



At last, a SITE for ConFest 89.

We finally have a site for next year's ConFest. It's a piece of land controlled by the Department of Conservation Forests and Lands. It nestles on the banks of the Upper Murray, with magnificent old River Red Gums shading it and a long river frontage with good swimming and ample shallow areas for the younger members of our community to enjoy the water in safety. The land in the area is mainly used for sheep grazing and the surrounding hills are steep with incredible rock outcrops.

Now to make it happen, with meeting attendance averaging about 6 people (and some not making a quorum) we've got to try to make it happen and here lies our biggest problem. In the past ConFest has been organised by 20 to 30 people with many more to prepare the site, help the festival happen and then dismantle the whole thing. There was a bad energy shortage for our last large festival (Daylesford 87) (the site was built by about 1/2 a dozen people, thankfully they were bloody good workers) and numbers now are far less than then.

Over the last few ConFests there has been a feeling expressed by a lot of the ConFest community that the co-ordinators are not doing the job in the way they would like to see it done. That we have too much 'control' and won't let go of it.

I think at this point I should try to explain our feelings/fears in this. The people who are actively involved in the co-ordination of ConFest are there for many reasons but it all comes down to the fact that they see ConFest as important for the community who gather there. They therefore commit themselves to helping to make it happen.

Due to their small numbers this usually means that they take on too much (somebody has to do it). Along with this workload goes a knowledge of the

multitude of laws and regulations to which we must 'conform' and still other precautions we must take so as not to 'upset' councils etc. (because if we upset them they won't give us a permit next time and good sites are hard to find.

Then when ConFest comes along there is still a lack of energy so the same bunch of people keep going. I've heard a lot of people say that the co-ordinators are doing too much, they're burnt out. Bloody oath we are, your average co-ordinator goes through ConFest about 2 degrees below spontaneous combustion. But one thing they're all doing, they're all still caring.

However as a result of the energy level that we end up riding on I know that I for one often don't/can't spend as much time as I would like when I'm talking to someone about ConFest or am forced to 'confront' them concerning the 'rules' of ConFest.

We agree, ConFest is suffering because we're too burnt out to do things as we would like. So we wanna say **HELP!!!**

I feel that ConFest has got off the tracks a bit.. We can't put it back on the tracks and neither can you people out there, but all of us together can. If ConFest is to continue it's got to get back to the caring and sharing which was ConFest/D.T.E. a few years ago. It's becoming an event we put on for you, it's got to get back to an event which we all put on for all of us.

For this to happen it's got to be a full sharing of commitment and enjoyment, a working together before, during and after ConFest (when you're burnt out pulling it to bits at the end is painful, but someone's got to do it).

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August
88

DTE NEWSLETTER AUG 1988

So what our **HELP!!!** means is we need you! We need physical and moral/immoral support to make ConFest happen and run smoothly in such a way that we can all have a good time and know that we'll do it again next year or sooner if the energy's there.

We need as many people as possible to come to meetings so that we get as many views as possible in the decision making. If you can't come to meetings write us a letter with suggestions and/or offers of help in any area where you would like to become involved. If you can't become involved during the year there are the 'on the ground' things necessary to keep the ConFest community going i.e. Site maintenance (that includes dunnies, garbage, showers, etc.). We urgently need a registered electrician who is willing to set up our power, there's the Market and Stage which require some energy during, all the villages need energy/workshops.

We would also like to set up a register of doctors, nurses and first aiders on site who would be willing to either be on call or go on a roster to staff the First Aid Tent.

We would like to set up a ConFest Fire Brigade, to do this we need as many people as possible who have a knowledge of fire fighting/prevention to register with us before hand.

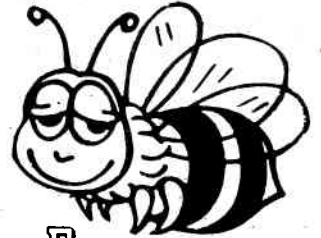
For security we need preferably to have everyone at ConFest willing to discuss any problems they have with each other, this would be 90% of security done. Barring this we need more people willing to do the dreaded 'security'. We are hoping this year to be able to have Non Violence and Conflict Resolution workshops happening for people who wish to be involved in security and anyone out there who has already done any of this type of training would be greatly appreciated.

