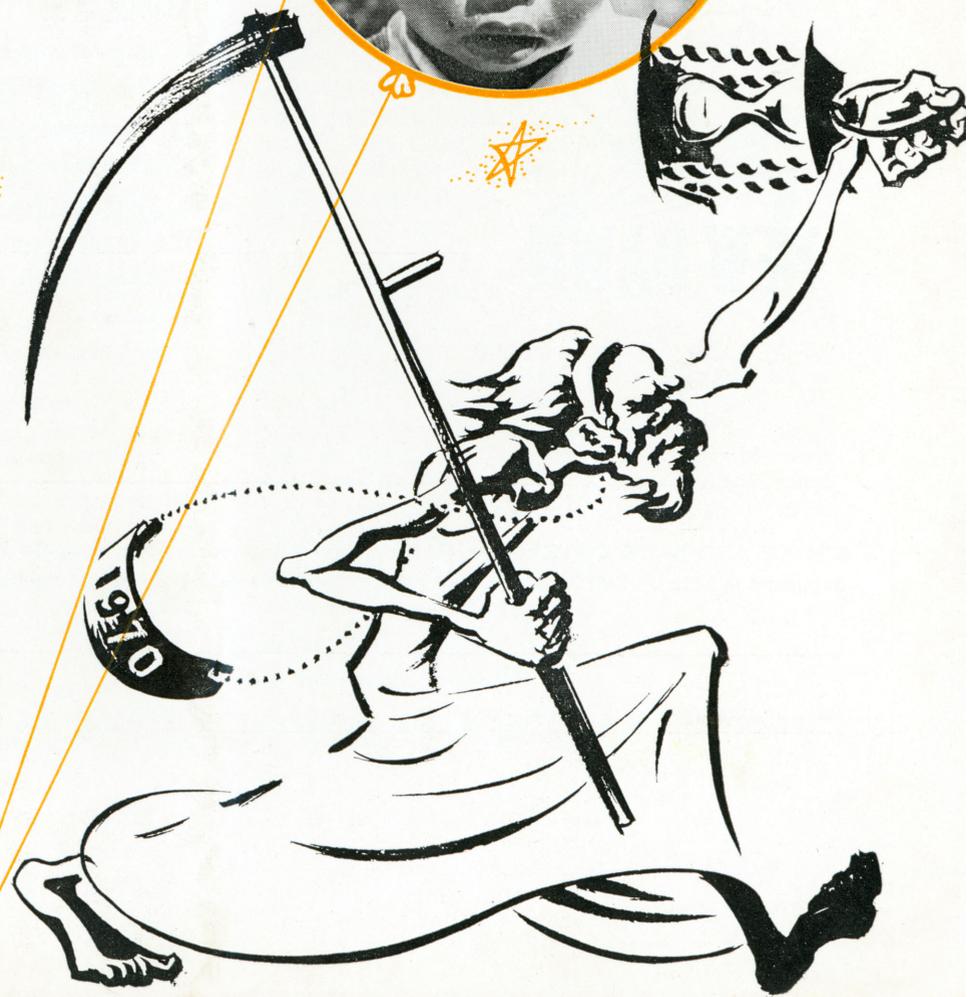
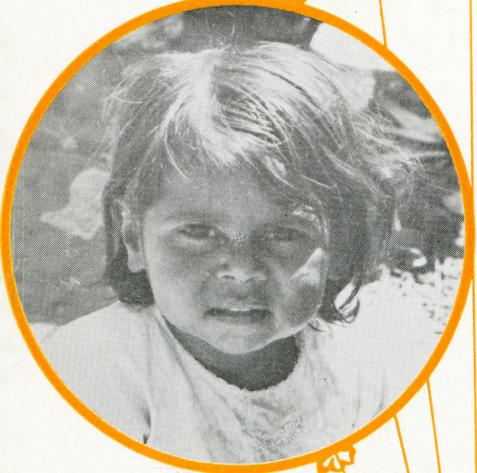
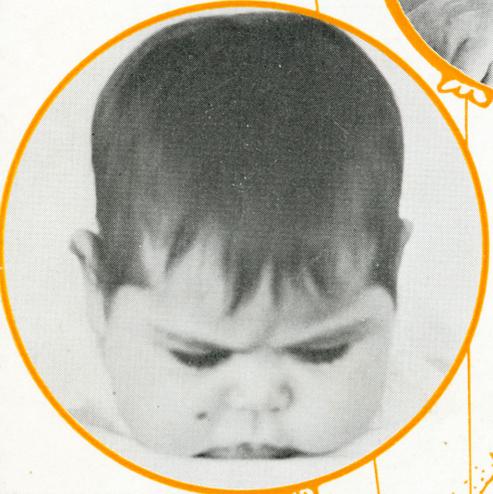


A MAGAZINE FOR
THE ABORIGINAL PEOPLE
OF NEW SOUTH WALES

NEW DAWN

JANUARY, 1971



This, if I may say so myself, is a good issue. Why? Because Pearl Gibbs helped. Tom Moylan helped. Marlene Ferguson helped. Ted Fields helped. All my letter-writers helped. Above all, Elsie Jones helped. I can't turn out good issues without this sort of help. That is why you've all probably noticed that some months, NEW DAWN is duller than other months. For a New Year's resolution, let's you and I make this magazine jump in 1971?

NEW DAWN A magazine for the Aboriginal people of New South Wales

January 1971 Vol. 1 No. 10

A monthly magazine produced by the N.S.W. Department of Child Welfare and Social Welfare



IN THIS ISSUE

- 1 The most beautiful lady . . .
- 4 Imagine a Budch and a Totty and a Percy and a Piccrust. . .
- 5 Sisters of Compassion, Wilcannia
- 7 Stopping off at Dubbo on the track west . . .
- 8 The Aboriginal in Walgett
- 9 A story of school, jobs and satisfaction
- 10 "Write for New Dawn" Competition
- 11 The Australian Aborigines
- 12 Smoke Signals
- 14 Letters
- Booris' Corner (Inside back cover)

FRONT AND BACK COVERS: As old man 1970 rushes out of the picture, the balloons go up for 1971. And I just happened to have a whole lot of very new looking Wilcannia babies to liven up the balloons!

EDITOR: Cora Walther, Dept of Child Welfare and Social Welfare, Box 18, G.P.O., Sydney, N.S.W. 2001

The most beautiful lady . . .

Early in October, I took a trip to the land of never hurry, never worry—Wilcannia in N.S.W. About one hundred miles before you get to the town, the landscape changes a great deal. And so does the feeling the land gives you. You can sense the majesty of the semi-desert and begin to understand why the people of these parts have different ideas and different values from your own. After a while, you get a little envious. After a bit longer, you don't want to go home.

