



FriendsNET

Number 51 June 2005

Will your group be represented at the Grampians Conference?



Dean Cordes, South Australia National Parks Community Liaison Officer, will be a special guest at the September Friends Conference

Planning is well underway for the 11th Biennial Friends Conference to be held on 16–18 September at Roses Gap.

You will find a registration form with the posted version of this issue of *FriendsNET*, or an e-mail version may have been sent to you. It is also on our web site (see page 4).

Your group can be represented by as many people as you like, so copy the registration form for each person attending.

The form outlines the program, and some key features. The special guest speaker will be Dean Cordes, South Australia National Parks Community Liaison Officer. Dene started with SA National Parks in 1968 and in 1980 became the first Community Liaison Officer, setting up Friends of Parks, Consultative Committees, Campground Hosts and a National Parks Foundation. In 1985 he had a Churchill Fellowship to study parks volunteering in USA and Canada. He instigated the formation of what is now Parks Volunteering Network Australia and the International Federation of Parks Support Groups. There are now 130 Friends Groups and 17 Consultative Committees in South Australia.

Passing on the word

Thank you for the complimentary comments about our special 50th issue. Feedback (positive and constructively critical) is always welcome.

Just three reminders about *FriendsNET*:

- This newsletter is only sent to the representative nominated by the group – we rely on that person to pass on information to other members. It is available either in hard copy or as a small-file PDF so that it can be easily sent on to others by e-mail.
- Be sure to let us know if you would prefer to receive it by e-mail rather than as a posted copy and we will transfer you from our mailing list to our e-mail list (and save the Network postage!). *FriendsNET* may also be downloaded from our web-site: home.vicnet.net.au/~friends.
- Extracts or whole articles in *FriendsNET* may be published in group newsletters (with appropriate acknowledgement).

On the subject of e-mailing newsletters, have a look at the tips in the article on page 2.

Friends of Sherbrooke Forest celebrate 25 years of dedicated activity



Cutting the celebratory cake are founding members Don Vrachnas, Jane Parris, Bill Parris, David Wilson, Vivien Freshwater and Margaret Vrachnas.

On 20 March 2005, a large gathering celebrated the Friends of Sherbrooke Forest's 25th Anniversary.

Many present and past members and associates enjoyed a memorable afternoon. Special guests included John Lloyd who was Forests Commission Ranger when the group was formed in 1980, and Don Saunders, Director of National Parks from 1979 to 1994. Best Friend Award recipient Vivien Freshwater has been fully involved for all those 25 years. We asked her to encapsulate in ten key points her advice from those years of experience:

1. Get those weeds before they seed.
2. Work out your priorities, then plan your action.
3. Be prepared to follow up your initial work.
4. Keep records of your work.
5. Don't let all your projects be 'grant driven'.
6. Don't over-extend yourself – remember you are a volunteer.
7. Leave your ego at home – these are your Friends.
8. Social interaction makes willing workers.
9. Be quietly passionate.
10. Don't let bureaucracy bully you.

Distributing your group newsletter by e-mail – some tips to make your members happy!

The author of this article, Leon Costermans, produces 'FriendsNET' and the VNPA walks booklet (which are both distributed as PDFs), as well as numerous other publications for Friends groups, including full-colour books.

As an example of the small size of PDFs, it might be noted that the e-mailed version of this newsletter (with photos) is under 150 kB.

Because of the great variation in computer systems, programs and versions which Friends groups use, and the range of skills of the operators, it is not possible in this brief article to go into more technical detail and other possible options. However, anyone wanting more information can contact Leon on 9783 5015.

Friends groups are increasingly recognising the benefits of distributing their newsletters to members by e-mail—it's easy, and saves time, postage and paper.

However, those of us on the receiving end (and that includes this Network's coordinators) have been made only too aware that some newsletter producers could benefit from a bit of technical advice. So here are a few tips.

