



VICTORIA REGIONAL GROUP

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Victorian Convention The Best Ever!

Oh, What a busy month!!!

At our April meeting we had Peter and Jo Comber talk about Central Australia. They spent seven years living and working at the Alice Springs Wildlife Park and gave a talk about some of their fascinating personal experiences with the fish, reptiles and amphibians of the area. It was an entertaining and informative personal and pictorial account of some of the wild life in central Australia. And we saw what happened when an over ambitious driver met head on with local wild life (literally!). We had a good turn out (over 40) and all had a great time. *Thank you Peter & Jo.*

Of course, April was Convention time. A huge turn out ensured the Anzac Day weekend was successful beyond expectation. ANGFA Vic. is very proud to have had a wonderful group of hard working volunteers and supporters working behind the scenes to make the convention run as smoothly as it did.

This was a fabulous convention, enjoyed by all. A diverse group of guest speakers presented a range of inter-

esting topics. Every speaker was informative and all had gone to great lengths to prepare their presentations in a professional manner. The audience enjoyed every minute.

We had a number of magnificent aquariums on display with some beautiful, and in some cases, unusual creatures (crayfish, eels) and of course, fish and plants. For all attendees there were show bags with lots of free goodies, and lots and lots of interesting items were on sale.

The Convention Book looked great and will no doubt be kept as a souvenir by all. The venue was most comfortable (wasn't the seating great!) and the food was excellent.

The Fish Auction on Saturday night was well patronised with excellent prices achieved and many rare and interesting fish and plants going under the hammer. Auctioneers Andy Wattam and Glenn Briggs kept everyone well informed and entertained. Everyone had a great time.

The Monday outing to the Zoo saw in excess of 60 people in attendance and the "behind the scenes" tours into a number of enclosures certainly gave a great insight into the wildlife kingdom we rarely, if ever, get to see. Our thanks go to Noel Harcourt and staff at the Royal Melbourne Zoo for making this a memorable days outing.

ANGFA Victoria, you did a splendid job. To all our many volunteers, helpers and supporters, we thank you.

More information on the Convention can be found in other pages of this issue of *VicNews*.



NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given that ANGFA Victoria's Annual General Meeting will be held during the June meeting. As per our constitution, all Committee Members will stand down at the AGM and their positions will become vacant. This gives all members the opportunity to elect to office whomever they feel is best suited for the job.

Nomination Forms will be available at the meeting. All Nominees, Proposers, Seconders and Voters must be current financial members. If you haven't yet paid your dues, please do so now.

If you would like to be involved with the Committee, please contact a current Committee member prior to or at the meeting.

ANGFA Vic. Special Effort

With the support and kind generosity of
Upmarket Aquariums

ANGFA Victoria is raffling a fantastic aquarium, winner to be drawn at our December meeting. Tickets went on sale at the ANGFA Convention and are only \$5 each.

Please buy a ticket for your chance to win and support ANGFA. This handsome unit retails for over \$1700 and comes complete – you only need supply water, plants and fish. Incidentally, we have it on good authority that ANGFA people will include a selection of plants and fish as well.

Tickets on sale until December

ANGFA 2005 Convention – Melbourne

By Gary Moores

As most people would be aware ANGFA Vic hosted the 2005 National Convention over the Anzac day weekend. This is the second one I have been able to attend, the previous being the 2000 Melbourne Convention. There was one major difference – this time, I was a volunteer helper. For myself and many amazing committee members and volunteers the convention started long ago. The amount of work and planning which goes into this event is incredible.

Unofficially the convention began Friday evening. Representatives from all the ANGFA Regional Groups gave an update on what their State has been up to and where they are headed. Final preparations were made and the scene was set for the big event.

The convention kicked off at 9.00 am with the opening video showing many ANGFA people and landscape shots to set the scene. Over the next two days we heard from many speakers on topics such as rainbow breeding and housing, cray fish, frogs, aquatic blood worms the health of the Murray River and many other interesting speakers and topics.

International speakers told us of their collecting adventures in remote parts of the globe most of us will never get to see.

For me one of the highlights was a talk from John Seyjagat from the Baltimore Aquarium in the USA. This aquarium has spent over 70 million dollars recreating a Northern Australia river gorge exhibit complete with a huge range of fish, birds, reptiles and plants. They have even managed to train the freshwater crocodiles to come when called using food rewards (maybe a new business for Dave Wilson NT). I feel a sense of pride knowing our wildlife is so unusual the Americans are prepared to go to this much effort to display them.

