

# THE TRIANGLE

COMMUNITY

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**BROGO QUAAMA COBARGO BERMAGUI TILBA & LOCALITIES**

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## Hazard Reduction - To Burn or Not to Burn

Many *Triangle* residents living on rural 'bush' blocks are naturally concerned about the threat of bushfires. Most take steps to reduce the fire hazard around their residences and outbuildings by periodically reducing or removing combustible materials from the immediate area. For those of us without the appropriate machinery such as tractors and slashers, the most practical method is controlled burning. Indeed, in the large areas occupied by National Parks and State Forests this is the only practical method of hazard reduction.

The recent tragic bushfires in Victoria have again precipitated much discussion about the pros and cons of hazard reduction by periodic burn-offs. Opponents of burning claim that it harms wildlife and damages soil quality by greatly reducing the invertebrate organisms that break down leaf litter and other plant matter. There is probably some truth in this latter claim but a good 'slow' burn certainly allows wildlife plenty of time to avoid immolation, although a few small animals inevitably fall prey to kookaburras, magpies and the like as they break cover to escape the flames. The bottom line is that a fast-moving uncontrolled 'hot' fire destroys virtually all before it, particularly if there's ample fuel. I certainly think that any cumulative damage to biodiversity by periodic controlled burning is greatly exceeded by one uncontrolled bushfire.

Controlled burning should only be carried out in winter. A few tips for people wanting to undertake such burns

follow. First, inform your local bushfire brigade (even if a permit isn't required) and immediate neighbours of your intention to burn and give them a rough estimate of the time period involved. As the timing of burns is largely dictated by prevailing weather conditions one should allow a generous time limit. Once optimum weather conditions occur and you are ready to proceed, a back-up phone call to the brigade and neighbours is

extinguish the fire as it creeps along the boundary, but a spray backpack is also a useful accessory. A good time to start such a burn is late afternoon, as the burn will usually be extinguished by the dew settling at dusk. Once a fire break has been established around the perimeter through a series of creep burns, one can commence burning earlier in the day.

It goes without saying that the best firebreak is a cleared paddock regularly grazed by livestock. However,



A volunteer firefighter conducts a hazard reduction burn.

many of us don't have that option. My property is on the slopes of Mt Dromedary adjacent to a heavily timbered national park that, for reasons known only to them, the NSW Parks & Wildlife Service steadfastly refuses to conduct hazard reduction burns. Living in such proximity to a proverbial tinderbox makes me very aware of the value of my periodic burns. When burning, caution should be exercised at all times. I must confess to having one

mandatory and the Brigade's advice should be sought if you're unsure about the burn.

An ideal burning day is one without wind and one should closely follow weather forecasts and meteorological maps. If the area to be burnt is reasonably large a series of 'creep' burns is recommended. Such burns should start at the area's edges and be directed inwards by progressively extinguishing the outer limit of the boundary creep. In hilly country always start a burn at the highest point and direct it downhill. Basic tools such as a wide shovel and a rake are usually adequate to

fire that 'got away on me' following a sudden wind shift and am eternally grateful for the prompt actions of the Tilba Bushfire Brigade that brought it under control.

*Richard Tilzey*

Postscript: The NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) has begun an investigation into the illegal lighting of two fires in the Brogo Wilderness within Wadbilliga National Park west of Cobargo which have now burnt approximately 200 hectares of bushland.

Over the last couple of months *The Triangle* has welcomed with open arms several 'new' members – Olivia and Carlyne, both on the production side, Virginia on the computer and Maralyn who is replacing Prue as our Bermagui contact person. This is very exciting for us as anyone who works on a volunteer committee will know that finding 'new blood' to keep the enthusiasm high is a constant worry. So thank you all, once again *The Triangle* rises from near ashes.

September will see the start of fresh logging near Bermagui. Information so far gleaned is that this will be in the area north of the Bermagui-Cobargo Road, an area that was clear felled after the Second World War. The logs are apparently earmarked for the Batemans Bay mill. They will be logging down to 50 metres from Narira Creek and taking 50% of the canopy

around Black Lagoon. Although the initial information was supplied by State Forest, at the time of going to press this had not been confirmed.

