *20,000 Miles* an amazing narrative of one Welsh family's experiences in the Second World War, does exactly that.

20,000 Miles is written by local author Gloria Cotterill. Gloria describes the dilemma faced by her parents living in South Wales in 1940, of realising that they should evacuate their children to a safer place and wanting to choose the best option. Because they had relatives in Australia they made the heart-wrenching decision to send their older children 20,000 miles away to what they perceived as a safer environment. Gloria herself was considered too young to make this voyage and so remained behind in South Wales. This meant she had her own fascinating story to tell about living in a country under attack. the narrative is written from the point of view of the various siblings and provides a unique glimpse into the wartime lives of child migrants in Australia, separated so abruptly from a normal family life. This is a story not often told but one that certainly deserves a voice.

Gloria Cotterill has copiously illustrated her narrative with fascinating excerpts from contemporary newspapers, photos and letters. This, added to the different voices of the narrators, brings to vivid life the era and the experiences. The book is an impressive debut for this local writer. The book is available at the Delegate RTCT Center and local newsagents for \$22.

LAUGHTER THE BEST MEDICINE.

The burial service for the elderly woman climaxed with a massive clap of thunder, followed by a bolt of lightning, accompanied by even more loud thunder.

"Well" said the husband to the shaken Vicar when it ended, "She's there"



QUOTE FOR JUNE.

Never be ashamed to admit you were wrong. You're only saying that you are wiser today than you were yesterday.

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a.h. - Justin Lewis
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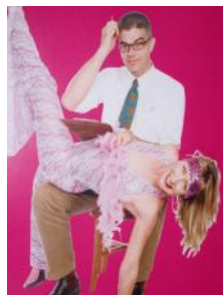
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COOMA'S DANCING WITH THE STARS.



There was local interest in the fund raising event held last weekend for the Monaro Council Council, when Shara Jones, daughter of Mark and Leanne took part in the dancing spectacular with partner Jono Forrest. Mark's family travelled to Cooma on Saturday night for the show and dinner at the Multi Function Centre, and spoke highly of the professional way the event was staged. Shara and her partner received the judges award for their performance on Friday night for which they received a handsome trophy, while on Saturday two couples tied for the award. Thirteen couples took part doing a variety of dances and the theme of "Dancing with the Stars" followed exactly the TV show of the same name.

The local population wholeheartedly embraced the concept, and Doctors, plumbers, accountants, farmers etc. donned their dancing shoes and practised enthusiastically for occasion.

With two evening shows and a matinee to add to an already impressive total, organisers are expecting a figure in excess of \$140,000, all in all a wonderful effort for a very worthy cause.



Above: Shari Jones and Jono Forrest and their trophy.

Right: Section of crowd dining before the show.



NEWSLETTER

SCHOOL PHOTOS

Photos will be done by the same person as last year, Angi High. She will be coming on Tuesday 20th July around 11:30am. Payment will be via the envelopes she provides and will need to be brought in on or before the day. Envelopes are in the post at time of print.

WELCOME

A warm welcome is extended to Nicholas Camm O'Hehir and Connor Reed who have begun care at our service. Connor is an addition to the youngest group and makes for a play mate for the youngsters. Nicholas is in the preschool age group, this is a great age for children to be attending early childhood services as they mature and develop in readiness for primary school. We have also had some other children on a casual basis Tyneil and Rhiarna Worley. We hope you all enjoy your time spent at Delegate Preschool.

**LOOK OUT FOR
"BOOK OF THE
MONTH" IN THE NEXT
ISSUE !**

NEWS UPDATE

Since the last publication was put out, there has been many things happening. We have seen Suzy leave the service, we wish her well in her future career and endeavors. Esther is a local girl who has been with us here at the preschool for some time now, she looks forward to working more closely with your children. Shailee moved to the area 2 yrs ago and is enjoying watching the children grow.

The service has had to reduce days of operation on a temporary basis for financial viability reasons—Mondays and Thursdays are the days of non operation. This was predicted at the parent information session held in February 2010. We are still waiting to hear from The Hon. Mike Kelly about the issues we presented to him in March, but as soon as we know something families will be informed.

Just a reminder to families that if your child is

not coming to preschool on their allocated day, please advise Tonelle that your child is not coming. Failure to do this will result in an extra fee of \$15 on top of your ordinary fee will be charged to your next account. Thank-you.