But let me tell it from the beginning. A friend, Mrs Carmel Power, Andrew, my big matey mong and I were travelling to Wilcannia to "do" it for NEW DAWN. Carmel came along purely to keep me company, because she likes people and because she had never seen the country out west. Andrew came because he's beaut company and because he gets too lonely and miserable if I'm away for a long time. Knowing what an embarrassing time Aborigines can give strangers, I had come armed with a few names and addresses, but still didn't exactly look forward to breaking down the reserve on the reserve. When people get shy, I get shy too and then, oh boy!

What we wanted to do was stay on the reserve and get to know at least some of the people in the short time we had in Wilcannia. Would the reserve people agree to this? We had a message from Sydney for Mrs Elsie Jones, who lives on the reserve, so we set out to find her, pass on the message and ask about staying on the place. Mrs Jones, whom we found by the nearby Darling river, fishing, said "OK". We had our own bedding with us, but not much else, but Mrs Jones' hospitality was to make this no problem. Her friendliness, entirely natural, was so complete that we felt at home at once. Why, she even let us forget we were gubbas! That night, we all had a fish dinner at her house and yarned all evening.

Elsie Jones has lived in the Wilcannia area all her life and is the daughter of a fullblood Aboriginal woman and a Scots father. Elsie, who is now a widow, settled on the reserve fifteen years ago. When she came there, the house and ground were completely bare. The house had not even a stove in those days, just bare walls and a wooden floor. The yard was brick-hard clay-pan earth which would grow almost nothing. Elsie and her husband set to work to turn these unpromising beginnings



into a home. They carried soil from two miles away for the fruit trees they were determined to plant. They got a 44-gallon-drum full of river water and got it home on an old 1927 Dodge truck. Their little fruit trees grew and in time, the fruit came. Said Elsie: "It was always a problem. I used to share the fruit with everybody, like what was right, but often the kids would strip the trees before the fruit was ripe".

Her tribe? The Darling River people—the Barkindji tribe who had once ruled this area. As we helped to clean and prepare the fish, Carmel asked Mrs Jones whether she knew much of the Barkindji language. Came the soft reply, full of fine pride: "Yes, I know my language." My language. Out tumbled the sounds that don't exist in English. Clumsily, I got some of them down and had to ask her to repeat them, over and over, to get the words even a little bit right. Here are some of them:

- kunbali —a yellow-belly or perch.
- bandoo —Murray cod.
- bangala —black bream.
- yammedja —cat-fish.
- bandja } —two sorts of bony bream in the
- naamba } Darling River.

- bumuluku —turtle.
- kalthi manu—emu bread, a type of berry.
- barlamba —a lettuce-like vegetable.
- buntha —a hot-tasting herb used to take the taste from one's mouth. Also used to cure indigestion.
- nardoo —looks like a large clover. Both the leaves and seeds may be eaten.
- theemaree —the sap from certain gums. Scratched from just under the bark, it can be heated and eaten.
- burrumba —the milk of the milk thistle. Used on warts three or four times daily, they will go away. Mrs Jones knew of this from childhood, but was reminded of it when a white doctor recommended this old Aboriginal remedy to her some time ago.
- kurya mara —sandalwood tree.
- kamaru —a medicinal gum tree.
- kumbula —a non-medicinal gum tree.
- kukuru —box tree.

Elsie Jones is quality. For her, her Aboriginality is not something to be waved, like a banner. It is the source and foundation of her personality. She knows who she is. Like so many of her people, she has had a hard background. Her mother died when she was fifteen and Elsie brought up the younger children while dad worked on a station. Altogether, she had two years schooling. Now, at fifty-three, she says: "I would like more education. I would go to school again, now, if I could, to learn to read and write better. I know my own language, but would like to know more of the English long words—words like 'facility' "

I told her about my troubles with the Aboriginal dialects and she laughed when I asked her whether "boori" was *really* a bad word. She told me that "the nicest words of one part of the State are the nastiest words of another." Which didn't exactly cheer me up.

Elsie is sorry that the young ones don't like to use their own language any more. If they do, people stare at them in the street and they feel that white Australians might not like it. But, she adds, considering how the Greeks and Italians come here and speak their own language, "Why shouldn't *we* speak our own language in our own country?" The young ones are giving it away though, and Elsie can see the time when they realize what they have lost and will come scrambling back to save the last few crumbs. She hopes they will not be too long.



Elsie Jones photographed amongst her fruit trees. I tried to capture the quality of her smile, but only partially succeeded. Partially, because that smile starts from within and comes out through her eyes and then spreads over her face. (Have you ever noticed how few people smile with their eyes?) But the photo does give you some idea.

Mrs Jones learnt much of her tribal lore from her own grandmother who was born near the Darling. She told us about Wilcannia's Grandmother, Mrs Annie Moysey, who also is one of the Darling river people and who was born 100 years ago. Later, we met Annie Moysey whose grandfather was the king. Her lineage and age give Mrs Moysey complete authority and no one questions it. "Nowadays", she said, shaking her head part in anger, part in sorrow, "the young people of the reserve" are not healthy enough. They marry relations. They don't follow the Rules. They marry whites . . . agh!"

A next door neighbour of Elsie Jones is fullblood Peter McFarlane. He was in part brought up by Grandma Moysey. When Peter was younger, said the locals, no horse could throw him and he broke horses for a living. Now, there are very, very few

horses in the Wilcannia area. We saw none. Someone told us that a lot of the stations have gone broke and that there's not much work around. It seems that the Department of Main Roads keeps the place going more than anything. Certainly, even the dirt roads are pretty good.

With few jobs available and little chance of much development in the area, why don't the people move away? Elsie Jones explains it this way. "Well, you know everybody and it's a pretty nice place to live, with the river and all. We've lived through so much here, the earth and the planting and dragging the water and having the kids. Our lives are in it . . . we couldn't leave that behind." Of course, Wilcannia is the place where her grandmother taught her to pick and eat the herbs. It is the place where she loved her husband. It is the place where she was told the stories and where she has her history. If Elsie Jones were to leave here, she would tear the last of her racial and personal links. And what would be left for her then?