What all this comes down to is that we feel that a lot of people out there aren't happy with the way ConFest has been going and we agree with them. But we can't change it on our own. ConFest needs to 'belong' to the people who are ConFest but part of the joy of the whole event must be the joy of helping it to happen, and even though the co-ordinators usually leave ConFest absolutely wrecked there is a deep sense of satisfaction in helping it to happen. Not quite as good as delivering a baby but the same sort of thing. I personally tend to sit back and think 'amazing, it really happened.'

Let's share the joy,
Ron Fletcher.

P.S. If you see a worker who looks like they're a bit frazzled, give the poor bugga a cuddle, a massage, a cup of tea, just let them know that you're there or all of the above and then join in and help with the load. Believe me, they need it and so does ConFest.

P.P.S. I love cuddles and massages! and yes that was a hint.



BEES RAVE

(Say it out loud!)

After I took over from Dani a few months ago I paid some attention to the conduct of our meetings. The quality of the meetings has improved. We are getting through the agenda more efficiently and conflicts are generally resolved without acrimony. Numbers dropped, but this is probably a combination of Winter and mid-ConFest hibernation. Now that Spring has arrived and we are gearing up for a ConFest old faces are re-appearing.

There is also new energy which is welcome! Jiorge, a Graphic Design student at RMIT has volunteered to help us. He is designing an advertising campaign which will hopefully target our advertising more effectively.

The ConFest poster in the middle of this newsletter was designed by Peter Gough (thanks Peter). Please use it wherever you can to publicise our ConFest. Further copies are available by contacting the Environment Centre in Melbourne (write to DTE at 247 Flinders Lane Melbourne 3000 or ring 03 654 4833).

For those who haven't been into the Environment Centre since it moved, it is on the Flinders Street side of Flinders Lane between Swanston and Elizabeth Streets. We meet every Thursday except the fourth of the month from 8 to 10 p.m. The first Thursday is an open Director's meeting (everybody participates, but Directors are required to attend), the second an informal occasion where we work on the newsletter or just socialise, the third a more formal meeting (as formal as DTE ever gets!) with priority given to the Finance Collective. If the month has five Thursdays, this is a general meeting. Everybody is welcome! Because the building is locked at night you may need to ring the bell and somebody will come down and let you in.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

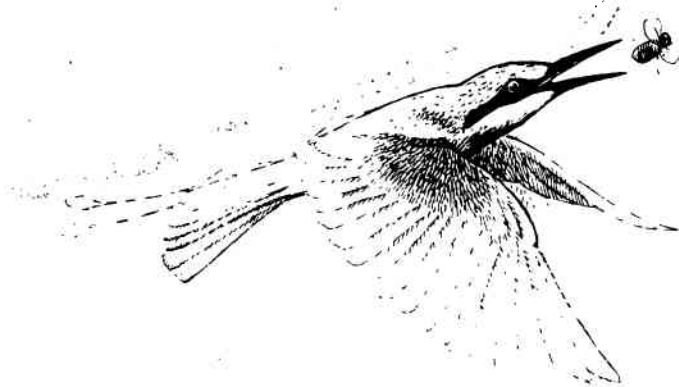
This is the third time I've tried to set this page up, if I screw it up again You might never know that our A.G.M. is coming up.

The Annual General Meeting of Down to Earth Co Operative Society Limited will be held on Friday the 14th of October at 8pm in the meeting room at the Environment Centre, Ross House, 247 Flinders Lane, Melbourne, 3000

Agenda

- 1) Attendance.
- 2) Apologies.
- 3) Confirmation of the Minutes of the last A.G.M.
- 4) Business arising.
- 5) Directors report on the years' activities.
- 6) Treasurers report.
Presentation of auditors report, balance sheet, trading sheet, profit and loss accounts and other financial information.
- 7) Secretaries report.
- 8) Election of directors, secretary and treasurer.

The Down To Earth 'Financial Accounts for the year ended 30th June 1988' are available for your inspection in the registered office of the society. If you wish to see them please make an appointment with our treasurer Cassandra Clark.