All the speakers gave excellent, informative and entertaining talks and visual shows. There was a great spread of variety and all who attended appeared very happy.

Saturday night's auction was a massive event with some rare species available. There were many bargains while at the other end of the scale some fish went for \$80 and \$90. I came home with a box full of goodies. There was a mad dash at midnight making room in tanks to house the purchases. Some Queensland prawns had to call a bucket home for a few days.

There is one thing I now better understand, and that is why so much time is allocated to socialising. As well as the presentations one of the biggest things is catching up with old friends, e-mail correspondents and meeting like-minded people from across the country and overseas. The entire weekend was brilliant, a huge pat on the back to all those who helped stage the event and all those who were able to attend. Without everyone it would not be possible.

I can't wait for Darwin 2007, hopefully Dave has trained those NT crocks by then so we can do some serious collecting afterwards

Some comments from the 2005 Melbourne Convention:

"This was the first fish convention I have attended and can only say it was fantastic. From the time I walked in, seeing the display tanks, products on offer and the comfortable chairs which were going to be a bonus for the time we were going to spend in them.

The opening special guest, Graeme Bowman, comedian and hoax presenter, taking off David Attenborough's long lost brother was excellent, this helped break the ice and made every one feel at ease and settle in for the intensive weekend ahead. Each presenter was unique; you could feel the dedication they have towards their field of interest and commitment, the love of the hobby and environment. The auction was a sell out, even the foam boxes were in demand. It was nail biting with some heavy bidding going on with some fish reaching eighty dollars. Lots of other bargains were to be obtained as well as Trade Table Specials on the Sunday which were a steal. I won't waffle on as there is too much to cover and I will leave it for a more in-depth committee convention report. I thought that the convention was very cheap and more than worth every cent – even the forty dollar fine for forgetting to pay the freeway toll. Thanks to all the presenters, members who could make it, and the convention planning committee for putting on an unforgettable show. You are all a good bunch of inspiring people to be around. For me it was tops".

Craig Hopkins, ANGFA Vic

"I thought the convention was fabulous and you and your team are to be congratulated on a job well done. It was my first ever convention and I enjoyed it thoroughly. I was particularly impressed with Heiko's presentations, even though there wasn't a lot about Australian fish; the talks were still fascinating and he was extremely impressive. I also made friends with Franz-Peter and look forward to catching up with him again. The auction was also brilliant and well run and there were some good bargains to be had".

Leo O'Reilly, Toowoomba QLD

"Thanks for a GREAT weekend to Victoria, all the NSW ANGFA members that attended were not disappointed, the convention committee are to be congratulated!"

Derek Girkin, ANGFA NSW

"To the Victorian convention group, great convention and I enjoyed meeting you all! Just chatting with so many fish heads has rekindled my fish keeping interest (yet again)".

Thank you!, Matthew Stanton, ANGFA NSW

"WOW!!! What a great experience. What a great weekend".

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Bruce Attenborough at the 2005 ANGFA Convention.

As part of the "special opening" of the 2005 Convention attendees were somewhat surprised to find themselves being addressed by one of the famous Attenborough clan, long lost brother of both Sir Richard and David, Mr Bruce Attenborough. Bruce was there to give a brief look at the evolution of our association. Little did the audience know that in this particular case, Bruce was non other than corporate comedian, Graeme Bowman, son of our very own Ron Bowman. Following is a transcript of the presentation by "Bruce"

Now, Ladies and Gentlemen, before we go any further, we would just like to take a brief look at the evolution of our association. When Charles Darwin visited the Galapagos Islands in 1832, he initiated an understanding of the evolutionary relationship between all living things. And our fascination with the mechanism by which one species can be transformed into another is just as strong today as it was then.

And so we come to the natural history of one of the most unusual organisms to have evolved since the Jurassic Age, *Fisbeeii keeperus* ... the humble aquarist ... an unusual organism that has spread throughout many of the world's ecosystems ... from the habitats of *Yankee americanus* and *Chinarus sweet-and-sourus* right through to the habitat of *Britannus pom-miebastardi*.