Our area is a perfect example of



What's left after logging!

a 'green' drought. The little bits of rain that we have received have kept the paddocks greenish but the state of our dams and rivers tell the true story. Certainly hope we get some serious rainfall in spring or we will all be facing a shocking summer, especially if it throws us up some of that horrible, hot, hot weather we got last year.

A reminder to all groups interested in fund raising – *The Triangle* has an amazing inflatable screen and projector which is available at a minimum rent and with winter on the wane it is time to start thinking of getting out of the house again after dark.

We all heard/read that Council has spent \$800,000 on consultants' fees over the Wolumla Tip site fight. Well, we here at *The Triangle* did some pretty basic arithmetic and worked out – give or take a few houses – that that \$ 8 0 0 , 0 0 0 represents 400 houses, working on the average of \$2,000 a year in rates for a house

in Cobargo. Four hundred houses, well that's Bermagui. That's an awfully large chunk out of the Shire's budget gone on one issue. Is that really money well spent, especially when the issue has still not been resolved? How much are our rates going up again this year?

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## Red Light on Water - Give way to Flashing Lights

Recreational boaters and professional fishermen - Give way to flashing lights on the water.

The next time you see flashing blue and red lights may be on the water – not the road. Bermagui Royal Volunteer Coastal Patrol (RVCP) is installing new emergency flashing lights. RVCP is entitled to use these in an emergency (rescue) situation. If you are skippering a boat and see these lights please give way as the rescue vessel will be proceeding to the emergency at greatest possible speed.

Recently the Lifeboat James T Lees was called out to an emergency involving a vessel in distress and about to wash up onto the rocks at Mystery Bay. Our volunteers responded to the emergency like trained professionals, the boat was readied for sea and set out in good time. The Skipper then had

to heave to and wait for a long line of vessels both commercial and private to enter the Harbour. With no end in sight the Skipper pushed in and forced his way through the line to put to sea. If you look, you will notice that in an emergency, the rescue vessel currently has a flashing blue light at the top of the RADAR mast (soon to be accompanied by an additional red flashing light). These lights indicate an emergency situation is in progress. If waiting is frustrating at the time, think – it could be you out there next time.

On the return of the lifeboat, if it is towing the rescued vessel, the lifeboat is required by maritime law to fly a yellow blue yellow pennant. Racing it into the harbour while it is displaying this pennant could cause an extremely dangerous situation for

everyone. Please, for the sake of five minutes, be careful and allow the RVCP to provide the care you need when bringing both you and your vessels into harbour.

So look out for the big orange boat (soon to be under the new combined Marine Rescue colours of white with an orange flash) with the flashing blue and red lights. We are here for you and we are doing our best to provide you all with the quickest and safest possible response times and we need your help to prevent the loss of life at sea. All you have to do is provide the Rescue Boat with right of way when our emergency lights are flashing.

Denise Page

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## My Triangle

### Marge Shipton, Cobargo

'Have you had your lunch?', Marge Shipton greeted me as I turned up to talk about her life spent dairying in the Triangle. Born in Cobargo at the home of Midwife Nurse Hadget in the early 1930s, Marge was the third child to Robert and Margaret (Hyland) Blacka. Raised on a dairy farm at Quaama and later on Tarlinton's farm "Cadjancarry" in Verona, Marge and her two older brothers helped with the hand milking.

In 1949 Marge's father was badly burnt in an accident on their Quaama farm, and was hospitalised for months. As the older brothers worked away, Marge and Margaret did the dairying and ran the Quaama farm purchased by Robert when the children were teenagers. Marge also cleaned and cooked for the Postmaster, Mr Slater. Eventually Marge's parents swapped houses with Earl and Joan Horne who had previously owned the dairy farm, as Robert's injuries prevented him from

working as hard as he needed to keep the farm viable.

