

MOUNTAIN CATTLEMENS NEWS

Newsletter of the Mountain Cattlemens Association
of Victoria Incorporated (ABN applied for)
Registered No. A2117
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September 2000

MCAV INC A.B.N. NUMBER.

The Association has applied for an A.B.N. number, and has been waiting patiently for it. Mid-August, on enquiring again we were told the Tax Office had lost our form. Needless to say we have reapplied and are still waiting.

Thank you to everybody who has already sent in their annual subscriptions. The level of interest and support for the mountain cattlemen shows no signs of diminishing. We are all very grateful for this.

Can we use this Newsletter as a reminder to those who have not paid their subscription to send a cheque as soon as possible. Those with a yellow 'dot' on the envelope are unfinancial.

It might also be worth mentioning at this time that there is a discount of \$11.00 (\$1.00 of which is GST) per membership for entry to the Get Together. This will be the same deal as last year. During December we will be sending out a discount card to all financial associate members. Subscriptions paid after that date

(mid-December) will not be eligible for the Get Together discount.

GET TOGETHER 2001 AT JUNCTION PLAIN, NEAR OMEO.

Date - Weekend of 13th and 14th January, 2001.

Venue - Junction Plain near Omeo.
Flyer enclosed.

Heritage and novelty events will be held on the Saturday, and the horse events on the Sunday.

Events will include:

Photograph and art display,
Heritage - the building of a slab hut,
Whipcracking,
Dog High Jump,
Hay Stacking,
Mulga Bill's Bicycle
Tug of War,
Beaut Utes - Best kept & feral
Horse Shoe Throwing event
Lasso the Beast competition,
Shetland Pony Derby for children,
AND OF COURSE -

The Don Kneebone Heritage Awards.

On Sunday the Mountain Cattlemen's Cup will be run - both in the junior and senior divisions. In addition horse events will include:

Relay Race,
Wally Ryder Horse Walking,
Sprint Race,
Open Race
Run-a-Muck Cup.
Packhorse Race.

(The events are NOT listed here in the order they might be run. They are listed only to let you know what to expect over the weekend. A proper programme will be sent out with the next Newsletter in December.)

There will also be terrific bands entertaining you on Friday and Saturday nights, and on Sunday night there will be a local talent night. We hope to have many join in! There will also be a gate prize.

It all sounds great fun. Bring some friends and have a good time.

DONT FORGET THE PORT!

If you are unsure that you will be able to make it to the Get Together, or if you are determined not to miss out on the next edition of the Port, you can order in advance. The 2001 Mountain Cattlemen's Port can be ordered through our marketing officer:

Ms Pauline Venn
Post Office Box 814
ELTHAM VIC 3095.

The Spring Mail Order marketing flyer is also enclosed with this Newsletter.

A good idea if thinking of Christmas presents, get an order in early. Why not support the Association by purchasing our goods!

MARKETING OFFERS SOME NEW LINES -

Pauline has been looking for some new lines to interest members and associate members alike, and is delighted to introduce the following goods :

Long sleeved Rugby Tops
Playing cards
Mugs
Stationery sets
Blank cards - features various huts of the Bogong High Plains.

Have a look for these items in the marketing mail order form!

MCAV INC. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting for the Association will be held on Wednesday the 4th October 2000 in the Boardroom on the 6th floor of the Victorian Farmers Federation building. Farrer House, 24 Collins Street Melbourne commencing at 11:00 a.m.

Following the Annual General Meeting we hope you will join us in an informal sandwich lunch as usual. After lunch we will be having a Central Council meeting. Associate members are invited to stay to this meeting if they wish. We usually end at around 4:00 p.m.

All members and associate members should try to attend the Annual General Meeting. This is your opportunity to hear the reports of the office bearers of the Association, to participate in the election of office bearers, and to

discuss financial matters regarding the Association.

Apart from the business side, it is also a social occasion, and a great opportunity for members and associate members to get together for a catch-up!

Everybody is most warmly welcome.

The Notice of Meeting is enclosed with this Newsletter.

THE OLYMPIC TORCH RELAY COMES TO BENALLA.

Mountain cattlemen had an opportunity to take part in the Torch Relay on the 12th August 2000 when the Relay passed through Benalla.