Within the Australian biosphere, most *Fisbeeii keeperus* specimens are male members of the tribal group, *Consumerus live-beyond-their-meanseei*. Many of these males spend most of their time hiding in small tropical ecosystems constructed in spare bedrooms or the backs of garages ... going to great lengths to avoid contact with that other, dominant tribal member, *Wifus expect-the-eartheei*.

The very best Australian *Fisbeeii keeperus* specimens belong to the subspecies, *Angfari fanaticus* ... which also includes many sub-sub-species such as *Schmeedarus gunteri*, *Eddeus toothus* and *Andeei wattami*.

Members of the ANGFA tribal group are vitally aware of the need to protect the environment, not just in Australia and New Guinea, but around the globe.

For example, they are aware of the need to control the rogue hamsters which are currently wreaking havoc throughout the entire Dutch rainforest belt.

They are aware of the need to conserve threatened species such as the *felafel necked*, *gusset warbling*, *ferret gull*, the *yellow bellied platychidnasaur*, and the *stiff tossed marsupial Gondwana frog*.

And they are aware of the serious problem Australia has with a small endangered population of legless lizards that live at Melbourne Airport. The Melbourne Airport legless lizards that are most endangered are those males that live on one side of the runway, but who have a girlfriend on the other side of the runway. As you would expect, many of these lizard lovers are already dead. Unfortunately they find it hard to get out of the way of the planes – you see they've got no legs. And that is the main problem with being a legless lizard.

Fortunately, this problem has nearly been solved by

Pakistani environmentalist, Brekfa Stinbed and his Chinese colleague, Hoo Flung Dung.

Now you Australians may find this hard to believe, but in certain parts of the world, government policy actually makes things worse for some endangered fish species. For example, in Nicaragua there is a tiny freshwater fish threatened with extinction. Despite this, the Nicaraguan government grants permits to developers to bulldoze this fish's habitat, but local people interested in saving the fish can't collect a single fish for fear of prosecution.

Can you believe that? Still, what else would you expect from a bunch of clueless, self-serving bureaucrats in what is basically a far-flung, irrelevant, third-world banana republic? I trust that a similar scenario could never be acted out in a sophisticated, forward thinking country like Australia.

Indeed, as your former Prime Minister, Billy McMahon, once told me:

On behalf of my beautiful wife Sonia and myself, let me say that the plight of native Australian freshwater fish is something that members of my government think about a lot more than do members of the Labour Party.

These days, *Angfari fanaticus* is greatly assisted in its efforts by that rather erratic organism, *Computeri crashalottus* ... a bizarre device also used by naughty little schoolboys for downloading images of *Chickychick nuddei*. *Computeris crashalottus* enables these Aussie fish keepers to create an endless stream of emails about the slightest twitch or snuffle of every goby and gudgeon that ever there was.

But in this computer age, what *Angfari fanaticus* bipeds would like most of all is to be able to digitise fish eggs, and email them to each other as an attachment.

So what are the key factors in creating a better future for the fishes of sahur?

Well, first and foremost, I believe that everyone in this room must have total faith in the government. You see, it is my belief that Australian government agencies do have all the answers ... and when they say, **'we're here to help you'**, I would counsel you to believe them. Because that's where the solution lies.

But of course you fish enthusiasts have a role to play here, too ... and that role is to pay for the solution. You see, we must all understand that it costs a lot of money for government departments to set up steering committees ... publish discussion papers ... develop action plans ... and finance fact-finding missions. A lot of money ... and anyone who thinks the government will have more than \$3.50 left over to actually solve the problem has got to be kidding themselves.

The plight of native freshwater fish is of great concern to your current Prime Minister, John Howard, who is on record as saying:

We really need to do something about these endangered freshwater fish, Mr Speaker. I mean, we can save a whale, but we are battling to save the pusilla. Probably because the pusilla is so small ... they're easy to miss ... whereas a whale, Mr Speaker, is larger than a pusilla. Even from a cliff top, you can



look out to sea and say, there's a whale, we'd better save it, whereas it's very hard to say, there's a pusilla ... especially looking out to sea ... from a cliff-top.

Actually, if we are to save the pusilla, Mr Speaker, I believe we have to raise its profile ... we need the public to identify with this fish as a fellow Aussie battler. To this end, I suggest that ANGFA make a blockbuster movie about it, and make the fish the star of the movie. And we should call that movie: Pusilla, Queen of the Desert.