Marge later worked in Cobargo at Spencer's Café opposite the present day paper shop, and the Cobargo



Marge Shipton, Cobargo born & bred

Hotel, where the passengers off the Pioneer Tour bus came every night for tea (dinner), bed and breakfast.

Marge married Neville ('Fatty')

Shipton in 1952, and they purchased "Willowsmere". While 'Fatty' worked away on other farms, Marge trapped rabbits, sprayed blackberries, fixed fences, drove the tractor and used the axe and chainsaw, as well as milked 35 cows twice a day. The cream was separated by hand for the Cobargo Butter Factory. The milk was for pigs and calves as everyone had their own cows in those days.

Fatty passed away in 1980. Marge has a son in Griffith, a daughter in Adelaide and Jenny in Wandella who works in Bermagui. There are ten grand children and seven great grand children. Grandson Joel works in Cobargo and calls in for lunch most days, and granddaughters Kayla and Danika work in Bermagui together.

Apart from caring for her family, Marge's favourite pastime is exploring the bush off the back roads with younger brother Jim Blacka of Quaama. A hard working life may have taken its toll on Marge's back but the old fashioned warmth and hospitality of an earlier era remain.

*Maralyn Callaghan*

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## Blooming Algae

Lurking in the waterways and dams is a strange algal bloom, a light olive green in colour. Bega Valley Shire Council has been monitoring the bloom at the mouth of Narira Creek, where it flows into Black Lagoon. Their first sample taken about two weeks ago showed a high level of contaminants. The second sample showed a marked drop in the contaminant level at the estuary but still high further up the creek.

The samples have tested non toxic and Council reports that there has been no fish kill. Council is continuing to monitor the situation but is puzzled by a couple of things - the water temperature has remained at 11-12 degrees, usually judged too cold for blooms, and this bloom has been found in dams as well, although one reader reported, happily, that although the dam looked milky and murky the frogs seemed to be thriving.

Hopefully, nothing that a good ten inches of steady rain wouldn't sort out.

Local birdwatchers have reported the arrival of up to thirty percent of the total population of the highly endangered Swift Parrot in forests on the Far South Coast within the past fortnight.

The small green Swift Parrot is among the most endangered parrots in the country with less than a thousand breeding pairs remaining.

The species annually migrates between Tasmania and south eastern mainland Australia but has dramatically declined in numbers because of habitat disturbance

and an unfortunate habit of colliding into windows.

NPWS Ranger, Robyn Kesby, said today that anyone who knows

anything about this very rare species is very excited about the news they have arrived in such numbers on the

Far South Coast. It is ironic that they arrive just as logging is about to resume.

Because it is so rare the Swift Parrot is the focus of intensive efforts nationally to reverse its decline. A National Recovery Program is active for the Swift Parrot with the help of volunteers in NSW, ACT, Qld, Vic and SA who help conduct national surveys twice annually that track the movement of this species across the landscape.



Swift parrot, photo Max Sutcliffe

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## Wallaga Lake Bridge Opening – 1894

I wonder whether our forefathers would have contemplated that in the twenty first century, the bridge they constructed in 1894 would still be fundamental to a primary access to Bermagui. What a wonderful contribution they made to posterity at that time.

The text of the speech below has been kindly provided by Norm Hoyer,

afterward moving to Bredbatoura through lack of water, Captain Bunn Cobargo. Narira was then unoccupied and Curlewis decided to make that his heifer station. Not seeking further, we brought the cattle down in February 1834 and men to erect hut and yards etc. On reaching Narira, we found the place had been 'jumped' and occupied by Dr Wilson of Braidwood, no doubt

George Curlewis as a heifer station till 1843, when Septimus Curlewis and I became joint possessors of the Tilba run and started dairying and pig rearing and continued on till 1846, when he sold the run to William Campbell, then of Bergalia, who stocked it with 100 picked cows and heifers bought of William and Jas Walker of Kameruka. They had

recently purchased them from the late Imlay Brothers. I remained on the station as Manager till 1856 when the cattle run was sold to the late Thomas Forster. At that time Bega was being surveyed for settlement, which I had been looking forward to, for some time, to procure a permanent home, where civilisation I hoped, would soon follow settlement. I am thankful to say it did.

