

APRIL, 1987

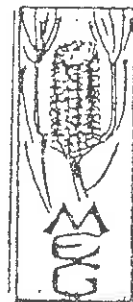
*An occasion for land managers and all
people interested in bushland preservation:*

David Cameron
(Botanist, Latrobe Univ.)

speaking on

The Significance of Bushland Reserves
for Flora Conservation.

8pm, 24th April



SPINULOSA

MONTROSE ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP NEWSLETTER

P.O. BOX 7, MONTROSE, 3765

SUMMARY OF MINUTES OF BUSINESS MEETING
HELD 9/4/87 AT GRAEME LORIMER'S

Matters arising - Minutes of meeting 5/3/87.

1. Graeme thanked members for their help with the successful exhibit at the Montrose Festival.
2. Committee members thanked Graeme and Tanya for their efforts in organising the display.

Correspondence:

IN: From

1. Dept. Conservation, Forests and Lands - Consultative Forum Meeting
2. S.G.A.P. Foothills Group re. Stringbark Festival.
3. Save the Dandenongs League - Various.

OUT: To:

1. Tract Consultants. Two letters re. Mont. Recreation Reserve.
3. Tony Lamb M.P. re. Community Volunteer Programme.
4. Mr. Lloyd Johns re. fire prevention.

Matters Arising:

1. Ivor Ellis reported on the Dandenongs National Park Forum re. Recreation aspects - a meeting he recently attended.

General Business:

- 1. We will hold a working bee - a weeding afternoon on 2nd May at L versha Reserve.
- 2. Graeme and David reported on a talk by the Los Angeles co-ordinators of the Tree People.
- 3. Graeme spoke on the recent public meeting concerning Stane Brae.
- 4. Cr. Toni Fraser attended and members discussed their views on a wide range of topic with her.

John Venn -
Minute Secretary

LEVERSHA RESERVE WORKING BEE

Leversha Reserve has many young pines and pittosporums which need to be removed NOW, before they're too big to remove easily and before they set seed and multiply. Come to the end of Kirkwood Court at

1:30 p.m., 2nd MAY, 1987

armed with gloves, hatchets, pruning saws etc. to help rescue what is otherwise quite high quality bushland. THIS IS AN ACTIVITY WHERE EVERYONE CAN MAKE A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION.

NEXT BUSINESS MEETING:

Thursday, 7th May at 7.30 p.m. at
Paul and Tanya Tankard's,
40 Browns Road, Montrose (728 2680)

GRAEME ON GROWTH (with a little help)

I wrote an article for Spinulosa last February to highlight the general plight of our planet and some of the most serious ways in which humanity is worsening it. It was my intention to expand on the specific problems in later issues, and in this article I will concentrate on the evil of growth economics.

You may recall that I paraphrased a scientist who presented an analogy between mankind and bacteria, wiping themselves out by destroying their growing medium. Almost simultaneously, a visiting Canadian science broadcaster, David Suzuki, expanded on the analogy in a very illuminating way, so I'll simply report what he had to say in a talk to the Commission for the Future.

Firstly, he noted that when economists/politicians use the term "steady growth" they refer to what scientists call exponential growth. Now, whatever you call it, exponential growth is invariably non-sustainable. It of ten doesn't appear to be that way to begin with, but it has a terrible habit of causing disaster with very little warning. David Suzuki illustrated it this way:

"Let me give you an analogy to show you why it is a ludicrous concept. Suppose I have a test-tube full of food for bacteria and I put one bacterial cell in. And that bacterial cell is going to go into exponential growth, it is going to double every minute. And at 60 minutes the test tube is going to be completely full. So at time-zero you have got 1 cell, at 1 minute you have got 2, at 2 minutes you have got 4, at 3 minutes you have got 8, and so on and at 60 minutes it is full. The question is, 'when is the test-tube half-full; that is, half empty? Of course, the answer is 59 minutes.

Flowering period; August - October.

Acacia melanoxylon Blackwood

Mimosaceae (Wattle family)

Widespread and common in all areas.



At 59 minutes you are one minute away from filling the tube. So at 58 minutes you are 25%, at 57 minutes you are 12.5% full, at 55 minutes you are only 3% full.

