

December 2005

Friends of Warrandyte State Park



Newsletter

Friends of Warrandyte State Park (FOWSP) Inc. PO Box 220 Warrandyte 3113
ABN 94170156655/ACN A0024890C

From the Rangers

By Andrew Nixon, Ranger-in-Charge

Environmental actions

Various actions have been implemented on various weed issues, including weed burning at Boomers reserve, Hochkins Reserve, Shaftsbury Gully Dodd St Reserve – honeysuckle & watsonia - a hired forestry mulcher (small bobcat type machine) munching away at gorse and burgan; and weeding and woody weeds at Gold Memorial; & further support to Osborne Peninsula Landcare group and FOWSP activities. A new sub-group of FOWSP concentrating on the Stony Creek area has met with NVM rangers.

Rabbit fumigation has commenced at Hochkins Ridge & sections of the Yarra banks, and fox control is about to commence at a number of locations.

Powerful Owls had 2 successful fledglings in a known nest site nearby to the park office.

Nursery Plans

The RIC and the Nursery Manager met to discuss and inspect options for some site improvement work at the FOWSP nursery. Actions will include: 'farm' type fencing of the whole area, closure of the circular driveway, enlargement of the hardening-off area, new storage bins, transfer of the kitchen portable to the current potting mix bin area for use by nursery volunteers/manager and conversion of the lean-to shed to become a storage facility for the FOSWP trailer and canoes.

Fire

The outcome of investigations into the recent Wilsons Promontory NP wildfire sees some significant improvements in actions and an increased time commitment for PV staff in managing fire responsibilities. The majority of

field staff and a large percentage of administrative staff now undertake a minimum of 21 days per year involvement in fire.

Melbourne Water land

The new blocks of ex Melbourne Water land have now come across to Parks Victoria. Operationally this occurred in early October, but officially it is to be announced in mid-December. The new land addition currently stands at around 410ha which, including reserves north of the river, means we manage around 660ha to our north (only 20ha short of WSP and not including Sugarloaf Reservoir)

Park Office

The completion of the new building is hopefully not far off. In the new year FOWSP committee will be able to make use of the buildings meeting room. Space for the joint PV/FOWSP library will need to be ascertained.

Pound Bend tunnel

A decision has been made on the permanent closure of the steps leading to the tunnel entrance. Visitor's safety in both entering the river and also accessing this point, down a steep incline, has been part of the consideration. Opportunities for water based recreationalists accessing the river and viewing the tunnel entrance will be via Norman and Tarroona reserves. The exit area of the tunnel, which suffered extensive erosion damage during the February storm event, is to have site rehabilitation works commence soon. This will be a joint project between Melbourne Water and Parks Victoria and it is hoped that the site will be ready for visitor use early in the new year.

Bush Backyard

The Shy Black Wallaby

By Steven Katsineris

Over the years I have often seen Black Wallabies at night or early morning in various parts of Hurstbridge, Wattle Glen and Diamond Creek (around Broad Gully Road). They are very timid and dart for cover when seen. Their distribution is dependent upon the availability of adequate dense shrubs and other vegetation for shelter. They rest by day hidden in the thick forest undergrowth of waterways and gullies and become active at dusk.

Unfortunately because they are moving around at night feeding they are at a high risk of being hit and killed by cars. Sadly I have seen a few of them dead near the roads as a result of road kill. When we drive at night we should bear in mind that Black Wallabies and other wildlife are active and make an effort to drive carefully.

The Black Wallaby is a small, stocky wallaby with black to dark brown fur, often with lighter rufous patches on the belly and chest. It has a rusty colour around the base of the ears and back of the neck. Light yellow strip along chin line, this is subtler in southern areas. The tail is blackish, sometimes with it white tip.



The Black Wallaby feeds on a variety of grasses, shrubs and ferns, including introduced plants.

Breeding occurs throughout the year and a single young is born. The joey leaves the pouch at between 8-9 months of age. The young will continue to suckle until about 15 months old.

The Black Wallaby is found in along eastern Australia, from Queensland, through NSW, to southwest Victoria. There is also a small population in south-eastern South Australia.