FROM PAGE 2

I recently spent four weeks in Queensland, including two wonderful weeks North of the Daintree. There is still a presence at the site of the blockade against "that road" which was bulldozed through virgin rainforest from Cape Tribulation to Emmagen Creek. A Field Study Centre has just opened at Cape Tribulation to conduct research on the flora and fauna of the region. They plan to start an Information Centre so tourists can get accurate information about the area. There are signs of much "development". I hope to get back for several months next year before this gets too far. If you are planning a trip there, you are welcome to contact me.

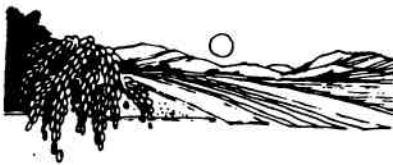
While I was away a site was located for our ConFest. This is a great relief, because our application to hold one at the Permacroft property near Seymour was rejected. The Pyalong Shire feel that thousands of lives could be in danger if a fire approached from the North, where the main access road is. Although there is an emergency exit over Sugarloaf Creek, they are not prepared to take the risk that somebody may be parked across it, crash into a tree, etc. They will not allow a large gathering in the Summer months.

After this disappointment, we heard about a site on the New South Wales side of the Murray. When I was leaving for Queensland it seemed unlikely that we would get permission to use it, so it was great to get back and find that there was another on the Victorian side of the Murray. Although we still have nothing in writing, Cass assures us that we will get the site. Well done, Cass!

By the time you get this I will be away in New South Wales. I am going via Sydney to the Peace and Healing Festival at Homeland and returning via the Rainbow Region by October 13. See you at the AGM and /or our weekend in Maldon!

We will need to elect five Directors at the AGM. At this stage I know of only one person who is definitely standing, so I urge you to think about it. Because the minimum time commitment is the first Thursday of the month, it may be possible for somebody living in the country to consider it. Nominations are taken at the AGM, but if you are unable to be there, please write to me. You need to be a shareholder in the Down to Earth (Vic) Co-operative Society and have your nomination endorsed by two shareholders.

Norman.



Come Dance with me

Many of you will remember ConFest Dance Workshops and a New Years Eve dance with the group Shenanigans.

Recently returned from a successful tour of the U.S.A. , and 4 Australian states, they have started monthly dances (last Sat. each month) at the Community Centre, 11 Mt. Alexander Rd., Flemington.

The performance is an impressive array of ethnic instruments (some have to be heard to be believed), and blend a Bush Dance atmosphere with the music of Australias many cultures (not forgetting primitive African style you were too shy to join in before).

All dances are called, and beginners are made to feel comfortable. Come with or without partners. Cost is \$7.50 / \$5 concession. and the next is 24th of September.

Enquiries: 372 1755.

See you there?

Eva.





Why are we here? What's life all about?

More and more often in my involvement with D.T.E. these words from the 20th century's most meaningful spiritual leader (Monte Python) come to mind.

We (about 5 at the moment) sit here for 11 months and 3 weeks of the year with no contact with the rest of the ConFest community except this Newsletter. We make decisions which will effect the whole ConFest community, we do our best but sometimes no doubt we stuff it up. Then, for 1 week a year you all come along and invade this unreality which us and you have created around us and called Down To Earth.

*Why are we here?
What's life all about?
Is it us during the year?
Or ConFest, when you buggas come out?*



Weekend Gathering

From time to time (notably at our ConFest at Permacroft in January) there have been suggestions that it would be nice to have some time in a weekend, preferably in the country, where those of us who are interested in talking about where DTE is going, how ConFests should be run, etc. have a chance to get together.

Well, this is our chance! On the weekend of October 15/16 we will meet at Maldon. The site is at Butts Resrve on Franklin Street (on the road to Mt. Tarrengower). Come early and have your lunch there so we can start with an attunement at 2 p.m. We expect to break up about 6 p.m. and move to the Penny School at the corner of Church Street and Camp Street, where we can have a barbecue and some fun. Bring your musical instruments, and we might have some dancing. Tea/coffee will be provided and you are asked to put in \$1 to cover cost of tea/coffee and hire of hall (\$30).

Before we break up on Saturday we will decide when to start discussion the next morning. Camping is available at Butts Reserve, where there are toilets, but no showers. Also no charge.

We will decide at the time what we discuss, but here are some suggested topics - regional networks (isolation in country), organisation of ConFest, pre-arranging ConFest workshops, alternative economies for rural areas, future directions for DTE, an alternative economy, and "between ConFest" activities e.g alternative employment, housing, etc.