First, it must be recognised that our members fall into three categories: the fortunate ones who have broadband (i.e. high speed) e-mail connections; those (the majority) with slow dial-up connections with their limitations; and those not on the internet. We are mainly considering the middle group here, but must still cater for those needing posted copies.

The two main problems

Anyone on dial-up connection knows the annoyance of long waits for large downloads, only to find that the file size was caused by unnecessary or unwanted large or high-resolution photos, logos, scans etc. (The worst offenders in this regard are senders working in government and business organisations, and those with broadband, who seem oblivious to the size of files and often are not the ones paying!)

The other frustration is finding that the document simply won't open or, if it does, that its layout has obviously been distorted in some way. This usually results from differences in software programs or versions, platforms (Mac or Windows), page set-up, available type fonts/versions, and so on. The sender can never assume that all their intended recipients will have identical set-ups in these respects.

What usually happens at present?

Most newsletters are set up in MS Word (the most common program) and often include photos imported directly from a digital camera. This file is then e-mailed as an attachment exactly as it is – often producing the problems referred to above. If less common programs (e.g. Publisher) are used, there is still greater chance of difficulties at the receiving end.

What to do - some suggestions

1. Start out with a newsletter created in Word (or whatever program you use) and use this for your *printed* mail-out copies.
2. If you are sure that everyone can satisfactorily read this file*, send it as an attachment *provided it is less than about 200 Kb*. To reduce size: (a) any graphics

(especially logos) should be in *smallest-file* formats, and never use *high-resolution* photos from a digital camera or scanner; (b) consider *compressing* the file before sending (most people have decompression software).

*Note: For essentially *text* documents, you can usually overcome differences in word-processing software/versions by saving your document to .rtf (Rich Text Format), which almost all programs will make and read.

3. The best method, however, is to convert your file to a .pdf (Portable Document Format). The advantages of a PDF are:
 - (i) *everyone* will be able to read it – regardless of their operating systems – provided they have Adobe (Acrobat) Reader, which most people will already have, or which is available as a *free* download (www.adobe.com or plenty of other sources);
 - (ii) your document can be saved to give the *smallest* file (*screen* resolution) while still incorporating all your design components;
 - (iii) it will reproduce everything *exactly* as you set it up (your fonts, graphics, photos, layout etc. are all built into one PDF file);
 - (iv) it should print to any printer (except that if the PDF was made at 'small file' setting, photos will be at screen resolution).

However, it must be understood that the free Adobe *Reader* will not *create* a PDF, only *read* it. To create a PDF, you need one of

- a word-processing or layout program which has a PDF 'distiller' built in;
- a full version of Adobe Acrobat (Standard is quite adequate) – this is quite expensive to buy, but if you have a teacher or student in the group, the Academic Version is *much* cheaper;
- a non-Adobe program which will convert your file to a PDF – these are cheaper (or free) and probably adequate, but do not have all the features of Adobe Acrobat.

You will find the ability to make PDFs useful for all sorts of things, especially for e-mailing.

Finally, two reminders for 'e-mail etiquette'. People won't thank you for a big attachment (say more than 500 Kb) unless it's something they really want. *As a courtesy, ask before sending*. And always think before *forwarding* e-mails to large numbers of people on group lists (especially if they contain attachments) – many of us have our e-mail addresses on several network lists, and everyone can finish up receiving several copies of the same e-mail because various recipients have sent it on. And chances are we didn't really want it anyway!

Groups in action ... Growing Groups

SHEPHERDS BUSH INDIGENOUS GARDEN

Located near the Park headquarters in Glen Waverley, the garden was started in 1990 by the Friends of Dandenong Valley Parklands as a 'Botanic Garden'. However we soon discovered this title disappointed visitors who expected a garden such as the Melbourne Botanical Gardens. The gardens are undergoing a renewal with a new purpose of demonstrating indigenous plants in a garden environment to encourage use of local plants in surrounding homes. The emphasis is on horticultural experimentation, particularly on pruning techniques. Plant labels are an unsolved problem; the initial engraved plastic labels, although legible and weather resistant, proved susceptible to weeders' feet. Suggestions anyone?