Its ideal habitat is dense grass and fern woodlands, heath and eucalypt forest. Black Wallabies are still common in there range, where the necessary thick undergrowth is found. We

should be mindful that Black Wallabies and other species require grasses and shrubs for their survival and we should avoid removing such ground covers unless there is a fire risk. Our actions often determine weather such shy, beautiful and inoffensive creatures continue living in our local area,

Not So Common

By Pat Coupar

Last month in our 'other' backyard in Far East Gippsland we had a visit from a very special bird. Our attention was first drawn to the visitor by a loud and persistent shrill that I have never heard before. It was a sound more associated with a tropical rainforest.

Grabbing the binoculars I tracked the bird down, but it was high in a large eucalypt tree against the sun. It appeared only as a dark silhouette.

I waited patiently and eventually the bird flew lower and closer. In better lighting I could see that it was in fact totally black in colour with a long, slightly fanned tail. Although smaller, it reminded me of the Pheasant Coucal that I had seen in New South Wales. When I consulted my bird book for a look alike from the same family, there was my bird – a male Common Koel.



Like the Coucal, the Koel is a cuckoo and lays its eggs in the nests of other birds. Its habitat is indeed rainforest where it feeds on figs, but will also eat the berries of Lilly Pilly and Blueberry Ash.

Common Koels spend the winter in India and New Guinea, returning to northern and eastern Australia in September. It is a rare visitor to Victoria. We were lucky enough to have this unusual noisy black bird in our backyard for one whole day.

More Snippets Please

Let us know what is happening in your backyard. Keep contributions coming. Don't forget snippets can be about anything of interest in the environment and do not necessarily have to be about Warrandyte.

Contributions can either be dropped into the editor at 143 Brackenbury St, Warrandyte or via email at ian.coupar@vcp.monash.edu.au

A Dichondra Lawn?

By Peggy Safstom

Dichondra repens is NOT a grass!

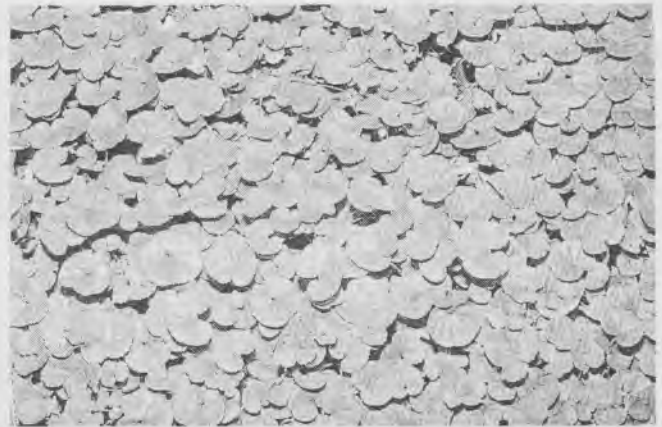
The lawn seed companies market it as an ornamental lawn. It is a member of the Convolvulacea family, and has a tiny, kidney shaped leaf. It is suitable for heavy clay - wet in winter, dry in summer.

Dichondra is a soft, green, ground hugging plant, spreading quickly via underground runners. I dig out a small circle of it and plant it in another spot. The bare hole soon covers over again. Or, I set out tray of soil, plant my little circle of Dichondra in the centre, wait till it has spread over the whole tray, then cut across and down the tray, and plant the little squares around my block. It is speedily taking over!

Where I walk on the Dichondra or the car drives over it the growth is smaller, tighter and more compact than in the unused areas: Dichondra is happy in full sun or shade, it doesn't ever need mowing, and if it peters out in summer with no watering, it soon comes back as good as ever. Isn't that a great alternative to lawn?

My Dichondra is flowering now, a tiny, inconspicuous flower. It must have seed because the lawn seed companies sell it - very expensive - (my neighbor once gave me a wonderful present for looking after her pussycat while she was away on holiday - a tiny film canister of Dichondra seed - how I treasured it!)

I can't hazard a guess as to how anyone harvests Dichondra seed - has anyone any ideas?



Reassurance on Rust

By Cathy Willis

In last month's newsletter it was reported that Bruce Fuhrer had noticed rust (a fungal infection) on Ivy-leaf Violet at Stane Brae. The area where Bruce noticed the rust is the site of release of Bridal Creeper Rust *Puccinia myrsiphyllia*, a biological agent introduced to control one of Australia's Weeds of National Significance (WONS) Bridal Creeper (*Asparagus asparagoides*). Bridal Creeper has also just been declared a noxious weed in Victoria under the Catchment and Land Protection Act.