I, my wife and a black boy in 1848 carried a child each on horseback across the tidal inlets, then all open to the sea, to Moruya for Baptism, by chance hearing that a visiting clergyman would be

there - in those times Tilba was an isolated place, on the road to nowhere, no churches, no schools, no postal communication.'

*Article compiled by Harry Bate*

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Wallaga Lake Bridge Opening 1894. Photo from the Corkhill Collection, National Library of Australia

and was given by John Jauncey, Station Manager for the Curlewis family, and one of the first white persons to sleep at Tilba Tilba. The text has been edited slightly with some current spelling of place names. The speech gives some insight into the early history of white settlement in Tilba Tilba.

'The Residents of Tilba Tilba and neighbourhood, Ladies and Gentlemen.

I, being one of the pioneers of the Cobargo and Tilba country, I think some explanation from me will not be out of place at this large gathering of the residents of the neighbourhood, as to who were the first takers up, of the different stations [as they were then called]. As there seems to be some misconception, as to who were the first comers, I was one of a party - George Curlewis's - in search of a suitable place, to form a heifer station.

This was in November 1833. A year or so before that time, Major Elrington had taken up Wandellow. The late WD Tarlinton, Murrabrine -

induced to do so by James Nowlen, Manager for Capt Bunn at Cowdra near Braidwood.

We had with us two Aborigines, brothers Tom and Dick Toole, who said there was another 'budgery' place, Nurrung, way off on the coast. We came, we saw and settled, choosing the site for hut and yards, on the clear hills near where the Reid brothers homestead now is. The real Tilba Tilba, a far preferable place to Narira, it being unconnected with other runs, by natural boundaries.

The Currenna [Corunna] Lake was settled as the North boundary by George Curlewis, Frank Hunt, who had recently taken up Nurrama [Narooma, now Mrs Foster's Homestead] boundary, Wallaga Lake and the Dromedary.

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## Community Garden Fundraising

### Well on its Way

The first sausage sizzle – organised by The Triangle Community of Gardeners – was successfully held on 18 July. We would like to thank the sponsors: Robert from Benny's Butcher; Janet from Cobargo Farm; Sharon from Cobargo Bakery and especially the cook, Amiee Van Kampen, for their contributions and assistance. Thanks also the people from *The Triangle* for publishing our articles.

As you may be aware from reading reports in *The Triangle* and *Bega District News*, a small group of locals are trying to secure a space to set up a Community Garden Project for Cobargo. We may be close to securing a hectare of land within the Narira Trust

area, although still awaiting for permission to use that Crown Land.

Therefore we feel that it is pertinent and timely for community groups and residents to come and be involved and have their say, regarding organising, planning, set-up, goals, etc. The input from the community is important.

An information-gathering meeting will be held on Monday 10 August, at 7 pm, at the Cobargo CWA Hall. The next sausage sizzle is on Saturday 15 August, next to Cobargo Bakery, from 9 am to 2 pm.

See our website [thetrianglecommunityofgardeners.org.au/](http://thetrianglecommunityofgardeners.org.au/)

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### 'Wind Stories' Community Participation in the Four Winds Festival

A group of musicians and performing artists, Dan Scollay, Geoffrey Badger, David Hewitt, Lee Pemberton and John Bolton (director), have been commissioned to create a community performance as an opening to the 2010 *Four Winds Festival*. The performance, to take place on Dickinson Oval, will include members of our local community as well as musicians from the Festival program. The theme they have chosen is wind and local peoples' relationship with the wind.

Do you have a story to tell about the wind? It needn't be a long one, just a few words, a poem, a memory, or musings. You can write your thoughts down and send them or better still, meet for a cuppa and tell your story to Dan Scollay.

The group is hoping that locals will tell their stories as part of the performance. Dan stresses that, '[They] are not looking for great literary works, just something simple in your own words would be wonderful!' she said. Please contact Dan Scollay on 6493 4361 or send your writing to Four Winds 'Wind Stories', PO Box 73, Bermagui NSW 2546.