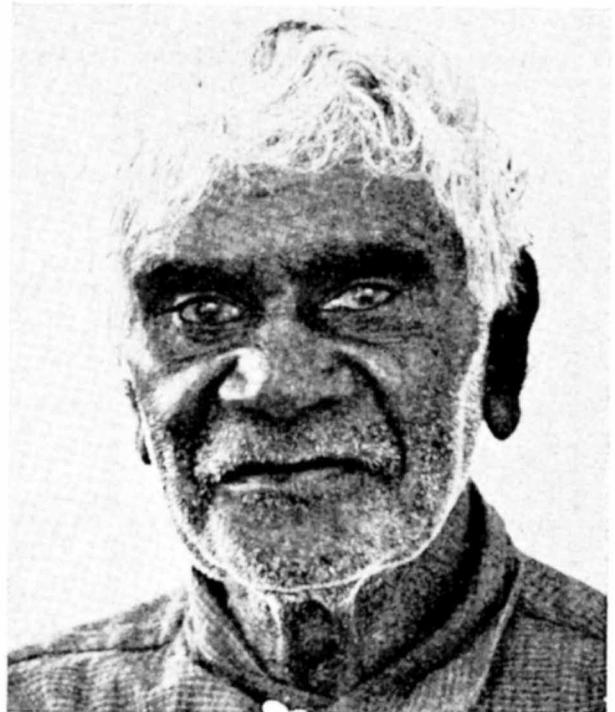


Above right: The grandmother of Wilcannia—Mrs Annie Moysey

Bottom right: Peter McFarlane

Members of Elsie Jones' family—

Left: Grandson Michael. Bottom left: Daughter Janet.



IMAGINE A BUDCH AND A TOTTY AND A PERCY AND A PIECRUST...

Anyone who has been introduced to my large, friendly and very mongrelly dog Andrew knows that I like animals. But rarely have I seen such a delightful collection of animal "characters" as those belonging to the Jones family in Wilcannia. Outstanding among them is:

Budch who is a large, fat black sheep of immense dignity. He will drink *only* out of a tap. When he is thirsty, he bangs a tin near the tap with his foot, louder and louder, until someone turns on the tap. He eats absolutely anything but normal grass, chews bones like a dog, eats emu-feathers and chews brooms, and chews the fur off Totty the cat.

Budch.



Totty is the most peculiar cat you ever saw. When I first saw her, I thought she had a bad case of mange. Her back is bald and her sides are all rough with tufts of hair sticking out at right angles. But it's not mange. Budch chews her. It seems that once upon a time she discovered that being chewed was a nice way to have her fleas scratched. She learnt to sit and enjoy it. Budch chews and chews, and Totty looks, well, chewed.

Totty has three tiny little kittens. They're only a few weeks old (or were, when I saw them) but already they are as tough and worldly wise as the other animals. One, a little ginger tom, didn't even twitch when I dropped a tin with a helluva bang, about a quarter of an inch from his left whiskers. Everything was OK wasn't it?

Totty is good with dogs and normally, ignores them. But not when the kittens are about. When Andrew came in to have a sniff, she clawed him out of the house. He felt so humiliated that he promptly picked a fight with one of the reserve dogs, to take it out on someone.

Percy is a tame, half-grown possum who lives inside and is not interested in the outside world. He eats tremendous amounts of apple, vegetable and whatever else is given to him or can be stolen. In the absence of anything else, he eats the curtains.

Miss Jones a normal looking cat. She hasn't yet discovered the bliss of being chewed and staunchly resists Budch's attempts to convert her.

Piecrust, Charley and Baby who are a galah and two blue-eyes respectively. They all talk, of course.

Spot and Fluffy two small male dogs, who, like the other animals, are tough, clever, and wise to the ways of the world. They spent most of their time deciding it might be better not to pick a fight with Andrew.

*More about that very important pre-school stuff . . .
This time it's the:*

Sisters of Compassion, Wilcannia



Sister Mark, Sr Domitilla and Sr Vincent

Sister Mark, Sister Domitilla, and Sister Vincent run their Aborigines' Mission on the reserve. In charge is Sister Mark, who trained in New Zealand under Lex Grey some years ago. She learnt his methods and worked amongst Maoris until she came to Wilcannia in January 1966. Soon after arrival, the pre-school started, with five kids and two dogs. The children were pretty wary of us in the beginning, Sister Mark remembers. Not being used to the long white habits worn by the nuns, they used to run away when they saw them coming and called them "ghosters". But that didn't last long. The pre-school grew rapidly and now there are forty children attending the kindergarten at the mission. Four local mothers, Marlene Clark, Haze IMcEwan, Barbara Clark, and Gloria King come once a week to help with the children. They are now doing Lex Grey's A.F.E.C. Mother's Help course and are discovering new things about their children every day as a result.

At the mission, children from all over town are mixing now, because they come from the Mallee, the reserve and "round the bend" of the river to learn and play at the kindergarten. Sister Vincent gives them check-ups because she is a nursing sister.

Sister Mark is very much against the idea of taking away children in cases of apparent neglect. Despite neglect and poor conditions, she urges, there is often a very happy home. The answer, she feels, is to help the parents to help themselves. One of the ways the sisters do this is by giving cooking and sewing lessons. The sewing circle, Marlene Clark, Gloria King, Ngarie Cattermole, Hazel McEwan, Barbara Clark, and Norma Dutton, have made curtains for their homes, children's clothes and dressing gowns as well as their own frocks. All this, to the delight of Sister Vincent, their sewing teacher.

Gloria King is one of the young mothers who form the backbone of the young A.F.E.C. pre-school



*Left: top to bottom
Two photos taken at the Mission's picnic.
Mother and child. Gloria King and Lindy.
Gloria in front of her new Commission home.*



at Wilcannia. Each Wednesday she goes down to the mission to take a group of children for dough play, blocks or puzzles. She said: "Pre-school has shown me how to control my children by giving them story books, tins, blocks or cotton reels to play with. I look forward to pre-school every week and it's fun to watch. Kids are happy and do not fight or get cranky when they have things to do. This is because they are too busy."

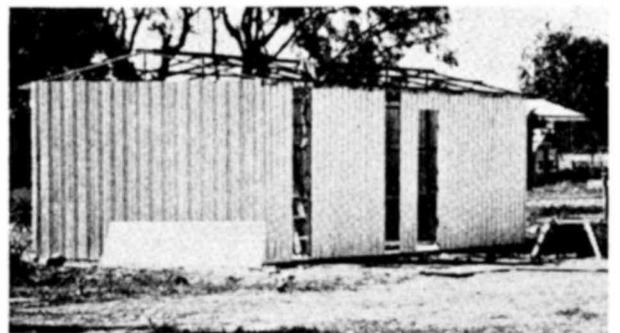
Gloria King is one of the Aboriginal mothers who moved into a new home last May. At first she was worried that she would be lonely, but now she realizes that she can still see her family and friends, yet live in comfort too. One of the sisters told me that several of the shanty dwellers, who once wouldn't dream of shifting, are now being converted to the idea of running water and proper conveniences and are now waiting until they, too, can shift into new homes when the Housing Commission builds them.

Under construction is a laundry and ablution block for those reserve Aborigines who do not have washing and bathing facilities. Financed by the Department of Child Welfare and Social Welfare, it is designed to help raise the health conditions of people on the reserve.