I'm one of many who've been involved in various methods of controlling Bridal Creeper, including releasing and monitoring the rust. So far it has appeared to be quite successful, and holds great hope for the future. To find it had jumped to a native species would be a disaster.

I collected specimens near the release site at Stane Brae of both Bridal Creeper and Ivy-leaf Violet infected by rust. Through a hand lens they looked different but with similarities. Maybe the same fungus at a different stage? Time to consult the experts.

I rang Greg Lefoe at Keith Turnbull Research Institute, Department of Primary Industries Frankston, who agreed we should seek positive identification. I couriered the specimens to Crop Health Services, Agriculture Victoria, Knoxfield. I asked them to inform Greg, Dave Van Bockel at Warrandyte State Park, and me of the result.

Good news! A week later I received a phone call and follow up fax with the results. The two rust species are different. The Ivy-leaf Violets are infected with *Puccinia hederaceae*, a rust of the same genus as Bridal Creeper Rust. The important thing is both rusts are specific to their host plants and have not crossed between them.

Worth Repeating

Artefacts find halts freeway work

By Dan Silkstone, Transport Reporter

Work has stopped for three months on part of the Mitcham-Frankston Freeway after the discovery of a massive archaeological site containing thousands of Aboriginal artefacts.

The area has been fenced off as the road's builders, Thiess John Holland, conduct further tests before negotiating with traditional owners over how best to preserve the site's heritage value.

Stone artefacts were discovered in August during archaeological testing prior to the beginning of excavation works north of Greens Road, near Keysborough.

Further examination uncovered around 5000 objects of significance scattered throughout a 70,000-square-metre area.

The location is a protected site under State and Commonwealth law and construction work cannot go ahead without the approval of the traditional owners - the Wurundjeri people.

"This site is a very exciting place in terms of the potential it has to tell us about past human activity there," said Megan Goulding, acting chief executive of the Wurundjeri Council.

"A lot of artefacts have been found and we are working hard to come to a management arrangement for that site."

Thiess John Holland spokesman Anthony Havers said work had shifted to other locations on the \$2.5 billion project - now renamed EastLink - to minimise disruption caused by the discovery.

He said the scheduled completion date of late 2008 was not expected to be delayed by the find.

"A number of people are looking at it at the moment and doing further assessment," he said. "Then we'll sit down with the traditional owners and work out an appropriate management strategy."

Ms Goulding said stone flakes and tools had been discovered throughout the area and that shells, animal bones and plant material could also be unearthed, allowing researchers to get a clearer idea about traditional life in the area. The piece of land was once a virtual island - a promontory surrounded on all sides by swamp, she said.

The Wurundjeri want a controlled excavation in which digging is done slowly and carefully so that the depth and placement of different artefacts can be examined, giving archaeologists a clearer idea of how their ancestors lived.

"We don't have much information in our oral history about that area," Ms Goulding said. "There was swamp all around though, it would have been a terrific place to camp and to hunt water birds and other animals."

The full extent of the disruption and the eventual cost of the archaeological works are not yet known but the road's path is not expected to move as a result of the find, Mr Havers said. The artefacts are likely to be relocated to a site nearby so that the road can proceed.

Archaeological testing is an important part of modern road-building. The Wurundjeri and other traditional owners have been consulted throughout excavation works for the 39-kilometre freeway, which will run between Mitcham and Frankston.

Source: *The Age* 17/11/05

Market Volunteers

A big thank you to the following people who volunteered their time on the FOWSP trailer at the November Warrandyte market: Ray Kruger, Mark Hassell, Antje Bauer, Jan Smidts, Peter Curry, Marie Krause and Pat Anderson

A special thank you to Geoff Speedy for delivering the trailer and to Peter Curry for returning it. Also to Marie Krause for the unenviable task of organizing the roster each month. Of course Marie would love to hear from any of our members who would like to take a turn on the trailer. New members especially welcome - no previous experience necessary. Marie's number is: 9712 0498

FOWSP ASSETS

Over the years, mostly through grants, FOWSP has accumulated a variety of assets which are available for members to borrow. These include:

- 2 canoes and all safety equipment
- Underwater camera
- Digital camera
- GPS

These are kept at the rangers depot at Pound Bend.