If you can join us, please ring Sally at Maldon 054 75 2633 or Eva 03 386 7614 or write to DTE at 247 Flinders Lane Melbourne 3000. Sally and Eva have maps of Maldon if you need one. You are welcome to be there just on the Saturday evening, but if you want to join the discussion on Sunday it would be better if you were there on Saturday afternoon.



Norman Keegel



MEMORIES OF CONFEST

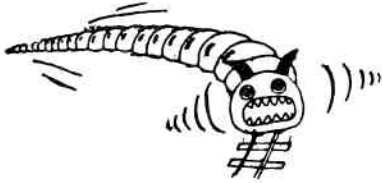
*Festivals mean sleeping in tents,
Market place, morning sharing,
Swimming, massage, sunshine,
Talking, campfires, music,
Stage, concerts, workshops,
Costumes, make up, cooking, eating,
And time spent in the company
Of like minded souls.
All looking for different ways
To express themselves.*

*Every year it's different.
Every year it's the same.
Human celebrations
Under a different brand name.
It may not stop missiles
But the only firing there is wood.
And talk and work and laughter.*

*Come to think of it,
no missiles have fallen yet.
Maybe there's a link somewhere.*

Tom
1985.

Probably the newest potential ecological disaster threatening us is the plan to exploit the Gippsland forests. At last there has been significant progress in protecting these forests from logging and now ;



A VERY FAST TRAIN FOR EAST GIPPSLAND?

An issue which is gathering momentum among environment groups is the Very Fast Train (V.F.T.). This train proposed by a private consortium, will provide an alternative transport service to the planes, trains and cars currently travelling between Melbourne, Canberra and Sydney.

The V.F.T. will travel down the Bonang Valley between Cooma and Orbost. On one side of the valley is the Rodger/Bowen wilderness in the Snowy River National Park and on the other the Errinundra National Park. The distance between these parks is in some places as little as 10 km.

The initial environmental impact of the V.F.T. will be the construction of the track itself. This will involve extensive cutting and filling which will inevitably cause siltation and erosion. There is a need to keep animals and fallen branches from the track. This requires 50m clearings and 2m fences on either side of the track. This will constitute an unsightly scar running the full length of the valley.

Once in operation, the V.F.T. will flood the valley, not to mention the surrounding ones, with sound

comparable to a jet taking off. The problem of noise is a familiar one for V.F.T. developers. On a V.F.T. project in Japan the developers of the "Shinkansen" (the "Bullet") were forced to limit the speed of the V.F.T. to 250 kmh and yet were still forced to double glaze windows of houses along the route ! The proposed V.F.T. in East Gippsland is to travel at 350 kmh and there will be 60 - 90 trains a day !

The wilderness value of the surrounding parks will suffer severely from the construction and the noise. As a consequence, the possibility of future world heritage listings in this area will become more remote.

These are just a few of the environmental problems which need to be considered.

The EGC is not opposed to a V.F.T. in principle. But there needs to be an enquiry into whether a V.F.T. is needed in South-eastern Australia. There needs to be public debate and investigations into alternative routes.

The V.F.T. consortium has just announced that they have begun the feasibility study for the project. Now is the time for the public to make its views heard.

With support from other conservation groups we can bring this issue to the attention of the public through press conferences, radio interviews and newspaper articles. Hopefully the East Gippsland area will win a reprieve from an unsightly and noisy scheme.