The Aboriginal community of Wilcannia has plans for an Aboriginal Centre when a building becomes available. This will form a club or social centre where the people will be able to mix and amuse themselves, hold dances and have adult education programmes.

Think about this Centre, and the pre-school and the cooking and sewing lessons and the new homes and the new laundry block and ask yourself: "Who says Wilcannia ain't on the move?"

The laundry and washing block under construction on the reserve.



Stopping off at Dubbo on the track west...

The first thing I noticed as I came into her Dubbo home was a well-thumbed copy of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights lying on the table. I smiled to myself as I wondered how many country homes would have such a thing. Or city homes, for that matter.

Then Pearl Gibbs, one-time member of the Aborigines Welfare Board, tackled me. "Come in. Sit down. How long have you got? Five minutes? Ten minutes? Five or ten minutes in which to solve the whole Aboriginal problem?" I started to protest that no, I wasn't that ambitious but that all I was trying to do was find out who had written me the letter signed "Half-Caste, Dubbo", which had appeared in the August *NEW DAWN*. To say good-day, like.

One of the locals had suggested that Mrs Pearl Gibbs, who runs the Hostel for Aborigines in Bembrose Lane, would be the person most likely to know who had written the letter. "Excuse me, excuse me," said Pearl, "but you stop talking. You just shut up and listen." Then she started to tell me some stories which fully justified her claim to the right to tell anyone to shut up—a justification, incidentally, which her age (70) background and experience all back up.

For one thing, Pearl Gibbs is right up to date with the latest developments on the Aboriginal scene, both here and in other states. Add to this a razor-sharp mind and a flawless memory and you can see why this woman has the right to take the floor. So, we listened.

Pearl Gibbs has seen it all. The speeches, the visits by important people, the projects, the plans. "Camp with me for three weeks," says Pearl. "I've got Aboriginal history in these trunks." Indeed she has. She can show you three huge trunks chock full of her people's history. Out came a scrap-book of newspaper cuttings and I leafed through them. The familiar headlines hit me in the eye:

- Aborigines get poor deal, says Alderman.
- Native Plight.
- Problems of Half-Castes.
- Natives were scared.
- Intimidation.
- Reforms for Aborigines.
- New deal for Natives.

With a shock, I realized, as I turned the pages, that the dates on these cuttings were 1938, 1939. I wasn't even born then. In the days when



Mrs Pearl Gibbs.

Aborigines kept quiet on reserves and rarely spoke up, Pearl Gibbs was already speaking at public functions about the conditions under which her people were living. As she talked, she showed, indirectly, how the frustration built up in her over the years. Yes, there was progress, she admits, but how slow, how slow.

I picked up the book of Human Rights and read out the sonorous, beautiful words, slowly:

"All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood."

Pearl, a quarter-caste, laughs. "You wonder what I've got that for, eh? Don't you see? I *have* to be interested in citizenship rights. I'm not quite white enough to be able to ignore them."

Pearl Gibbs is a gold-mine. The more you dig, the more there is. As she talks, the struggle and often brutal reality of her early life is uncovered. And now she says "Don't do too much for the Aborigine. Just leave him alone."

Finally our five or ten minutes were up and we had to begin the next leg of our journey west. Just before we left, unexpectedly, honestly, Pearl summed herself up. "I might get full of brandy sometimes, but I'm not full of bull." I can grant her that. She remembers a lot and knows more. Indeed, none of it is bull. As a matter of fact a remarkable lot of it made me think back to that reason and human dignity the Declaration talks about.

THE ABORIGINAL IN WALGETT

BY TED FIELDS

Within the boundaries of the Walgett shire is an estimated Aboriginal population of a little over 1,300 people. The total population (European and Aboriginal Australians) is 6,500. The total area of the shire is 8,500 square miles. The Aboriginal population within a one hundred mile radius of Walgett is 5,500.

A recent medical survey conducted by Dr L. Edwards discovered that one third of the Aboriginal children examined by him at Walgett were suffering from the effects of malnutrition.

This did not surprise me. In fact, I had expected that the figures would be somewhat higher. The reason for my pessimism is based on the fact that only slightly more than 40 per cent of the Aboriginal "bread-winners" average more than six months work in a year. When we consider that the average size family is nine (seven children) and that the normal pay received for casual work is from \$6 to \$8 per day, we begin to wonder in fact, why the infant mortality rate is not greater.

This could be attributed to the communal nature of the Aboriginal life style.

The needs of the people in this area are many and varied. Unemployment is our most urgent problem. Housing and education are next, in that order. The basic need, in my opinion, is organization. We need someone (preferably an Aboriginal) to engage in community development work. There is a need for more work *with* the people, as opposed to working *for* the people.

It is essential that the Aboriginal people be met on their terms in familiar surroundings if we are to obtain any ideas on their attitudes towards what is generally regarded as being in their best interest.

Even the best intentioned action by Departmental or other organizations working for the advancement of Aborigines is interpreted by Aborigines as token gestures. Why? Because many of the so-called

"Aboriginal leaders" who *advise* these groups and whose views are publicized in the newspapers have in fact no communication with the people for whom they speak. Quite often they are living in good homes in the suburbs of the metropolitan area. They do not necessarily represent the views of the Aboriginal living under adverse conditions on reserves, stock routes etc. in damp and draughty rusted corrugated iron shacks, or sleeping on wire netting beds without mattresses. Most of these "leaders" whom I have seen or heard speak on Aboriginal affairs are concerned with "policies" or "issues" that may or may not affect this or the next generation. They are not concerned with, or aware of, the immediate and very real problems of our people. They do not communicate with them. The conferences and meetings held in Sydney and Canberra where Aboriginal leaders express their views are no answer to the problem.

What then, is needed? Aborigines need field workers who are field workers in the true sense of the word; men who will, as mentioned above, meet the people on *their* terms in *familiar* surroundings. To continue to administer welfare work without this positive development can only foster parasitism by destroying human dignity.

(It's the old problem; HOW do you get effective communication? The Aborigines Act of 1969 attempts to solve this problem by setting up the Aborigines Advisory Council. Provided this council is effective, it will really be a voice of the people. But will the people who are elected to it be true leaders, or will they be the "non-leaders" whom you criticize? This depends entirely on *how many* Aborigines are interested in voting for people to represent them. A lot of Aborigines didn't enrol for the forthcoming Advisory Council elections. Quite a few decided that they didn't like the idea of being on an electoral roll, so they ignored it.

Now if the council, when it is formed, turns out to be unrepresentative and not true leaders, then think about it carefully and every three years, you can throw them out and get a new lot. That's how any democratic system works. Field workers have a role to play, and a valuable one, but the Advisory Council is the big thing—or can be, if the Aboriginal people decide to make it so.