FOWSP THURSDAY PROGRAM

We meet for propagation and other nursery activities every Thursday morning at 10.00am at the Warrandyte State Park depot, Pound Bend Road, Warrandyte (Melway 23 C10), unless otherwise stated below. When there is no scheduled afternoon activity we often go on a spontaneously organised walk. Propagation takes place from 10.00am to 12 midday followed by lunch. No prior experience necessary - there is always someone available to show you the ropes.

The nursery is open for plant sales (by donation) every Thursday 10.00am to 12md and the first Sunday of each month 2.00pm to 400pm.



Important Notice

Please note the nursery is only open for plant sales during the above times. Some members and non-members have been turning up for plants (and advice) outside these hours without prior arrangement. If you find it impossible to come during official opening times please contact the nursery manager first.

Note: There will be NO Thursday Activity Group (TAG) in January or February

FOWSP enjoying a BBQ following the Annual General Meeting



No Newsletter in January. Deadline for February Newsletter is February 5th

FOWSP Committee 2005

Nursery Manager 0408317327

Park Office 9844 2659

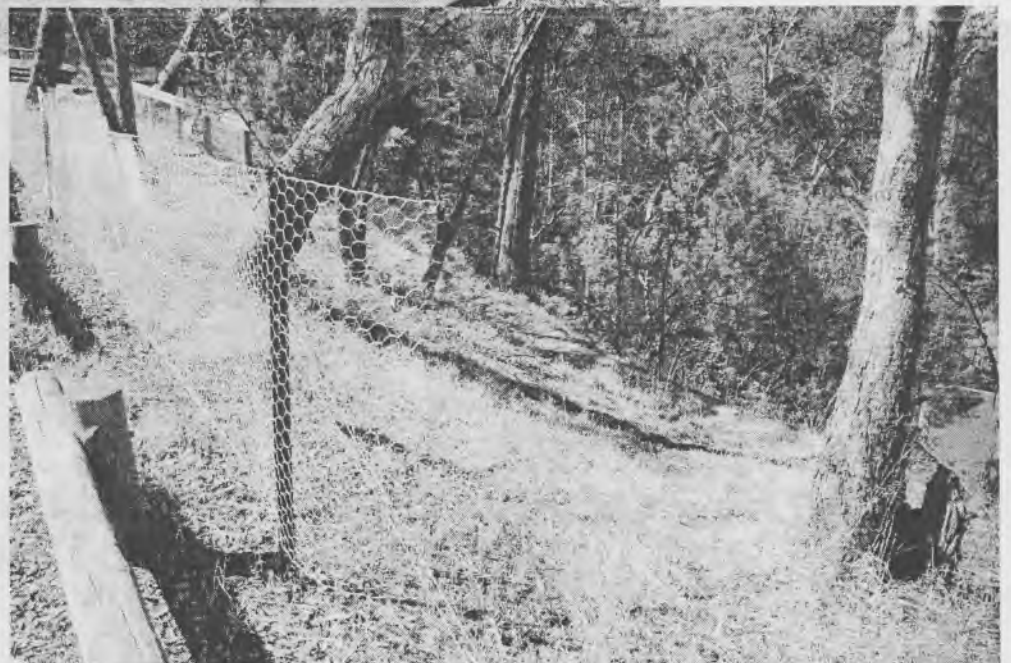
Dick Thomson	9850 9867	Treasurer	<u>Assistant Treasurer</u> Ray Clarke	9841 8507
Pat Coupar	9844 1650	Newsletter Editor		
Peter Curry	9844 0958	Secretary	<u>Wildlife Rescue</u>	
Geoff Speedy	9437 0894		Julie Pryor	9722 1117
Lee Speedy	9437 0894	Membership Secretary		
Mike Coupar	9844 1650		<u>Market</u>	
Karen Reynolds	9712 0797	Minutes Secretary	Marie Krause	9712 0498
Artur Muchow	0415383328			
Michelle Hanslow	0402251577		<u>Publications Officer</u>	
Kyen Knight	0418149961		Kirsten Brunt	0438411278

Please Note

A full set of FOWSP annual accounts to 30th June 2005 will be posted to any member who would like them. Please contact the treasurer, Joan Braodberry on 98461218



Permanent closure of steps to Pound Bend Tunnel (see front page article)



The Red-bellied Black Snake.