So if at 55 minutes one of the bacteria cells said to its mates, 'hey, I think we have a population problem, I think we are going to run out of food', they would look at him and say, 'you're nuts, 97% of the test-tube is empty, what are you talking about', and they would be 5 minutes away from being full, and if at 59 minutes they finally said, 'you're right, we've got a problem'.

So one of them jumped out of the test tube and ran all over the universe looking for more food and found 3 test tubes full of food with no bacteria, and quadrupling the amount of food, he would run back to the test-tube and say, 'we are saved, I have quadrupled the amount of food, I have found 3 new test-tubes completely full', how long would it last? Well at sixty minutes the first test-tube is full, at sixty-one minutes the second test-tube is full and at sixty-two minutes all four are full.

So quadrupling the amount of food buys you two more minutes, as long as you sustain exponential growth."

* * *

6.

But economists/politicians generally follow dogma in which such warnings must be ignored. David Suzuki quoted people in India who boasted that their population growth was only 2% per annum. Fools! With a present population of 750 million, 2% p.a. growth means doubling to 1.5 billion in 30 years. To quote again:

When the average North American consumes as much as 150 times that of an Indian and we feel we have to keep growing even further, how can the planet sustain that kind of consequence? It took all of human history to reach the first 1 billion human beings on the planet in the last century, then in only 150 years we doubled twice to reach 4 billion, and now we are going to double again to reach 8 billion in another 30 years. That is the consequence of exponential growth. Obviously, it can't be sustained.

The point of my relating all this is to warn against the superficially attractive doctrine of sustained growth and expansion. Growth in nature is only a phase, and it can be no more in the human sphere. The unique thing about growth in economics and resource use is that humans, as sentient beings, can actually regulate growth and, in principle, direct it toward a stable equilibrium to avoid the phases of atrophy and death which follow un hindered growth in everything from the smallest living things to the universe itself. We can all play a part in that, from our attitudes to waste and resource-use in daily life through to reaction against growth of the urban sprawl. Let's restrain ourselves!



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7.

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8pm, 24th April

Montrose Tennis Club pavillion, Mt Dandenong Tourist Road, Montrose.

David Cameron has surveyed the botanical significance of many areas since the early 1970's, and is a leading campaigner for protection of sites with special importance - particularly in East Gippsland and the Warrandyte-Research-Eltham areas.

His work has led him to develop objective techniques for:

- (a) rating the general quality of bushland areas (based on weed invasion, physical disturbance, age structure and so on); and
- (b) comparing flora of different sites to determine which ones are most important to preserve.

David will describe these techniques and their implications for management of bushland reserves.

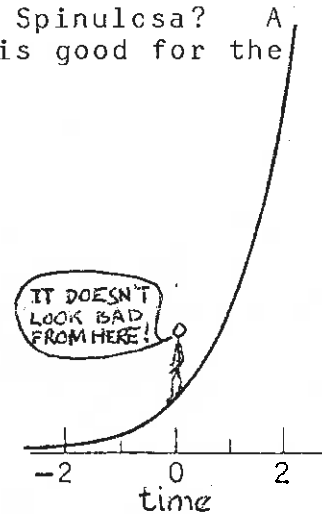
Convenor: Graeme Lorimer, ph. 573 2126 (bus.) or 728 5841 (AH)



By the way, can anyone take the job of intrepid reporter, investigating the decline of the world's forests, and write an article for Spinulcsa? A bit of research on these matters is good for the soul!

Figure Caption:

Every example of exponential growth can be represented by the curve shown, just by adjusting the numbers on the scale. When we look back from the time shown as "0", there appears to be no cause for alarm. If only we could look forward, too!



STANE BRAE LATEST

STANE BRAE has just been bought by an as yet, undisclosed person, for a sum, apparently around \$750,000. He/she is believed to be a well-known personality, who wants to build a single residence there, but would probably take a conservation-minded attitude to this magnificent parcel of land. We apparently have to wait until the purchaser returns to Australia to find out more. Perhaps the new owner can be persuaded of the value of transferring responsibility for management of the bulk of the 118 hectares to the National Parks and Wildlife Division.