I've heard Aboriginal critics say "The Advisory Council is not going to be any good! It won't represent the people and its even going to have three government stooges on it!" Now I don't know, at this stage, how useful the Advisory Council

is going to be. But don't you see that NO setup is ever going to be perfect? That no organization is ever going to satisfy everybody all at once? That is why there's dozens of Aboriginal organizations in this state now and new ones forming all the time. Each probably feels that *it* is going to provide the answers. But somehow they don't. So what are the Aboriginal people going to do? Wait for that golden day when

everything will be perfect? You'll be waiting! . . . Because the whole business of life is trying and struggling and getting slapped down again and trying again. By that we grow and it applies as much to a millionaire as to a peasant. That's why I say again, that if the Aboriginal people don't decide to seize on something and *make* it work, however imperfect it may be, they won't advance. —Ed.)

A story of School, Jobs and Satisfaction

When Casino girl Marlene Ferguson, 17, was going to St Mary's College, Lismore, she came pretty close to leaving school during her third year. Why? Not because she didn't enjoy school. Indeed, she "liked it very much." But several of her friends were leaving and so were her cousins. They were all very close and Marlene wanted to leave school and get a job with them. But, knowing how important schooling is, her parents asked her to stay on. She agreed to do so until she had her School Certificate.

After the School Certificate, Marlene Ferguson left school and came to Sydney. There she had a couple of jobs, without being very sure *what* she wanted to do. Then Mrs Ruth McDonald (one of the Bryants) suggested to Marlene that she apply for a job as a bank officer—a job which called for a School Certificate.

So, Marlene applied and did the entrance exams. At first, she heard nothing and thought that she had missed out. Then, out of the blue came a telegram saying that she had been accepted for six months probation at the Erskineville branch of the Commonwealth Bank. Soon after this, Marlene got sick with peritonitis, but the bank was willing to wait until September 8 for her to start work.

Right from the beginning, Marlene was happy in the bank and says that she "wouldn't leave it for the world. I am well paid and I am learning a lot as well as meeting new people."

Early in November, Marlene is starting a further course at the bank's head office in Martin Place. When her six months probation is up, she is pretty sure that she will be able to get a transfer to the



Marlene Ferguson, of Casino.

Casino branch of the Commonwealth bank. Does she want this?

"Yes, oh yes. I got pretty home-sick some time ago. I miss my parents very much. I don't miss the entertainment of Casino, because there's none up there to miss, but I *do* want my family." Hasn't Sydney got *anything* that will keep her here? "Oh," says Marlene, "I've got plenty of boyfriends, but none in particular. I don't know if I might meet one who'll be able to make me change my mind about going back to Casino."

Has the School Certificate been important to Marlene? "Yes, I treasure it," she says. "Without it and the references which I got from the sisters, I wouldn't have been able to get this bank job—or anything else worthwhile. I know now that I would have ended up in some awful, low paid job, or even with *no* job. I'm certainly glad that Mum and Dad kept me at school."

“Write for New Dawn” Competition

In order to make NEW DAWN more truly “a magazine for the Aboriginal people of N.S.W.,” its *Aboriginal* readers are being invited to write articles for possible publication. To find out just what sort of a response this idea will get, a trial competition is being launched. The three best articles, received at this office by March 1 will win for their writers:

1st — \$30
2nd — \$20
3rd — \$10

How long should the articles be? Between 500 and 1500 words.

What kinds of articles? Anything at all, provided it is your *own* original work. *Everybody* has a story to tell whether it is about life where you live, memories on seeing an old pair of shoes, your ideas on love, marriage, birth or death, how spider webs look with the morning dew on them, your ideas about the world, the problems of Aborigines, your son (daughter, wife, husband, etc.), things ain't what they used to be and so on.

Recently an Aboriginal woman said to me: “I’m not educated. I never went to university. How can I write anything?” I asked whether she could write at all. She could. Then I asked: “Have you ever been very happy, or very, very miserable? Or have you ever wondered why you are on this earth?” Yes, she had. And so have you. So *write* it down.

What are the keys to good writing?

- Be simple, clear, sincere and direct.
- Be *natural*—try to write as you speak.
- Write what you *really feel*. Get it down, exactly as you felt it.

An example of a true, personal feeling, put down into words is this little piece by a Japanese writer:

Oh, don't mistreat
the fly! He wrings his hands!
He wrings his feet!

What about spelling and grammar? Don't worry about it. If the story “takes hold” of you,

it'll be a good one. The English can be fixed up later, in this office. But other people can't supply the true *feeling*, which is yours.

What are the rules?

- Although prizewinning articles will usually be printed in NEW DAWN, they may not be.
- All articles sent in become the editor's property.
- The editor's decision is final, *but*:
- The editor is quite willing to enter into correspondence with anybody who thinks they may have had a raw deal, provided that person is reasonable and is not just being “smart”. Also, I will be writing to people *about* their articles, in a lot of cases.



KIRINARI VACANCIES

Applications are now being invited from Aboriginal boys of high school age to fill five vacancies which will exist at Kirinari Hostel from the beginning of the school year in 1971.

Preference shall be given to those students who would otherwise be unable to complete a secondary school education.

SEND all applications to: Selection Officer, Kirinari Hostel, Box Road West, Sylvania Heights, N.S.W. 2224.

The Australian Aborigines

Professor A. P. Elkin

PART VIII

(Continued from last issue)

Sections:

Over a large area of Western Australia, the southern Aranda (on the Macumba river, north of Lake Eyre) most of Queensland and in north-eastern and central New South Wales, a person's relations are divided into four named groups or sections. Many people know the names used by the Kamilaroi and neighbouring tribes of New South Wales (Ipai, Kambu, Mari and Kabi) while in Western Australia the commonest names are Panaka, Burong, Karimba and Paldjeri. There are often, too, feminine forms of these names. Associated with these groups are rules of marriage and descent, which can be represented as follows:

Kambu = Mari

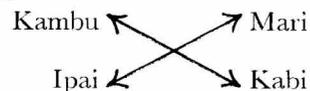
Ipai = Kabi

In the case of men: A man of Kambu marries a woman of Mari and their children, male and female, will all be in Kabi. If she marries against the Rule, her children will still be in Kabi. Her son (Kabi) marries an Ipai and their children are Kambu. This means that a man and his son's children are in the same section. A man of Mari marries a Kambu woman and their children are Ipai. But the Ipai son marries a Kabi woman and her children are Mari. That means that a Mari man's

son's children are back with him in the Mari section. That is why they will often say "a man's father's father is his elder brother."