By Steven Katsineris

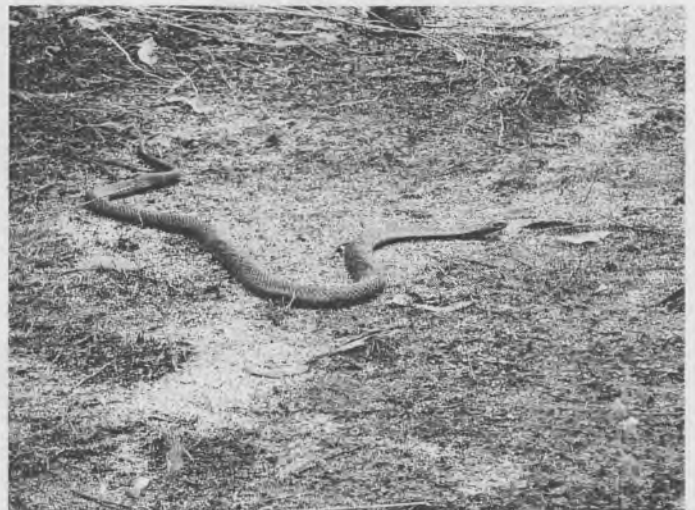
One day, while we were holidaying at Mallacoota, we drove to the start of the walking track to Captain's Creek Jetty. On the bush walk we saw a lot of splendid wildlife, including several Black Wallabies, Red-necked Wallabies and Lyrebirds. But the out of the ordinary highlight of the day for us was seeing two Red-bellied Black Snakes. Our son, Andreas was walking slightly ahead of us when he spotted a snake on the track and stopped to point and shout, "Snake, Snake." We all joined him in time to see a small Red-bellied Black Snake (about 80cm in length) gradually disappearing into a hole near the walking track. We saw the same snake on the return journey.

On our drive back to Mallacoota Township, Andreas was again the first to see a large black snake, over 1.5metres in length (it was almost half the width of the road) crossing the road ahead of us. We slowed down and avoided running over it and it quickly vanished into the bush on the side of the road. When we returned to our holiday unit I told the owner about the huge snake and the spot where we had seen it. He informed me that a number of locals had seen a large Red-bellied Black Snake that lived in that area. Though I have seen many large snakes over the years, this particular one was one of the biggest.

Red-bellied Black Snakes are found from south-east South Australia through Victoria and NSW to south-eastern Queensland, as well as some isolated pockets of north-east Queensland, where its numbers have considerably declined due to habitat destruction and its feeding on the cane toad. They may grow to over 2 metres in length. Red-bellied Black Snakes are a beautiful and distinctive colour, jet black above, with red sides and belly. They like to swim and are found around

water, near rivers, in swamps or rainforest, where they live in holes, in logs or under rocks. They feed mainly on frogs, but will also eat fish, mice, rats, lizards and even other snakes. Red-bellied Black Snakes young are born alive, usually about 12 born (though they can have up to 40) in late summer or early autumn.

Because they inhabit the mostly urban populated areas of eastern Australia, bites from the Red-bellied Black Snake are fairly commonly recorded, but there have been no confirmed fatalities. Despite a rather bad reputation, it is an inoffensive species with a fairly gentle nature and generally very reluctant to bite, unless it is really threatened. Snakebites are actually uncommon occurrences, especially if you are careful also few bites are severe and deaths are rare. As far as snakes are concerned, it is vigilance and commonsense that is the essential basics for the prevention of snakebite.



This photo of a large Red-bellied Black Snake was taken at Mallacoota by Pat Coupat in Oct 2004



Koala Count

By Julie Pryor

The koala count results are coming in slowly.

Westerfolds Park near Porter Street, Templestowe	1 koala
Alan Place, Warrandyte	1 koala
River Reserve, Osborne Rd, Warrandyte	1 koala
Arunga Drive, Wonga park	1 koala
Merril Cres, Warranwood	1 koala
St Benedicts Road, Gladesdale	4 koalas
Hazeldene Road, Gladesdale	2 koalas
Woodland Heath Drive, Inverloch	1 koala
4 koalas were sighted at Pound Bend one had a joey	5 koalas

The koala sighted in Merril Crescent was a large koala so I don't think it was the little one reported last month. The Gladesdale koalas are part of a relocation program. 200 koalas were relocated to this area, one has died (no p.m. results as yet) and a second is in care. There are always some deaths in a move of this size. Thankyou to everyone who took the time to check their backyard.