With the weather being so unpredictable lately it might be an idea to pack your child 2 hats, 1 for sunny days and 1 for cold days. Children's sun hats need to be sun smart which means they need to be a particular style:

bucket hat

#Legionnaire style

#broad rimmed hat

Baseball caps are not considered a sun smart hat.

If your four year old child has not had their vision screen done yet, please advise Tonelle of this. At the last count all four year olds had already had it done, but just double check so we can make

*CHILDREN HAVE
BEEN EXERCISING
THEIR SOCIAL SKILLS
VERY WELL LATELY.*

sure it is done before your child goes to school next year.

Long weekend

With the long weekend coming up, we hope you have safe travels and enjoy yourselves in your travels.

Staff Training

This Friday is the last day of Tonelle's training in Challenging Behaviour in Children, this has been a worth while 3 day work shop that has provided ideas and strategies to better manage challenging issues amongst young children. Also Tonelle graduated earlier in the month in Bathurst. 3 long hard years of studying has paid off!! She now holds a Bachelor of Teaching Birth to Five.



Children recently engage in mathematical learning centre's.

A maths based learning centre encourages children to engage in a range of experiences and gain skills as mathematicians. This style learning centre supports the development of logical mathematical knowledge and thinking through

"hands on" and "minds on" experiences. Weights and measures is an area that has been included in a maths based learning centre. Core components of working with weights and measures are:

#comparisons and contrasts

#learning from trial and error

#logical reasoning

Children were provided with items to weigh and/or measure such as small plastic animals and small plastic blocks. Other areas where children explored mathematical concepts were with play dough using numbers, scoops and con-

tainers. The current home corner theme is also providing mathematical awareness too through pretend money, shapes and sizes of boxes (comparisons) and the spatial awareness of box construction at craft time.

Women in War

Delegate has been spoilt for quality cultural experiences this month. On Thursday 27th May the School of Arts once again proved an excellent venue for a series of monologues performed by talented actress Leith Arundel and written by Alana Valentine and Mary Rachel Brown entitled *Women in War*.

The first of these monologues *Radio Silence* was a fast-paced piece with Leith taking on the character of a WAAF radio operator during the Second World War. She took the audience into the lives of these dedicated women, allowing us to empathise with their fears and joys experienced while providing radio contact with the bomber command missions over Europe. We could experience the sadness of knowing the young men would not return symbolised by radio silence or the joy of knowing that they had landed safely and were back in radio contact.

The second monologue entitled *Last Letters* was a moving tribute to the Australian nurses in the First World War. The theatres of war at Gallipoli and the Western Front were described through the eyes of a young nursing sister, Elsie. She is thrilled to be returning home to her beloved Australia. As she enthusiastically tells us of her experiences, both the horrors of the trenches and the light-hearted antics of the young soldiers, she systematically empties the simple set of the accoutrements of a field hospital into several large trunks. At the end of the monologue we are presented with a set emptied of both things and life as we are made aware that Elsie did not make it back to her family, succumbing to pneumonia on the voyage only two weeks away from Fremantle. Yet another casualty of the war to end all wars.

Leith's powerful portrayal of these two women was made possible due to the beautifully written scripts.

The performance was brought to Delegate by South - East Arts and the Australian War Memorial. We hope to see many more shows like this.

Pictured below Leith portraying two different characters.



COUNTRY CLUB TRIVIA NIGHT.

Ten tables of locals took part in a successful trivia night organised by the Delegate Country Club.

As well as a series of trivia questions, contestants were put to the test with a variety of puzzles, including naming makes of cars, and guessing identities from pictures of half faces. They were also heads and tails with a difference, and many minor prizes were handed out over the course of the evening. The Chapman family team pictured, blitzed the opposition winning by a good margin.



DELEGATE SCHOOL NEWS

ATHLETICS CARNIVAL

The Snowy Mountains District PSSA Athletics Carnival was held recently in Bombala. Delegate students arrived and gave their best efforts throughout the day.

Thank you to all the parents who assisted with transport on the day.

As expected the Delegate students cheered the loudest and behaved very well. We were awarded the Handicap Trophy. This is when our overall points are divided by the number of enrolments of 8 year olds and up. Delegate School has not been on this shield since 1996. Well done to all the students who participated!



Toby Mustard and Francis Famador gave a tremendous effort in their race.