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### WIRES

First of all, WIRES would like to thank all of the Valley's wonderful vets for the time and expertise that they donate to WIRES and other native animal rescue organisations. We would not be able to help our native fauna to the extent that we do without their help. We really do

appreciate our vets for their kindness and generosity, and we are so lucky to have them to turn to. A big thank you to them all!!!

Bega Valley residents often say that they live in paradise because of our valley's natural beauty that has been protected. Incidentally, the word paradise is derived from an Old Persian word *pairidaeza* meaning enclosure, and gardens in ancient times were generally found in enclosed courtyards.

Thus, enclosure meant garden. Gardens and paradise are closely related.

In our 'paradise' we are blessed with beautiful birds. Lots of people try to encourage these lovely creatures into their gardens. It is wonderful that our native birds are appreciated and here are some hints as to how to go about attracting and caring for them.

The best way is to plant native trees, bushes or flowers in your yard. Even if you only have a small area, one tree or a couple of bushes would appeal to the birds. If you live in a flat with no yard at all, perhaps there is a small balcony where you could put some flowerpots with natives in them.

What are some of our native birds' natural foods? The natural diet of Rosellas, Cockatoos and Galahs is native grasses, a wide range of insects and their larvae, and hardened fruits like gumnuts. Lorikeets and Honeyeaters survive on nectar and pollen from eucalypt and other native flowers. They also thrive on berries, blossoms, and insects and their larvae.

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## Tilba Bites

### Benefit night success

The benefit night for Greg Negus proved to be a great success with a significant amount of money being raised. Blood Line's music soon had the Drom's dance floor trembling as many locals shook the dust out of their booties. As the night progressed there were some remarkable arabesques with a particularly fine jeté from Arthur as he avoided the dainty tootsies of his partner Lyn. His landing reverberated through the village. Arthur was plugged into a heart monitoring machine at Moruya Hospital two days later, but I'm happy to report that he has since been given the all clear and has returned to his hale and hearty self. Well done all who contributed on the night.

### Defining boundaries

Quite a few people are wrestling with the implications of the new Eurobodalla Environment Plan. The detailed maps appear to be confusing to some as a well known Bermagui identity speaking as a witness in a Narooma court case referred to Tilba as being "a northern suburb of Bermagui". Now I've nothing against the fair town of Bermagui, but this is taking somewhat of a geographic liberty. No doubt we'll soon be seeing an inner city metro to the suburbs of Beauty Point and Akolele. One can only hope the magistrate wasn't too confused.

### Baseball gets going

The Tilba Valley Baseball Club is going from strength to strength since being formed in 2008 and now has two teams, the Foxes and the Cubs. The driving force behind the club is Martin (don't mention Stoke United) Pye and his lovely wife Robyn. The teams have been drawing good crowds to the Tilba Sportsground with catering being

provided by the inimitable Mutt (sorry, Marty) and Jeff. One feature of the club is the strong female representation, with 2008 players Cheryl and Annie since being joined by Jo and Sharon. The 2008 President Kellie handed over the reins to Tagan in 2009 and her sister Golda is current Vice-President. No glass ceiling here! Tilba-based male players include Ry, Charles and demon pitcher Kurt, with others being drawn from the surrounding area. The Cubs have just become minor premiers in the South Coast Baseball Association's league and beat Moruya to advance to the Grand Final. As the Foxes play in this week's other semi-final there's a real chance of the two Tilba teams battling it out in the final. Not bad for an outfit currently acknowledged to be the smallest baseball club in Australia!

The school holidays saw numerous tourists around Tilba taking advantage of the unseasonably warm weather. When, oh when, will we get some reasonable rain? The climate continues to confuse. I normally don't start pruning until August but have had to attack a plum tree that's already in bloom. Would that I could take the secateurs to a certain Senator Fielding!

*Richard Tilzey*

### 'Hooked On Learning': Bermagui Public School

Bermagui has had a primary school since 1876 when, under pressure from some local families, a half time school was opened to cater for the 15 children in the immediate area. They shared their teacher, a Mr Michael Doyle, with Tilba Tilba, another half time school.