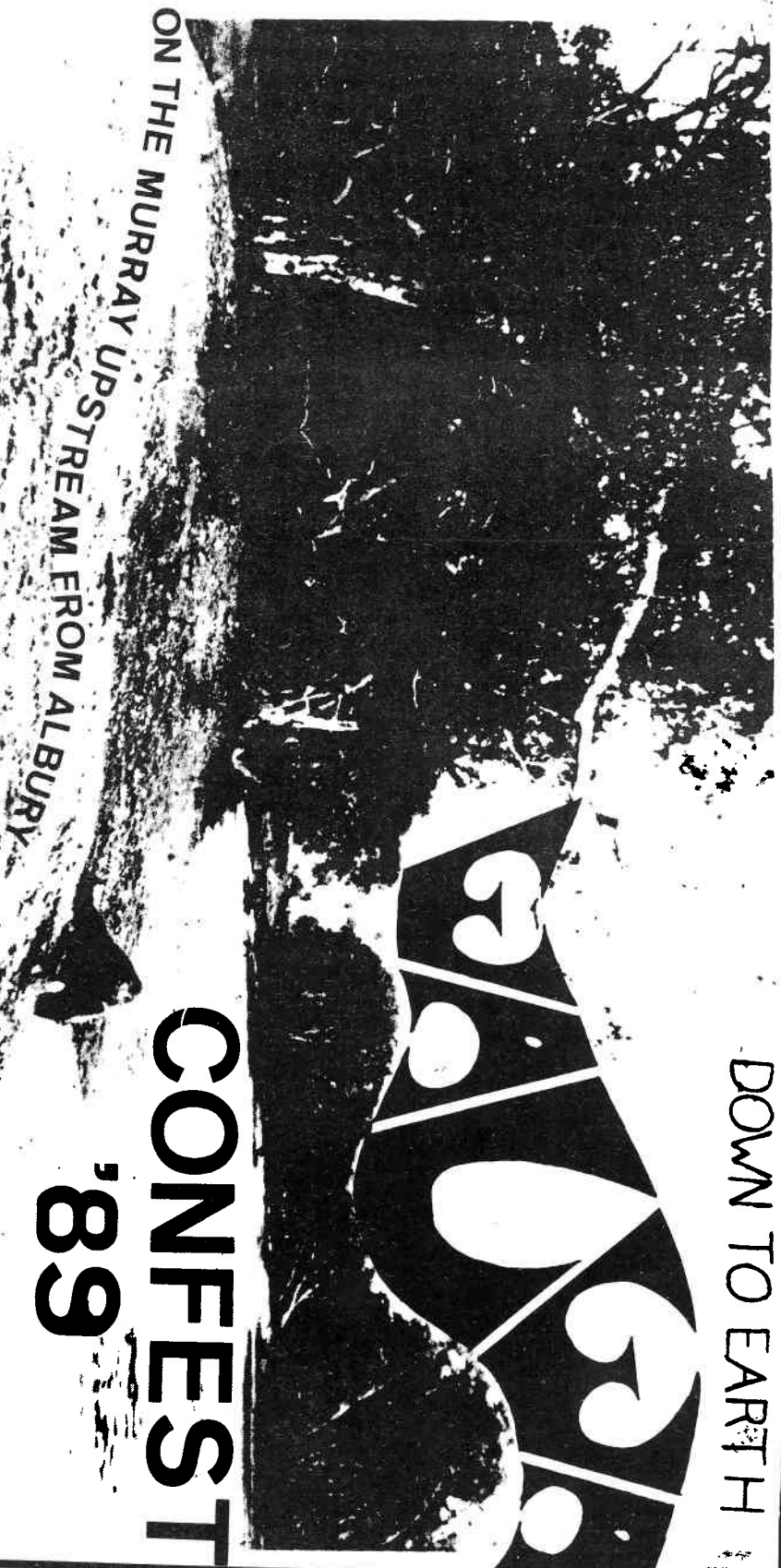
Angus Charlton

If you are interested in becoming active on this issue, or just finding out more about it, you can become involved in the V.F.T.A.G. (Very Fast Train Action Group).

Ring Bronwyn or Angus at the E.G.C. on 654 4833 for further information.



DOWN TO EARTH



CONFEST '89

ON THE MURRAY UPSTREAM FROM ALBURY

STAGE*SELF MANAGEMENT

WORKSHOPS*HEALING*MARKETS

VILLAGES*ALTERNATIVE TECHNOLOGY

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- No disposables - BYO plate and mug for take-away food -

ALTERNATIVE

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IF YOU'RE INTERESTED

If you've ever wondered what the strange writing is on one end of Furphies (water tanks) it's Pitman Shorthand and it says "Water is the gift of god but gin and whiskey are the concoctions of the devil. So come and have a drink of water.

Mount Oak News

In our March Newsletter I promised to report further on Mount Oak (near Bredbo). For details see Green Alliance Newsletter, Jan 1988: "Jim Cairns, Junie Morosi & the Down to Earth Movement. The Story of Mt. Oak Bredbo" \$2 posted from Green Alliance, P.O. Box 55, Cooma 2630.