Phoebe King, Janine Jamieson, Anna Horton and Jordan Williams accepted the Handicap Trophy on behalf of the Delegate School.

MOWER EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

We have been putting some of our global budget aside for a few years to purchase a new ride on lawn mower. The new purchase has arrived so we need to make room in the sheds.

We are seeking expressions of interest for one ride on lawn mower that does need repair. Some details we have about the mower is that it is a MTD Yardman HF6135 which needs motor work and a Battery which when quoted will probably cost about \$400.00 to fix.

If you would like to examine the mower, David is here on Mondays or ring the school and we can open the shed (after school hours would be preferred).

You can submit your expression of interest in a sealed envelope addressed

Attention: Mrs Joyce Reed

MUSICA VIVA

The Delegate students travelled to Bibbenluke last week to attend the Musica Viva performance along with Bibbenluke and Bombala students. The performance 'Sirocco' was fantastic and was based around the music from Asia and Australia.

The performers began by playing songs with their

various instruments from China, other parts of Asia and Australia. Some of the instruments the children enjoyed were the windchimes, electric guitar, ocean drum and several pipes.

Then they invited some of the students to help by playing a few of the instruments. Jayden, Anna and Brahnie played the gong and other instruments before Emma was asked to try on the Chinese dragon. All the students were well behaved and enjoyed the experience.



“Sirocco” was the Musica Viva performance the children attended at Bibbenluke.



Emma Stewart tried on the Chinese Dragon costume.

3/4/5/6 ASSEMBLY

The school assembly was held in week Four of term. Several merit certificates were received by students for behaving well in the classroom and on the playground. Students that had earned their Bronze awards were awarded them at this assembly.

Then the 3/4/5/6 class presented their item to the school and guests. The class presented poems they had written about war in recognition of Anzac day. These poems were very well written and performed.



Max Kozak, Dylan Noble, Sophie Reed, Brahnie Mitchell, Hannah King and Maddie Manning received the Bronze awards at assembly.

Melbourne Excursion Fundraiser

Dinner at the Delegate Country Club

Friday 18th June 2010 6.30pm

Asia/Aussie night delicious 3 course dinner

Cost: \$20/ hd for 2 courses

\$10/hd for children

\$6/hd for entree or dessert

Bookings Barb Mount 64588401

Mandy Horton 64587293

Raffle: Truck load of wood approx 5 tonnes

Kindly donated by Jamieson Brothers

To be drawn at country club dinner

18th June

\$2 a ticket

Please support these fundraisers and help us give our year 6 students the “Melbourne experience”

DELEGATE COUNTRY CLUB

For the Information of Members & Their Guest.

★★ Coming Events★★

SATURDAY 5TH JUNE 2010

Penants Golf Congratulations Dinner.

ALL WELCOME.... BOOKINGS ESSENTIAL . 6.30PM .

FRIDAY 18TH JUNE 2010

Delegate Public School P & C Fundraiser.

Open to all who would like to help our local school... Enjoy a delicious meal cooked by our talented local Mums Cleo Jamison and Mandy Horton.

Asia Cuisine and more. BOOKINGS ESSENTIAL . 6.30PM . (see ad p11)

SATURDAY 24TH JULY

Christmas in July ... Book today at the Club for Christmas with a twist. Meal, Music and a whole lot more.

AUGUST

United Churches Trivia (Date to be announce).

**GOLF SUNDAYS 1PM HIT OFF.
ALL WELCOME!**

Every Friday Night!!!!

3 Raffles, 3 Chances

Delicious Meals,

Great service

And

Courtesy Bus to your door!

It's Your Club!!!!

That reminds me of a story...

Make a powerful and engaging story told in your own voice in a **Digital Storytelling workshop.**

One day workshop at Tubbut School, July 11, 10-4 pm

We begin the day with a discussion about your story, and help you refine it into a script. You'll use digital copies of photographs, drawings or treasured objects to make the images in the story, so don't forget to bring them! Finally, we'll help you assemble your images and script together in a computer to make a short movie or multimedia presentation. We'll finish with a special screening of the finished stories.

No prior knowledge is required, and all the skills you need are taught in the workshop. Over the course of the workshop you will:

Design a story of about 1 - 3 mins duration

Create and collate the images, audio, and/or video.

Publish the story using digital media and web software.

If you have your own laptop, mobile phone and/or digital camera bring them too!