In the case of women: A woman of Mari has a daughter who is of Kabi. The Kabi daughter's daughter, in turn, is a Mari, so that a woman and her daughter's children are in the same section. This cycle of Mari—Kabi—Mari on the women's side and the other cycle of Kambu—Ipai—Kambu on the women's side too, goes on forever. The two cycles express the doctrine of the pre-existence of spirits and the birth or incarnation of these spirits through the everlasting cycle of women.

The ritual pairs of sections:



These have their own special duties and privileges in ritual, so that the Kambu/Kabi and Ipai/Mari ritual pairs look after each other. Each section has its *own* sacred places and rituals, but has to help the section with which it is paired to carry out its rituals and see that they do it properly. So, Kambu/Kabi will help Ipai/Mari and Ipai/Mari will help Kambu/Kabi.

SMOKE SIGNALS

► The first thing I noticed when I got to Wilcannia was how resentful the townspeople, both white and Aboriginal, were of newspapermen. They soon dropped their guard for NEW DAWN, but I feel that the next newspaper man is going to have a pretty tough time getting information. Mick Rodden, the local Welfare Officer had warned me of the general resentment of journalists and “do-gooders” quite early and had shown me some of the inaccurate and unfair articles which had appeared in various newspapers. Local Aborigines too, complained to me how often they had had flying visits from “instant experts” from various organizations and from the universities. They made a lot of noise, criticized everything and everybody, then made a lot of promises. Then they disappeared. Nobody heard anything from them again.

The Sisters of Compassion, who have their mission on the reserve, put it this way: “It doesn’t matter *what* the authorities and the Aborigines themselves do to improve the life of their kids (and plenty are trying) the newspapers only ever report the bad side. All they want is sensation.” One reserve man had asked: “What do we have to do to be right?” The whole town resents the “splash” stories and the opportunists who promise the earth, leave, and are never heard of again.

► *Where have all the men gone?* Whenever I get near Aborigines, all the men disappear. There’s only ever WOMEN left to talk to. Just recently, I had three articles on women finished and had an appointment to see another woman about something else. A feller rang me up and said: “There’s this GIRL in Sydney I reckon you ought to do an article about.” See? Now the point is, if I don’t get more articles about MEN in this magazine soon, people are going to start to think funny things about the editor. We can’t have that, can we? So . . . anyone seen any men around?

► *Birth Notice* in the *Australian* newspaper last October:

William (Reeves)
Are at it again
At King George V on Wednesday October 21
A boy—Guy.

► My Wilcannia visit was great. Do you know why? Because Mrs Elsie Jones made us welcome. Perfect strangers we were, too. We got to Wilcannia on a Saturday and spent Saturday night on the reserve. That was the quietest night for three years, said the reserve people. There wasn’t a peep all night. It hadn’t been so quiet since the big funeral back in 1967. Now that made me feel really good—to know that I have the same impact on people as a funeral!

Seriously though, have you thought that it is even necessary to be kind to that form of life known as editors? Because, you know, there have been plenty of times when this one has stood outside an Aborigine’s house and had to talk on the doorstep because no-one said “Come in, have a cup of tea.” Point is, I can’t really do good articles about Aborigines unless I talk to them properly. That is why it is necessary for them to be kind to editors. And Elsie Jones *was* kind.

As a matter of fact, if I knew who the Elsie Jones was on every reserve, I’d be wheedling the Department to let me go every week!

► On October 1, the Redfern All Blacks left Sydney for a tour of New Zealand, at the invitation of Maori M.P. Mr Matiu Rata. Sixteen players were accompanied by two coaches and two officials. The tour was financed by the National Aboriginal Sports Foundation. During their twelve day tour, the All Blacks played three matches, of which they won one. Their Maori hosts showed the team the quality of Maori hospitality by throwing a number of dinners, balls and informal functions. Highlights of the tour were a farewell dinner to members of the New Zealand World Cup team in Wellington soon after the All Blacks’ arrival in New Zealand, a royal welcome from the Maori Queen at Ngarawahia and a farewell, in Auckland, from officials from the Department of Maori and Island Affairs, the New Zealand Rugby League Control Board and Mr Matiu Rata himself.

Long time Aboriginal rights leader Mr Herbert Stanley Groves, J.P., died in hospital on Monday, 28th December, 1970. His death was the culmination of a series of heart attacks throughout October. Mr Groves’ achievements for his own people are well known. May I extend my sympathy to the Aboriginal people who knew him and to his relations and family as well.



Some of the relations and friends of the All Blacks, who farewelled them at Mascot airport on October 1.

► Yes dear, yes dear

Margaret Curl, who up until recently was Wilcannia's Community Health nurse told a story which I feel will be appreciated by most of our readers.

"One of the families whom I visited after coming to Wilcannia had some obviously unsatisfactory conditions in and around their home. The mother seemed interested in hearing how to fix things, so I told her that she must do this and that and not do such and so. She listened carefully and agreed to follow my suggestions. Next day, when I came back, nothing had been done.

Thinking that she had misunderstood, I explained it all again carefully. Next day, when I returned, still nothing had been done. This went on for two solid weeks! At the end of this time, I got really furious and let her have it. I named her for everything and really roused on her. Then I left, meaning not to come back for two or three days. An unexpectedly busy period fixed things so that I could not come back for over a week. I felt a bit guilty as I drove up, thinking that I had been a little too rough on her. But the door opened and there she stood with a beaming smile, saying: Hello sister, where have you been? We've missed you!"

► Early in October, the second of six new Housing Commission homes for Aborigines was consecrated to the Sacred Heart at a ceremony in Bourke. It was performed at the home of Mrs H. Dixon junior. This Mrs Dixon is the daughter-in-law of Mrs H. Dixon senior, whose home was the first to be so dedicated. For the ceremony, which lasted about half an hour, a procession was formed at the Convent of Mercy with Father P. Murray and Father A. W. Curry, six Sisters of Mercy, four Missioners of Charity (Indian nuns) and about fifty Aborigines,

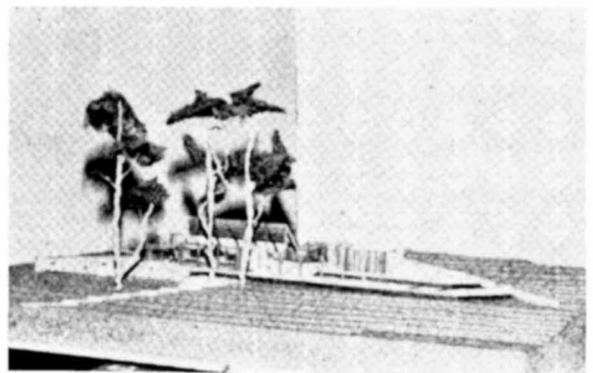
most of them relatives of the Dixon family. At the service, hymns were sung by Aboriginal children and the nuns. A large picture of the Sacred Heart was blessed and hung in the main room of the house. Father Murray later explained that the ceremony is only possible where the householder asked for it to be done.