— Bryan Boyd

NYERIMILANG EAST GIPPSLAND SPECIES GARDEN

The most significant project undertaken by the Friends of Nyerimilang with outstanding support from members of the local Australian Plant Society and specialist Parks Victoria staff, has been the planning, construction, and continuing development of the East Gippsland Species Garden. This is designed to showcase the variety of East Gippsland vegetation species within a four-acre area containing a dam, creek and waterfall system, a network of walking tracks and an Interpretative Pavilion. We regard this project as our 'signature' contribution to a 'Gem of East Gippsland' — the Nyerimilang Heritage Park.

— Jo Hope

SEAWINDS BOTANICAL GARDEN

Located in Purves Road, Arthur's Seat, the Seawinds Nursery Volunteers' 2-acre botanical garden is a wonderful display of the plants indigenous to the Mornington Peninsula. Within the nursery fences are also gardens to show the use of these plants in different garden situations, including a formal garden.

Visitors are welcome to see these gardens Monday and Wednesday mornings, while the bush garden is accessible every day.

— Tricia Allen

WARBY RANGES ARBORETUM

The aims of the Friends of Warbys Arboretum are to give the visitor a knowledge of some of the plants they are likely to see, and to provide a seed source. The project commenced in 1993 with direct seeding of seed collected from Warby Ranges plants. With extensions, the arboretum is now approximately 1.08 ha. Parks Victoria provided a high fence with gates to keep out rabbits and kangaroos and to provide access. Members have been involved with all aspects, including compiling a species list, collection of seeds and cuttings, propagation, planting, watering, weeding, track-marking and the preparation of a species map.

— Helen Curtis

A desire to increase public knowledge and appreciation of indigenous plants has motivated various Friends Groups to undertake some special projects focusing on growing plants.

Here, four groups report on their varying approaches.



A start with direct seeding in 1993



The Arboretum in 2003

Geoff's Group Grapevine

Group newsletters indicate that the February storm caused much flooding, with tree and track damage in many parks. When the floods receded, the Friends of Waurm Ponds Creek found among the debris two handbags containing cards and licences but no cash. They advise that such finds should be reported to the Police.

Repair of erosion of the Millers Landing Track was the Friends of the Prom February project. The big fire partly destroyed their viewing platform on Telegraph Saddle.

On Sunday 6 March many groups participated in Clean Up Australia Day. It is a great way for groups to let their local community know of their existence and involve others with the possibility of recruiting new members. Remember, next year Clean Up Australia Day will be on the first Sunday in March. This year, National Tree Day is Sunday 31 July, and Weedbuster Week is 15-23 October.

The Friends of Baw Baw NP are hiring a helicopter, funded by a Parks Victoria Grant, to continue their willow eradication program. They report that 'The plan to treat 95% of all willows in the Park by 2006 looks highly achievable.'

Geoff Lacey, a past Convener of the Friends Network, has produced a book *Still Glides the Stream – the Natural History of the Yarra from Heidelberg to Yarra Bend*. This 300-page book has good maps, 16 pages of photographs, a bibliography, lists of indigenous plants, birds, mammals, reptiles, frogs and fish, and details of the restoration work of relevant Friends Groups. Available for \$35.00 from Dr Lacey, PO Box 12, Carlton South 3053.

The Friends of the Grampians Geriwerd have decided to continue their two-hour weekday walks in 2005 on the third Monday of most months.

The Friends of Kooyoor State Park hope to conduct a number of trips into the 11,646 ha extension of the park. They say 'One can spend days traversing the area and find something new every time one goes out.'

The Friends of Loughies Bushland are changing their focus this year. Instead of weeding the weediest areas they will concentrate on weeding where native plants are prolific.