Two day workshop at Goongerah School, Tuesday July 13 and Wednesday July 14 - This is a longer, more technical version of the Intro to Digital Storytelling Workshop.

One day course: \$5

Two day course: \$10

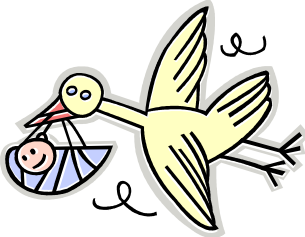
Be prepared to stay around for dinner and showing of everyone's stories.

Numbers are limited so please book at the Tubbut Neighbourhood House

Tubbut Neighbourhood House tubbutnh@bigpond.com or ring 64580295

HERE & THERE

Congratulations to Kate and Calum Steele (nee Sellers) on the birth of their first child, born at Hamilton in Victoria.. The baby boy, a third grandchild for Gail and Eddie Sellers is to be named Edward Hamish Sellers Steele.



Several children from Delegate took part in the Monaro Dance Centre's Fandango at the Bombala RSL. This was the 12th. Annual fund raiser, and provided great entertainment as students took to the stage with performances in jazz, tap, ballet and hip hop.



Another event with local interest took place on Saturday 29th. May, when Shara daughter of Mark and Leanne Jones takes part in the much anticipated "Dancing with the Stars" at Cooma. The event was staged to raise money for the Monaro Cancer Council.



Council have recently announced three new positions, these being, Youth Health Project Officer—Kyle Abbot, who will work closely with Jo Hagger who is Council's Active Communities Project Officer. Both these projects are funded by grants from Monaro Rural Health Service. Su King has been appointed Environmental Project Officer, which is fully funded via an Environmental Trust grant for two years.

This project will add value to the Delegate river project.



The local Blue-tongues Rugby side, had a good win last week-end, coming from behind to defeat Bateman's Bay



We understand that there will not be any games in Delegate this year, which will be a disappointment to fans.

Birthday wishes to those celebrating in June.

Phil Pope and Barry Reed both celebrate milestone birthdays.



Happy birthday also to Wilga Ingram and Tricia Guthrie

The Delegate Presbyterian Church Committee would like to advise that the Church building has now been returned to the Community. The Church Committee which was formed under the banner of the Progress Association are responsible for the managing and upkeep of the building, and advise that the church is now available for christenings, weddings etc. For reservations phone Secretary Hazel on 64587237.

A representative of CWCI Australia will be visiting Delegate on Thursday 10th June and will be speaking at the Nurses Cottage at 9.30am on that day. All are welcome to attend and join in a time of fellowship and sharing with Betty Geddes.

The Country Club will be holding a Christmas in July dinner on Saturday 24th July. The Club are taking reservations for tables now.



Around 50mls of rain was recorded in Delegate over the past week. Very welcome indeed, and thankfully we did not have the really wild weather that affected coastal regions



Lack of numbers has cause the cancellation of the Art Escape Glass Slumping workshop.

LOOKING BACK



Who remembers the “Cow and Shrub” an exciting event on Delegate’s calendar to raise money for the Delegate Tennis Club, probably for lights or synthetic court surface. It was a great success with the pavilion at the Showground being filled to capacity.

There was a large cast and a great variety of acts. From the costumes above we presume the group pictured were performing song and dance from the twenties.

They are from Left to Right: Dot Jervies, Kathy Jeffreys, Rita Smith, Jayne Sellers, and Pam Clear.

Community Information

EMERGENCY / AMBULANCE: 000

FIRE: 000

POLICE

Delegate: 6458 8044

Bombala : 64583444

Cooma: 6452 0099

Bendoc: 6458 1523

HOSPITAL: 6458 8008

DOCTOR: 64951369

CHURCHES

Catholic: Father Mick 6458 3020
Sister Helen Madden: 6458 3045

Mass: Summer: Saturday 6:00pm
Winter: Saturday 5:00pm
(except in special circumstances)

Anglican: Deacon Judy Holdsworth—64583018

Services: 11am every second Sunday
From May 16th.

COMMUNITY HEALTH (3 days per week)

Generalist Community Nurse –Monday, Thursday, Friday

Wellness Clinic—Monday and Thursday 0900-10.30

Pathology—Wednesdays 0930-1-3- hours

Immunisation Clinic—Fourth Thursday from 1100hours.