► On the return trip from Wilcannia through Dubbo, we again stopped for awhile at Mrs Pearl Gibb's place. This time she had some yarns for us. She agreed to let me use some of them in NEW DAWN. Here we go, then:

Many years ago Pearl Gibbs was with a group of friends in a pub. One of her friends, also called Pearl, found that it was her turn to shout. She got up from the table to go over to the bar window, just as three well-dressed white chaps walked in. Because this Pearl was very short and slightly built, the men didn't notice her and got to the window before she did. Two of them gave their order. The third one didn't seem particular, but his two mates urged him to have a drink with them. He hesitated, then, not noticing little Pearl standing behind him said "I'll have a gin sling." Pearl, a real hard case, tapped him on the shoulder and said: "Sling me around, mate." The bloke turned, looked down at her, blushed scarlet and shot out of the door, with his two mates after him. Pearl got a giggle plus a round of drinks on the house because the hotel missus reckoned she'd never had a laugh like it.

► Pearl Gibbs, who is a pretty fair quarter-caste ("I was always the one that had to go and buy the drinks in those days . . .") was working for a

The model of the Bowraville Family Education Centre in Lex Grey's office at Sydney University. The centre is to open in February '71.



white woman in Nowra during the war years. "I was reading aloud a piece in the paper about a local woman getting excited about the news that troops stationed in Darwin were mixing with Aboriginal women. I said: 'She's running a bit late, isn't she, getting excited about it as this stage?' The missus said: 'But you don't *really* think that white men would mix with the Aboriginal women up there, do you?' My reply was 'Well, how the bloody hell do you think I got *this* colour? It's been going on ever since Captain Cook landed. And seeing as you've had Aborigines of mixed blood working for you all your life, how can you be so bloody stupid?' The missus went away then. A bit later she came back and formally apologised adding: 'I *must* have been bloody stupid. I'm sorry'."

LETTERS

Dear Editor,

Just these few lines to let you know that I have been receiving the DAWN now for at least ten or eleven years until it was stopped when the Aboriginal Welfare Board closed. I did really miss it but was so thrilled to have it renewed and sent to me again. Other members of my family would like to have one each sent to them as we all see so many interesting pictures of people and relations we otherwise would never have the chance of getting to see.

We have lived here at Tenterfield since September, 1959. Before coming here we lived at the Boggabilla Mission Reserve which I think is now known as Boggabilla or Toomelah Village. Since we are here at Tenterfield we find the people here are very good and there is no colour bar whatsoever. It is a very good town. My four sons and their wives and children live here as well as a daughter and her husband and children. They all live in rented homes.

Two of my sons play in the football team here. There are four teams—the under 16 team, the under 18 team, the reserves and the A Grade. We see some very good football matches here. They also go to Goondiwindi, Texas, Warwick and Stanthorpe, so we see quite a lot of football. My husband and myself go with one of the sons, as they have their own cars so they never miss a game.

Well, I think I will have to close, as the mail is almost due. We live four miles from town. With regards and thanks for NEW DAWN and we hope it will keep coming.

Yours faithfully,
Mrs Grace Binge.

► This last one, Pearl warned us, is a yarn. It's pretty well-known. But it's a beauty and because it is such a perfect squelch, is well worth repeating.

An old full-blood was walking slowly along a bush track with swag and billy, minding his own business. Along came a young, pretty dark three-quarter-caste dressed in moleskins and a big hat and riding a flighty horse. As they neared each other, the young one noticed that the old chap wasn't taking much notice of him. So, he made the horse play up, to show off. Still the swaggie wouldn't look, but kept walking, so the young bloke sang out "Good-day, midnight!" The old bloke stopped, looked at him and said "Not so much of the plurry midnight from you—you're quarter to plurry twelve yourself!"

PENFRIENDS

Dear Editor,

I am writing to you to ask if you could kindly put my name and address in the Penfriends Wanted section of an issue of NEW DAWN. My date of birth is 20th April, 1947, which makes me 23. My place of birth is Swan Hill, although I am in Melbourne for the time being. Although I am a descendant of the natives and consider myself a Murrayian, I am also an Australian of Irish and Scottish descent. Living assimilation.

The interests I try to follow are those in the social sciences generally, world affairs, archeology, travel, reading, people and outdoor activities.

My education to date is one to Leaving level as a student and next year I plan to matriculate. The key to our life in this age I believe, is an unfettered search after truth and knowledge. This can be attained only through real education.

Finally, you may say my home is south of the Murray in northern Victoria. In conclusion, thank you for the service you do all who read NEW DAWN. We here consider it an important element in any community development.

With best wishes,

D. Robert Anderson, c.o. 9 Barnett Street,
Kensington, Victoria 3031

Dear Editor,

I am an Aboriginal girl, originally from the Aboriginal Station, Murrin Bridge. At the moment

I am in hospital here and will continue to be for several months yet to come, so the doctor told me. However, I am very happy here as the doctors and nurses are all very kind to me. But at times I get lonely. So I was wondering would you please forward me a copy each month of NEW DAWN. I will appreciate it very much. Also, would you print my name in NEW DAWN for pen-pals? I have had many pen-pals, but during the years have lost contact with them. If they see my name, perhaps they will write to me again. I would be very happy and would really appreciate it. To those who write to me, all their letters will be quickly answered by me.

Thank you,

Miss Betty Black, Gissing House, Base Hospital,
Wagga Wagga, N.S.W. 2650

(Here's a chance for the Murrin Bridge-ites to show what they're made of—Ed.)

Mrs Beryl Edwards, of Lavington, N.S.W. has written in asking for penfriends for herself and her two sons.

Mrs Edwards is 33 years old and has 3 boys aged 9, 8 and 5 and a girl aged 11 months. Her husband is a bread salesman. She is interested in reading, sewing, knitting, gardening, indoor plants, cooking and education. She is hoping to write to an Aboriginal woman who has similar interests.

Her son, **Bruce Edwards**, is interested in coin collecting, reading, music, singing, cricket and swimming. He is 9 years old and would like Aboriginal boy to be his penfriend.

Finally, there is **Rodney Edwards**, who also wants an Aboriginal boy penfriend. Rodney is 8 and likes football, cricket, swimming, stamp collecting, stones, music and reading.

SEND YOUR LETTERS TO: 602 Welsh Street,
Lavington, N.S.W. 2641.

Wake up Australia

Dear Editor,

Enclosed you will find a very sweet poem written by Mr G. Gaston of Mortdale, Sydney. It has come to my and Mr Vic Wallace's notice at Lightning Ridge. We are both miners here. Mr Gaston is a frequent visitor to Lightning Ridge opal

fields. We are sending this poem in to you so that you may print it in the NEW DAWN magazine for the Aboriginal people of N.S.W.