A large number of Mansfield people, many of them cattlemen and supporters were involved in the torch parade in Benalla. The festivities included a magnificent pioneer parade showing elements of the early settlement of the district and the mountains, including the cattlemen, the miners, and the farmers dressed in period costume. Seventy riders, many members of the Association supported the torch bearer, Mr Gerald Egan, who lit the cauldron. There was a guard of honour of mountain cattlemen.

THE ASSOCIATION STILL HAS CONCERNS ABOUT THE RETURN OF CATTLE TO THE GRAZING AREAS BURNT IN THE CALEDONIA FIRE IN JANUARY 1998.

The Association and the licensees prohibited from using their licensed areas following the bushfire in 1998 are considering the position in the aftermath of the findings of an Independent Panel formed to consider

whether cattle grazing should return to the burnt areas. The Panel sat during February 2000. The decision was that cattle should not be returned to the licensed areas during the summer of 1999/2000. In addition the Panel stated that:

* although the decision went against the return of grazing for the 1999/2000 season, any decision to prohibit grazing in future seasons would be difficult to justify;

* Parks Victoria, in future fencing of wet areas, must not continue to use what it refers to as 'catchment fencing' but rather must only use a 10 to 15 metre buffer zone.

* That management practices referred to in the licence document should be clearly identified and understood by both parties.

* That Parks Victoria had missed an opportunity in 1999 to observe cattle grazing habits by rejecting the MCAV's offer to put only 70% of the stock allocations on the licensed areas.

* There exists an opportunity to monitor fixed watering points in the licence areas.

Mountain cattlemen hold seven year grazing licences for their runs in the Alpine National Park. The licences are current and due for renewal in 2005. Minister Garbutt made the following response in Parliament on 5/4/00 to a question on access for the fire affected licensees:

"...Any future decisions about the return to cattle grazing will be made in the first place after an assessment of the conditions by Parks Victoria before the next grazing season" (2000/2001).

The politics of grazing in national parks were not tested before the Independent Panel. The evidence was confined solely to the vegetation surveys and the opinions of scientists as to what might happen if cattle returned. However the Association has a copy of the tender document for the fencing of some of the bog areas. This tender document states that the fencing must be completed before the summer (1999/2000) because cattle would be returning to the grazing runs that summer. It is interesting to note that the tender document required a response in September 1999, prior to the date of the last State election which saw the Bracks Government take power.

It is the Labor Government's stated policy to remove all grazing from the Alpine National Park.

In addition to the political implications gained through a knowledge of the tender documents, Mr Tom Guthrie, Chairman of the National Parks Advisory Council, a body whose opinion is sought and relied upon by Minister Garbutt, said on ABC Stateline on 17/3/00, that it was not possible to have a national park with grazing licences, and referred to the Alpine Park as a "cattle run". Stateline presenter, Libby Price, noted that the government's policy and intention was to 'phase out' grazing from the Park 'within its first term in office'. It must be pointed out that the legislation creating the Alpine National Park was passed subject to the tradition of (then) over 150 years of grazing access being allowed to continue. The Association believes that, without doubt, the Bracks government will attempt to further restrict the mountain cattlemen's' access to their licensed grazing runs. We further believe that

the restriction on access to date has been politically motivated and not a matter of vegetation recovery after fire at all.

The next vegetation survey in the Caledonia fire area will be taking place in September 2000 - provided the snow has melted. Presumably the licensees will be informed as to whether or not they can take their cattle to the runs. And again, presumably, this advice will come far too late in the season.

Parks Victoria have formed a scientific review panel. A list of members of this panel have been promised to the Association. Despite the promises, and the constant reminders, the list has never been forthcoming.

Further, decisions are being made about grazing issues by bureaucrats and a nameless scientific review panel without any reference whatsoever to the licensees involved. The licensees are not even allowed to know what topics are being discussed within Parks Victoria, or what the outcomes are. A frightening veil of secrecy has been drawn over the issue. Naturally this leads licensees to assume the worst. Who could blame them?