But the real saviour of the pusilla, and any other threatened species, will undoubtedly be *Angfari fanaticus*, which is constantly defending its territory against an array of fierce predators ... predators such as *Gambusia don't-you-hate-its-gutseei* ... and *Developeri make-me-wanna-pukus*.

Now and then, members of the *Angfari fanaticus* tribe gather together at a conference to discuss the future. At this conference, they tend to congregate in a dark cave, where they are forced to listen to their tribal elders, who generally belong to the genus, *Presenteri waffleus*. And, if the delegates are very unlucky, the seats may induce the debilitating disease, *Numbus bummus*.

However, after dark, these delegates will be let out to engage in a feeding frenzy, and to ingest vast quantities of fermented nectar, and I refer here to the sub-species, *Happyhourus paralyticus* ... and its close relative, *Johnnywalker pisspottius*.

It is the *Angfari fanaticus* genus whose evolution we wish to understand more deeply. And today, quite by chance, I have stumbled across a herd of these unique bipeds. Let us now observe their behaviour closely, from our vantage point in our well concealed hide, as they listen attentively to one of their dominant males, and leaders of the pack, *Walsbus damiani*.

Written and performed by Graeme Bowman. © 2005 Graeme Bowman

About Graeme Bowman: Graeme, the son of ANGFA legend, Ron Bowman, is one of Australia's leading corporate comedians, MCs and hoax speakers, appearing at conferences, launches and awards presentations around the globe. He is also a certified Lateral Thinking Trainer, accredited by the De Bono Institute, and gives keynote presentations and workshops on creative thinking.

For more information, phone 03 9528 3558 or visit his website: www.graemebowman.com

Darwin, Queensland and New Guinea in Melbourne!

By Damian Walsh

Amanda and I witnessed one of the greatest displays of rainbowfish ever. **Upmarket Aquariums** have set up a huge tank devoted to the glorious native fish of Australia. With over 200 rainbowfish, including trifasciatus, praecox etc and other natives such as hardyheads and catfish and perchlets, your eyes will be wide with excitement. The metal halide lamps make the tank pulse with color. Save yourself an expensive trip to Northern Australia or New Guinea and head down to the Queen Victoria Market. You won't be disappointed. In fact you will be inspired! **Well done to Greg and the team for making this dream a reality.**

Some comments from the 2005 Melbourne Convention:

(continued from page 5)

"Congrats to the ANGFA Vic mob for putting together a wonderful show. Great speakers, a wonderful opportunity to catch up with old friends, make some new ones and generally have a really good time."

A special thanks to Wives, Husbands, life partners or whatever you call the other half of a fish nut's family who supports the others passion for poisson, piscatorial pursuits and other aquatic antics. My wife Robyn enjoyed herself very much".

"Thanks to my ANGFA Friends (Budgy, Bev, Andy, Michelle, Scotty, Ginny, Bruce, Tony, Anne, Damian and Amanda) who looked after Robyn and I in the City the week after the Convention. We did a bit of shopping and sight-seeing. We acquired some gear that is difficult to access here in the NT. It was Robyn's first visit and my first good look at Melbourne".

Cheers!!! Dave (El Presidente) Wilson, ANGFA NT.

"Thank you for a wonderful ANGFA 2005! Special thanks to Damian, Amanda, Ron B, Ken and Bruce for their warm hospitality and friendship. I am now totally energized and invigorated to assist in moving ANGFA North America forward. I have a few ideas and wish to share them with Kevin H and later with you."

I had a wonderful time and look forward to 2007. I am already planning and putting potential program material together".

John Seyjagat, Baltimore Aquarium, USA

"My thoughts on the convention were that it was nice to see the beautiful balance achieved between conservation and hobby related subjects and the genuine passion displayed by the members for our environment and the aquatic life we come together to study and appreciate. And probably more important was the terrific feeling of mateship, goodwill, and co-operation that permeated the atmosphere of the convention".

Thanks again & well done. Rick Datodi (ANGFA Patron)

"Just got back home after a great convention – my congratulations to ANGFA Victoria and the Team"

Cheers. Bruce (Hansen). ANGFA (Qld) Inc.