So closing with a bright cheerio,

Respectfully yours,

Jack Green,
c.o. P.O.
Lightning Ridge, N.S.W. 2392

WAKE UP AUSTRALIA

Maybe we don't want to
Or will not understand
We are the agressors,
We have stripped them of their land.

We may call them uncivilized—
We've got a lot to show!
We were in the same category
A few hundred years ago.

We've gone ahead in leaps and bounds
and boast that we are free.
But what about our dusky friends,
The Australian Aborigine?

We try to big note ourselves
By helping starving people overseas.
If charity still begins at home,
What of the Australian Aborigine?

We boast about the millions
from minerals we'll make.
How about our dusky friends,
Have they not got a stake?

We'd only be giving them part payment,
For their country, it is true.
We could never really pay them back
For all that is their due.

Give them the education
Plus all the chances we have had.
They will equal any one of us,
If an equal chance they had.

G. Gaston,
Mortdale, Sydney, N.S.W.

Dear Editor,

The article, "The Urban Aboriginal in N.S.W." by Ken Brindle (NEW DAWN, August 1970) was very informative. Since I do not live in the metropolitan area, the article gave me a lot of

information about the people in that area. However, knowing Ken personally, I was expecting to find, at the end of the article, some very sound, practical suggestions as to how the situation could be alleviated. This did not happen. Very informative for us country Aborigines, but of no real value to the people in the metropolitan area.

I liked the 'News of prominent Aboriginal personalities.' I would like to see this as a regular feature.

I would like to read more about Aboriginal people in country centres.

I don't like having to wait so long for the next issue. Attached is an article on Walgett which I trust you will find worthy of publication in the next issue of NEW DAWN.

Regards,

Ted Fields.

(Up to a point, Ken did suggest measures: better home loan provisions, easier social service conditions, transitional hostels, special job training schemes, etc. All of these would play a role in improving the situation. But don't forget, it is easier to say what the problem is than to know how to solve it. I personally, still believe that the most valuable help is self-help, as is so effectively demonstrated by the Aboriginal Family Education Centres. That is not to say that is isn't necessary to get money and support, but self-help is in my opinion, the best help, because it is *living* and meaningful to those being helped. They are *involved*. When *everybody* pulls, dignity and happiness follow.

Your idea about regular features is O.K., but I've found that each month the magazine seems to grow out of the overflow from the last one, without too much planning. It just happens. To be pinned down to *regular* features, whether there's good material for them or not, is not what I'd call a pleasant prospect. I am getting to the stage of often having too much material. That's why I haven't done several interviews with people I've

been meaning to catch up on, yet. But because you people are such *people* people, I'll keep concentrating on articles *about* people, whether prominent or not. For example, this month's Elsie Jones and Pearl Gibbs articles Ed.)

Mr Fields' article is on page 8.

*Mrs Reg Randall, of 5 Rocky Laurie Avenue, Pippi Beach, Yamba, N.S.W. 2464 has sent in these photos of relations and friends.

Pictured are Guitarist: David Currie and his mate, Henry Thompson both from Brisbane. Shown also is a photo. of Mr Richard Donnelly from Woodenbong Reserve. (Mrs Randall adds, "I hope he sees it.")



Last October, on our way west to Wilcannia, we photographed Alexander Riley, famed as "Tracker" Riley—the only Aborigine to rise to the rank of sergeant in the N.S.W. Police Force.

Late November, when this issue of NEW DAWN had already gone to press, I received news from Tracker Riley's "very proud ancestors" that he had died on October 29, aged 86.

Alexander Riley received the King's Medal for distinguished police service in 1943. His uncanny tracking ability was a major factor in the solution of the Moss Murders—the biggest multiple murder mystery in N.S.W. in the 1930's. He figured prominently in many other cases over the years. He was a credit to his people.

Booris' Corner

Dear kids,

This month I'd like you to meet Allan John Murray of Erskineville, Sydney, who sent in a suggestion on how to make a piggy bank. This is important, because *making* a piggy bank is fun, and *using* it to save your money for something you *really* want is very good habit to get into. You might think that the best thing to do with money when you get it is to rush out and buy some sweets, but try saving it sometime and see how nice it is to have a bigger sum of money for something that you've always wanted.

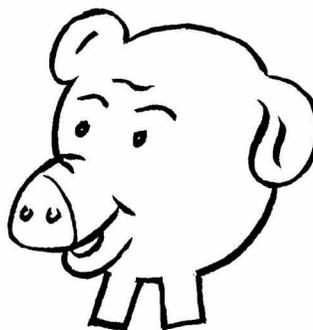


But first, let's make our piggy bank, like Allan has suggested:



Cross my heart
...I love you!!

10 Hitchcock Street,
Breakwater,
Geelong, Vic. 3219



Draw a pig's head onto a piece of stiff white paper or cardboard. Cut it out with scissors, not forgetting to leave two tabs on the bottom.

Then, get a cardboard box about 5 in x 3 in big. In the lid, cut a hole about the size of a penny, or a 20c piece. Put the head on one end by sticking the tabs onto the box with sticky tape. A piece of pipe cleaner makes a tail, and ordinary bottle corks turn into feet!

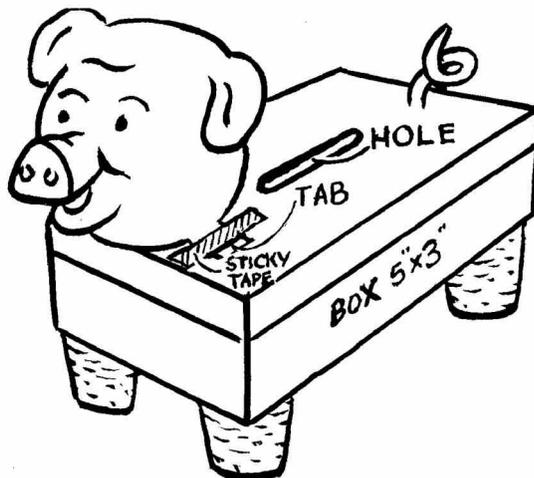
Dear Pete,

I love getting NEW DAWN and I like reading your page. Mummy helps me with words I don't know. I have four brothers and three sisters but I am the only brown one and I am seven years old. I like school and I play with clay and paste and clag. I like painting, too. I have two cats, two canaries, two guinea pigs, one dog called Pete, and a budgie and a gold-fish called Pedro.

Love,

Rhonda Livesay

(Oh, so you *do* still love me! I was beginning to wonder . . . I'll tell you a secret, though . . . I love you all, whether you write to me or not, *really*. . . But I *do* like getting letters. . .)



Finished? Now—start saving!!

Pete