Geoff Durham is the Network's Group Liaison Officer

How to contact us ...

By post:
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And We Welcome ...

Formal affiliation of long-standing groups continues, and there are many others from whom we have not received a request for affiliation. Without this we are restricted by privacy law from providing contact information.

Friends of Antonio Park

This is a formal welcome because the group has been operating since 1989. Antonio Park is a small bushland reserve on the Maroondah Highway at Mitcham.
Luke Naismith, 9872 3790

Friends of Black Hill

Black Hill is a 200 acre reserve near Kyneton. The Friends Group was formed in 1979.
Helen De Lacy 5423 4175

Friends of Bradshaw Park

A long-standing group. The park is on the Nepean Highway at Mordialloc. Peter Krause 9584 6241

Friends of the Briars

Volunteers have long been actively involved in management of 'The Briars' at Mt Martha.
Sue Stevens (B)5974 3686

Friends of Edithvale-Seafood Wetlands

This group, established in 1988, is best known for its birdhide on Edithvale Road. Barry Ross 9786 6687

Friends of Grant

Grant Historic Area, on the junction of the Wongungarra and Crooked Rivers near Dargo, has many mining relics which the Friends aim to protect.
Rob Christie 5140 1251

Friends of the Little Desert

Another old group formed in 1988. Its annual gathering will be at Kiata Camp Ground on 25-26 September. Everyone invited. Les Smith 9874 2641

Melton Environment Group

The group has a broad charter, including hands-on work. Doug Godsil 9743 6547

Friends of Mt Cannibal

Mt Cannibal is a Cardinia Shire Reserve just off the Princes Hwy at Tynong North. Hugh Kelly 5941 3229

Friends of Nyah Vinifera Forest

Riverine Red-gum forest on the Murray River north of Swan Hill is the concern of this group.
Anne Fraser 5030 2776

Ocean Grove Park Inc.

This is a tiny park in the heart of Ocean Grove.
Howard Timbury 5255 2477

Friends of Werribee Park

The group assists in the maintenance and development of Werribee Park, including its historic, heritage and natural flora/fauna values. Jill Donaldson (B) 8734 5150

Vale to some well-loved Friends ...

Alf Salkin

Alf was the founder and driving force, for many years, of Friends of Valley Reserve Inc. His enthusiasm and knowledge influenced Council and Melbourne Water to recognise the benefits of using indigenous plants instead of the inappropriate willow trees etc. along our creeks. ... Alf's influence has been enormous throughout the City of Monash and his contribution to our environment as a green city cannot be overstated.
— *From Damper Creek Doings, April 2005*

Tom Burchell

Tom, the sole recipient of the Best Friend Award in 1996, died at Alexandra on 29 April. Tom farmed at Alexandra until he moved to Kingsville in 1951. He joined the Friends of Brisbane Ranges National Park on its formation in 1982 and was a stalwart member until his final illness. In the words of Ranger-in-Charge Chris Worrell: 'His efforts and his love for the park were enormous.'

Jack Myers

For near 50 years a visit to Werribee Gorge State Park would be incomplete without contact with Jack Myers. As a guide, Jack was well informed, lively and amusing. In 1984 Jack became a founding member of the Friends Group and led walks and participated in project days. He was made a life member of the Friends in 1989. His notes for the many walks he led were published by the Friends of Werribee Gorge & Long Forest Mallee as Jack's Track Notes. — *From Bob Reid*

Bary Dowling

Well known for his regular nature column in *The Age* and particularly to Friends Groups along the Yarra, Bary died on 30 May. Shortly before his death he wrote: 'I am hugely grateful to have been given life and to have life on display – birds in the garden, clouds above, plants, the whole of nature – to love and appreciate and worship.'

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If undelivered, return to:
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c/- VNPA, 60 Leicester Street
CARLTON 3053

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