Victorian Visits Tuesdays

Call MPS 64588008

MONARO FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES

Bombala Office: 6458 4888

open Tues to Thurs - 9:00am to 5:00pm

COUNCIL CHAMBERS: 6458 3555

DELEGATE PRE-SCHOOL: 6458 8196

DELEGATE PUBLIC SCHOOL: 6458 8183

DELEGATE PROGRESS ASSOCIATION

RTCT Centre - 6458 8388— DPAoffice@exemail.com.au

Newspaper: delegateprogress@exemail.com.au

NRMA/RACV: Jack Stewart: 64588047

TUBBUTT ACCESS CENTRE: 6458 0295

Delegate Progress Association Inc.

66A Bombala Street

DELEGATE NSW 2633

PH 6458 8388 Fax 64588 374

E-mail DPAoffice@bigpond.com

‘Delegate Doings’ Subscription:

\$25.00 by post (\$50.00 overseas)

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Name

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ADVERTISING IN THE “DELEGATE DOINGS”

Spot Ad:	1	6	11
\$5 cash—\$7.50 a/c	Issue	Issues	Issues
1/4 Page	\$17.50	\$87.50	\$157.50
1/2 Page	\$35.00	\$175.00	\$315.00
Full Page	\$70.00	\$350.00	\$630.00
Back Page	\$80.00		
Full Page Insert	\$90.00		

Colour advertising: prices on application

June Garden

Welcome rain has fallen district-wide so we can look forward to a prolific 2010 spring. As the frost so far has been infrequent and mild, many semi-deciduous plants are still carrying leaves and flowers. This is the case with roses especially. Delay pruning until August as an earlier prune in these mild conditions will cause buds destined for Spring growth to break dormancy and the new shoots will risk of total destruction when frosty conditions set in later in winter.

It seems that all the heavy garden jobs are gathered into June and July. One important job is to control Lichen. This is done by spraying with Lime-Sulphur to kill it followed by a scrubbing with a bristle brush to remove it. Small infestations can quickly expand to cover the bark. Lichen is an interesting organism. It is a symbiosis between an algae and a fungus.

In nature algae occur wherever there is light and moisture e.g. the ocean and the surface layer of the soil. Algae can photosynthesise i.e. capture sunlight to create food. It is hoped that this function can be utilised industrially to produce biofuel as a replacement for petroleum energy.

In nature the role of fungi is to break down organic material. This cycles the nutrients that are essential for the growth of plants back into the soil. In order to do this fungi secrete complex chemicals and this is why so many mushrooms etc. are toxic but fungi are also the source of useful substances such as penicillin.

Both these organisms live in moist environment and this gives a clue as to how lichen damages plants. Although the lichen is not parasitic, its body maintains moisture around the bark causing it to swell and deteriorate much like our skin does when in the bath too long. The role of bark is complex but one function is to provide a protective layer shielding the plant from extreme temperatures thereby minimising interruptions to the sap flow from roots to leaves and vice versa. When the bark is damaged it also allows disease organisms a foothold. Branches eventually die and the plant is weakened. This is very obvious in neglected orchards. The good news is that lichen indicates good air quality!

Very few flowering annuals can be sown now but in lighter soils sweet peas can be sown. Seedlings of pansies can still be planted for a late winter display. Daffodils are starting to emerge. Remember that the display this year reflects the growing conditions of last year because the flower was formed inside the bulb just as the foliage was dying off. It is important to feed bulbs but commence when in full flower as an earlier feed will make tall weak flower stems and copious soft leaves that will succumb to rotting as they flop over.

The vegetable garden is very busy now. It is time for broad beans, onions, English spinach, lettuce and snowpeas. Onions are best planted as seed. It is tempting to buy seedlings but there is always the risk of introducing white rot into the garden and, once there, it is impossible to eradicate. I find that growing French golden shallots fulfils all my onion needs. They are a small bulb that can be used raw, cooked or pickled. They routinely store for 12 months in a clothes basket and the smaller ones are easy to plant again. They grow quickly into a new clump. English spinach prefers shade which can quite handy. The first leaves are picked individually and then the whole plant pulled making room for other Spring sowings. The fresh leaves of 'pick and come again' lettuce freshens up winter meals that tend to become quite heavy as we respond to the cold by seeking comfort food. Just remember that heavy frost will stop flowers of broad beans and peas developing into pods but pollination will occur on the days without frost allowing at least some pods to be produced giving some fresh winter greens.