Well, at a large meeting near the Chai Tent during the Mt. Oak Festival in January 1988, it was decided to start a fund to pay for the legal expenses of transferring the land title from Research For Survival to the Mt Oak Free Land Trust, and to pay off the mortgage. The money collected on the spot, together with money donated by people in return for the free food offered by the Chai Tent, was taken to the Commonwealth Bank at Manuka, A.C.T. where Research for Survival has its mortgage account for Mt. Oak. We were not allowed to open an account there, but an account was later opened at the Commonwealth Bank in Cooma. It is called the FREE MT OAK FUND with Account NO. 46922 Branch No. 2523 and you can deposit money from anywhere in Australia. If you want a receipt, then send your donation to Free Mt. Oak Fund P.O. Box 6 Cooma 2630.

This fund will be used only for legal expenses in winning title and for paying off the mortgage. Signatories are Bren Davies and myself from the proposed Land Trust, Uta Conway and Doug Broad from the permanent residents, and Susanna Vall and Rob Durand from the Free Land Forum. Three of our signatures are needed for a withdrawal.

The latest development is that Research for Survival has again served eviction notices on some of the residents. It is hard to see what they expect to gain, because they lost in Court last time. Hopefully this newsletter will have a letter from Marg McLean telling us what is happening there.

Norman Keegel
(Representative of DTE Vic. on Land Trust)

Permacroft has been quiet but not wholly inactive over the winter months. Council approved Bruce Norman's design for the shed, and two DTE members were part of the work party concreting foundations. The roof is now in place, but some work remains to be done on the walls.

The first field nursery has been established with oak seedlings long housed at Graham Dunkley's place.

Over 200 native seedlings were received as part of the State Government's desalination campaign, and most have been planted among the hill of young pine trees. We trust existing tree guards will keep the two resident 'roos at bay.

An architect adviser has taken members to inspect innovative housing in the Geelong area. The latest trip - Sat. 10th September - will be to view a Danish design using hay bales for roofing.

The Crofters' Association is yet to be formed.

The property looks green and lush, but is currently very wet, and cars can't be parked beyond the end of the road.

Eva.



A FRUITARIAN NETWORK

Dear Fruitarians,

We want it to be known that we have set up a 'FRUITARIAN NETWORK' with the main aim to provide a supportive environment for beginners and experienced fruitarians. There is, so far, little understanding of the peaceful philosophy and uncomplicated lifestyle of fruitarianism and we also experience social problems - we feel that we all need support and encouragement. IF INTERESTED, PLEASE CONTACT:

René Beresford
Box 51
NAMBOUR
Qld, 4560



**DOES ANYBODY OUT
THERE WANT TO SAY
ANYTHING?**

If you have anything you would like to put in our Newsletter please send it in to us, be it, poetry, drawings, ads for public events, thoughts, inane ravings (mine get in). The Newsletter is D.T.E.'s communicator, let's start talking to each other.

As we do the Newsletter on a computer (I know it sounds rank but it saves heaps of paper and time and gives a good finished job) the best way to send stuff in is on either a 3 inch Apple Mac disk or a 5 1/4 IBM. But seeing that most of you out there probably don't own a computer we'll accept it done with a thumb nail dipped in tar or any other medium which strikes your fancy.

If there's anyone out there with a faster typing speed than my 25 words per minute, a desire to one day be a publishing tycoon or who would just feel good helping to put this Newsletter together feel free to come and join us.

Hoping to hear from you soon.
Ron.

P.S. I'm always writing things trying to get some input for the Newsletter. Even if you don't want to write something for the Newsletter is there anyone out there who would like to write back so that I know I'm not talking to myself.

**IS THERE ANYBODY OUT THERE,
THIS IS MAJOR TOMS TO GROUND CONTROL,
ETC.(ETCs make good pets)**

The Newsletter Collective, which at the moment consists of Norman and Ron hope you like the new paper that the Newsletter is printed on. We've at last found a printer who can do the job on re-cycled paper.

P.S. I just found a saying in Queensland D.T.E.'s August Newsletter which I like;

**IT IS TRUE
there are just
LEARNING EXPERIENCES
instead of mistakes.**

SOCIAL ISSUES

THE JOURNEY

Explore & learn from "The Journey", a fascinating & informative film by Peter Watkins.