The licensed grazing areas affected by the fire amounted to 22,000 hectares. On that vast area the licensees run no more than 1,000 head of cattle. After the 1939 fires which devastated Victoria and burnt the high country, cattle were immediately returned the following season. From 1939 onwards vegetation surveys on the Bogong High Plains have been maintained - up to the present date and on into the future. In the 60 years of vegetation monitoring, not one species has been lost. This is the case in both the grazed and the ungrazed areas.

With the change in September 1999 from a Liberal to a Labor government, there came a change in policy even although current legal licences were held by all the licensees. We know it is the policy of this government to seek ways to remove grazing from the Alpine National Park. We believe that this policy is a hang-over from the policies of the early 1980's, and that whoever was responsible for drafting the policy had failed to move on into the future. We believe that it is reasonable for the government to consider changing this particular policy.

Whatever happened to the promises of rural renewal policies? Some housekeeping is needed by the Bracks government to bring all its policies into line. At the moment they are all over the place, and some policies, such as grazing in national parks are in direct contradiction to rural renewal policies.

It all comes down to the question of access. We cannot obtain any response whatsoever from Minister Garbutt. No acknowledgement of letters, not of faxes, and no hope of speaking with her. Obviously access to our Minister is also an issue.

Finally, at the end of the day it should never be forgotten that the traditional alpine grazing leases were considered pristine enough and important enough to be included in the Alpine National Park. Nothing has changed since then.

Mountain cattlemen need your support now more than ever, to ensure that our pioneering heritage and tradition continues.

For extra information on how to help please contact the office - Post Office

Box 294, Mansfield Vic 3722. Or by phone on (03) 5775 1600.

VOICE OF THE MOUNTAINS.

We want

Letters to the Editor.

Poetry.

Articles.

Photographs

for inclusion in the 2001 Voice of the Mountains. Can you help?

Please contact: Debbie Squires, Post Office Box 86 Bairnsdale Vic 3875.

This is your magazine. Help to make it an stimulating and a bumper issue!

FINALLY, DONT FORGET:

* If you have a green/yellow dot on your address label then we have not received your annual subscription.

Please bring your subscription up to date.

* Make a note of the date and plan to attend the Annual General Meeting on Wednesday 4th October 2000.

* Remember the 2001 Get Together. IF YOU ARE A FINANCIAL ASSOCIATE MEMBER YOU ARE ENTITLED TO A DISCOUNT AT THE GATE!!

* Have a look at all the wonderful goodies for sale by MCAV. Make your mail order purchase NOW!

Cheers!

**2001
MOUNTAIN CATTLEMENS CUP
ENTRY FORM
DECLARATION**

I,

of.....

hereby apply to enter in the Junior Mountain Cattlemen's Cup to be held at Junction Plain on Sunday on 14th January 2001.

I, the undersigned of this form declare that in consideration of and as a condition of acceptance of this application:

1. I will abide by the rules and regulations that may be made from time to time by the Mountain Cattlemen's Association of Victoria Incorporated (herein-after called MCAV) in relation to the annual Get Together and I shall comply with any instructions, rulings or directions of any official of MCAV during the said event.
2. I for myself my heirs my executors and administrators hereby waive all and any claim right or cause of action which I or they might otherwise have for or arising out of my injury or loss of life damage or loss of any description whatsoever which I might suffer or sustain in the course of or consequent upon my participation in the said event. This waiver release and discharge shall operate separately in favour of all persons, corporations and bodies involved or otherwise engaged in promoting or staging the said annual Get Together and the servants agents representatives and officials of any of them.
3. I will indemnify and keep indemnified MCAV and its servants agents representatives and officers against all actions claims and demands which may be brought or made against MCAV (whether in respect of person or property) arising out of my participation in the said annual Get Together and associated events.

Ambulance card No.....Expiry date:.....

(Competitors must attach a photocopy of current membership to an ambulance fund).

SIGNED.....DATE.....

NOMINATED BY: (Must be full & financial members of MCAV Inc) PLEASE PRINT

1.....

2.....

ENTRIES MUST BE SENT TO SUE SILVERS, P O BOX 294 MANSFIELD, 3722 BEFORE MONDAY 8TH JANUARY 2001.

PLEASE INCLUDE DETAILS OF YOUR HORSE ON A SEPARATE SHEET LISTING: NAME, COLOUR, BREED, MARKINGS & ANY OTHER DETAILS.