Interlude

By Alwynne Buntine

Will you follow me, follow?
Down by the river I'll go,
along a path through the trees
to a hidden grotto I know.
Where we can sit upon the bank,
our feet dipped in the stream,
away from the hustle,
away from the bustle,
for there we cannot be seen.

A place for quiet reflection,
to clear a cluttered mind.
To relieve the ache of tension,
from the tasks you've left behind.
For a moment or two, let them go,
let your thoughts fly free.
Forget the stress of living,
enjoy life as it ought to be.

The peace and serenity
within that hidden place,
will ease your mind, refresh your
thoughts,
and take the care lines from your
face.

Then, when you are rested,
and calm again restored,
I will take you back along the
path,
to reclaim your life once more.



"I SPY"

By B.G



Amnesiac Appendix

In a very recent edition of the newsletter readers may have noticed that the interview with Irene Fuhrer appeared rather short and truncated. I Spy has discovered the 'rest' of the interview after an archaeological-type dig in my study. Here is the missed section:

Irene Fuhrer revealed that her favourite music 'in general' is folk music. She also recalled that when she used to help her mother milk cows her mother recited 'The Man from Snowy River'.

Irene loves food particularly sweets – especially pavlova. Her favourite insect – ladybirds and her favourite fungi is *Mycaena interrupta* – "It is welcoming to newcomers and has a small blue delicate structure."

And Irene's concluding words "I really enjoy the friendship and coming out here to the nursery."

Latest in Laminating

A dedicated group of helpers were seen busy laminating A4 photos of various Friends activities for a 'viewing board' at the depot.

Echidna Entry

A small echidna was seen burrowing into one of our hot houses recently.

Recipe for a Wildlife Garden

- A tall, mature tree, native to your area
- A patch of natural mulch for beetles and worms
- A clump of dense shrubs where birds can shelter
- Nectar plants for honeyeaters
- A cat-safe bird bath
- A frog-friendly pond with unpolluted water
- A warm, sheltered corner for lizards
- Daisies for butterflies.



- Set aside a corner, protected from cats, dogs and children
- Plant a flowering nectar tree, *Eucalyptus* or *Callistemon*, preferably native to your area
- Add a *Leptospermum* for seed-eaters and an *Eriostemon* for insects
- Close together, add three low, long-flowering *Grevillea* for nectar
- Around their feet, plant dwarf *Correa*, *Banksia* or low growing daisy-flowers and generously mulch the area with finely chopped bark and twigs
- Hang a shallow birdbath from a branch or fix to a post, under or close to sheltering shrubs, and preferably not in full sunshine
- Place one large, flat stone to catch the sun



For further information about creating **Gardens for Wildlife**, please phone 1300 305 342
[email. boca@ozemail.com.au](mailto:boca@ozemail.com.au)
fax 9894 4048 or write to BOCA, PO Box 185, Nunawading 3131

Even traditional gardens with a stretch of lawn surrounded by flowering shrubs and annuals can provide habitat for wildlife.

Please contact BOCA if you would like a list of proven bird-attracting plants from our Garden Birds Survey

A list of local plants can be found in the following publications: '**Native Splendour**' published by ManninghamCity Council and '**Gardener's Guide to Indigenous Planting**' published by FOWSP and available at the market trailer, the Warrandyte Post Office and other local outlets.



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Bidgee-widgee
(*Acaena novae-zelandiae*)

This vigorous creeping herb is a common ground cover that can be prolific in open situations on the edges of bushland or in grassy verges. It has round greenish flowerheads that, at this time of the year, are replaced by globular brown burrs that break up and can be a problem as they stick to clothing and fur. The leaves of this plant are thought to have been used by early settlers as a tea substitute



Subscriptions for 2006 are due 01/01/06

To renew your membership to FOWSP for next year please fill in the form below and send it to the secretary FOWSP, PO Box 220, Warrandyte 3113

Membership entitles you to one free plant a month from the market stall, 11 newsletters per year and the opportunity to take part in a wide range of activities including slide nights and excursions throughout the year.

Thank you for your support.

Name

Address

..... Tel. no.

Membership \$20
Concession \$10