This multi-layered narrative is about one central idea — that our planet is under intense threat — and the inextricably linked ideas of the escalating arms race, the devastation of world famine and the silence in the schools and media on these matters.

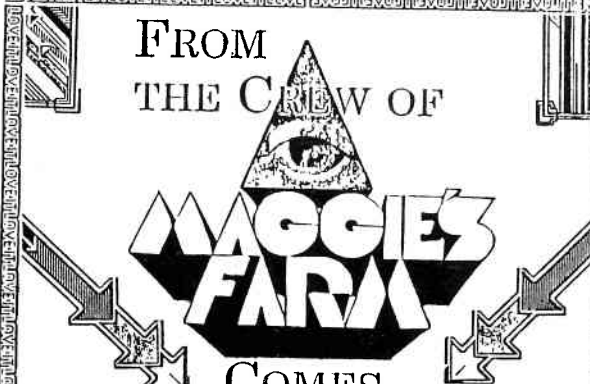
Everyone agrees that peace today is deeply affected by the media. The Journey serves as a catalyst to a close and thoughtful look at what's going on.

View & experience this 14½ hour film in segments, followed by discussion. Ring 652 0799 for further details.

CITY Pat Jesson, Andrew Kohane & others 10 x 2½ hr \$64 CS42

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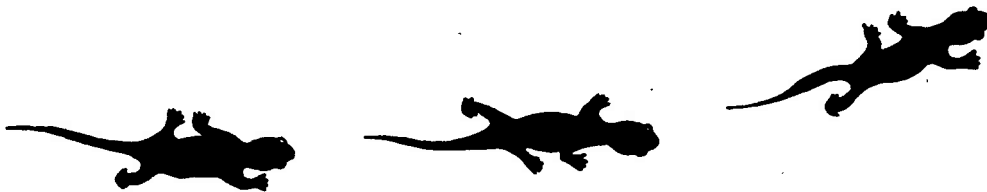
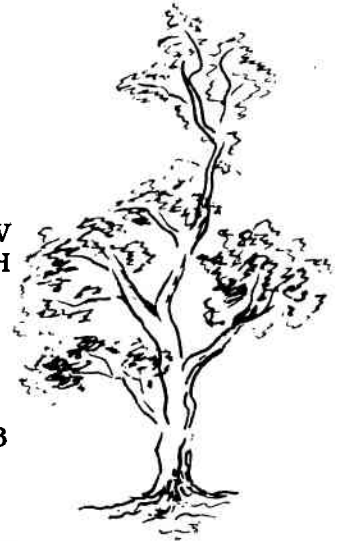
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Wot's On!

When	What	Where	Contact
Sept 30	Peace and Healing	Homeland (near	(066) 55 8514
Oct 3	Festival	Coffs Harbour)	Rides wanted/ offered 288 1705
Oct 3 8p.m.	Kakadu Action Group Public Meeting & Audio Visual presentation. Guest speaker: Lyn Allen Co-author of "Kakadu - Our Land and Heritage" and former Co-ordinator of the N/T Environment Centre.	Auditorium Footsgray TAFE, Nicholson St. Footsgray. \$3 or \$2 Conc.	A.C.F. 819 2888
Oct 12	Video/Slides on Rainforest and Penan (tribal people in Malaysia)	Public Lecture Theatre Old Arts Building Melbourne University	Felicity 819 2888 W Charley 772 7256 H
Oct 14	AGM	247 Flinders Lane	Ron 772 0165
Oct 15/16	DTE Weekend	Maldon	Sally (054) 75 2633 Eva 386 7614
Oct 21/23	Council of All Beings with John Seed	near Lake Tyers	Charley 772 7256 Felicity 819 2888 W



Council of All Beings

John Seed is conducting a weekend workshop in the forest near Lake Tyers. The Council of All Beings is an experiential process to reconnect with Nature and to find our place on the living planet Earth. Through personal sharing, guided meditation and rituals we will explore the depth of our concern and love for our planet in this time of crisis.

As we recapitulate the evolutionary journey we can shed our solely human identification and find oneness with all forms of life. When we see that the pain of the Earth is our own pain and the fate of the Earth is our own fate, the Council of All beings can empower us to act on behalf of the Earth. It can give us clarity and direction for our own lives and allow us to reconnect with the source of power and joy from our union with the living planet, Gaia.

The workshop fee is \$100 payable to Rainforest Action Group. All proceeds will go towards the campaign to save the rainforests in Ecuador. Register with Felicity at the Australian Conservation Foundation 03 819 2888, Charley 03 772 7256 (after hours) or Denise at Moora Moora 059 623 749. This workshop will be limited to 15 people. There will be others near Melbourne, so register your interest and we will contact you with the details when they are arranged.

Norman

Don't give us THE SHIPS!

WARSHIP HOTLINE

Melbourne and Sydney are expecting a large number of warships for the Bicentennial Naval Fleet Review in September and October. Please help organise and participate in activities currently being planned. We must make the people of Melbourne aware that we are in danger of Nuclear Hazards when these ships enter our bay. With any suggestions and offers of help please ring the Warship Hotline on the preferred number 486 1962 (H) and ask for Jo Hayter, or if urgent ring 419 1788 (W); or Nick McLellan 481 3621 (H).

List of unwelcomed Warships creating a nuclear environment in Melbourne and suburbs for the months of September and October. Keep your ears to the ground for details of activities.

16th - 22nd September

AIRS - Greek

18th - 22nd September

GODAVARI - Indian. With USSR's know how India's navy is being decked out with Nuclear weapons.

12th - 17th October

COLBERT - French

COMMANDANT BORY - French. Lets show them what the majority (75%) of the population feel about their actions on our side of the world.

CAIODUILIA - Italian

WAIKATO - New Zealand

ENDEAVOUR - New Zealand

USS INGERSOLL - USA

Carring Nuclear weapons.

14th - 21st October

HMS ARK ROYAL - British

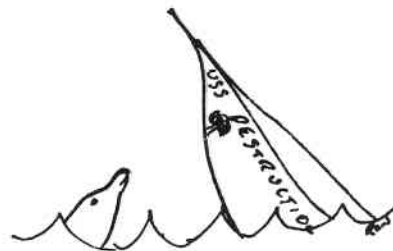
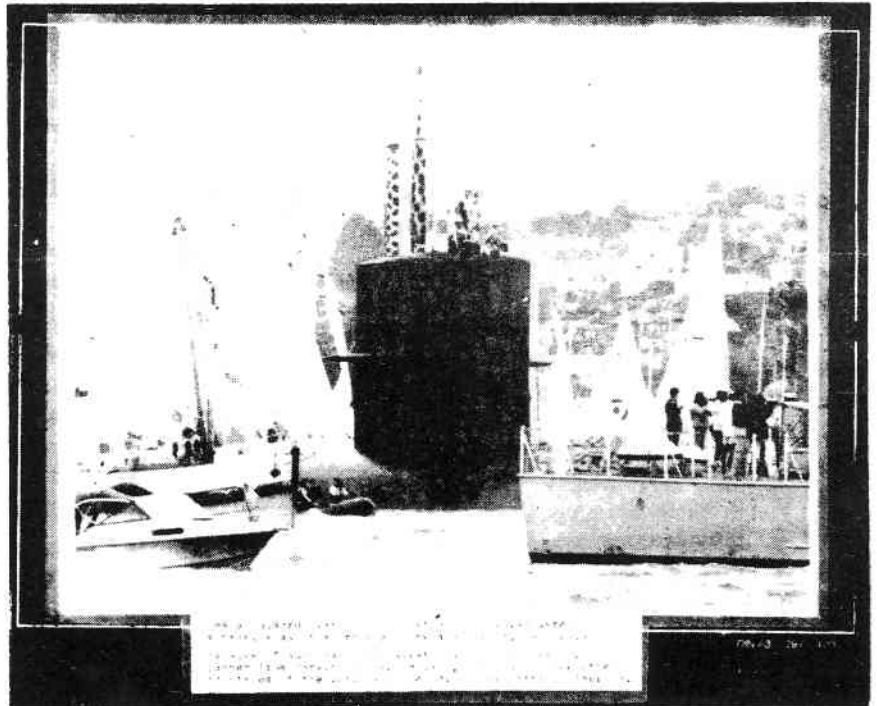
Carring Nuclear weapons

RFA FORT GRANGE - British

Carring Nuclear weapons

14th - 21st October (geelong)

HMS ORANGE LEAF - British





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