Mr Doyle had the unenviable task of riding the 20 miles between the schools, or braving the hazardous Wallaga Lake crossing. Things are a bit easier for the teachers of today, drowning en route to work not being an OH&S issue.

Numbers have swollen in the past decades. Now 170 children attend the school. The staff (unthinkable to the courageous Mr Doyle), include 11 full time teachers, a full time Aboriginal education officer, three administration staff, five teachers' aides and a general assistant, making the school one of the largest employers in the area.

The school is widely recognised as a leader of innovation in the delivery of quality teacher and learning, with the teachers trained in Accelerated Literacy which engages the students in rich literacy and a deep understanding of text.

A scientific approach is implemented at all levels, the three focuses being significance, quality learning environment and intellectual quality, to support the students in areas of knowledge, engagement and problem solving.

All students have access to lessons in Japanese, music and gymnastics, a nice balance. There is also a combined sports activity for the younger students.

Years Three to Six have been engaged in special homework tasks, including the challenge of taking an egg home to look after, paint and encourage it to perform tasks!?

The school parliament appears more organised than that other more notable one. Prime Minister Matilda Trendall, Deputy Jay Kildea, members of their Ministry and Year 6, organised an activity to raise money for the flying doctor service. The activity, aptly,

(continued next page)



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## Pat's Piece

Philosophy – now there's a word I love. I might have studied it, had I not been in the middle of the Great Depression. Meanwhile, on Radio National I have been listening to a reading of the late Dorothy Hewett's autobiography, where the opening pages threw me back into a sea of memories. It's strange to have lived long enough to remember boiling the copper every Monday morning then spending the whole day in that small annex at the back of the house washing clothes, when today I have this neat little machine where I press a button and, hey presto! – the washing is done.

What the hell has this got to do with philosophy, I hear you ask. Well, I believe that somewhere between these two eras we've had stolen from us two very important commodities: *time* and *contentment*. And why? Because we all seem to have this mad desire to create a better 'lifestyle', whatever that is, no longer do we indulge ourselves in "Sometimes I just sits and thinks, and sometimes I just sits". And for what? Well from where I'm sitting it's about

two people occupying a double-storey mansion with four bedrooms and three bathrooms alongside their double garage full of stuff they never use, and a debt over their heads that will probably never be paid in their lifetime, all down to the new god of consumerism who tells them they must own whatever gadget that comes along while they try to crack the imaginary glass ceiling of whatever career they have chosen.

My argument is that surely if our minds are liberated we can scrub the toilet until it gleams then stand back and admire our handiwork with the same pride that the CEO of a large corporation feels if business is doing well. Now tell me, who between the two of us has more time to read a book, listen to music, visit a friend, smell the roses and watch the birds in the garden? Of course technology has its place but surely we have to control it rather than the opposite.

At this particular moment in history this all-invasive, demanding brute has us all running so hard we're likely to fall over the cliff before we realise it's there. Don't get me wrong – I love my electric blanket, especially on a cold winter's night, but I don't have a computer, a mobile phone or a microwave oven, which means that "sometimes I just sits!"

So why don't we all take a deep breath and slow down a little while you forgive me for this self-indulgent philosophising!

Pat Thompson

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## 'Hooked On Learning': Bermagui Public School

(from previous page)

involved the design of paper planes.

A yearly highlight is NAIDOC week. This year's plans include a BBQ of bush tucker including crocodile. The bush tucker garden is expected to produce other delicacies by next year.

The active P&C organises fundraisers such as the Spring Fair. November 14th is the date for your diaries this year.

Bermagui is proud of the quality of teaching, the students and the support given to it by the local community.

This wraps up our 'Mini Series' on the primary schools in the Triangle. We think they are great, all unique in their way, but the same in their pride, support and nurturing of their pupils. Soon there will be an amalgamation of primary schools in Bega, leaving one school of up to 500 pupils! How daunting for the average five year old just starting their school life. We are so fortunate to have these smaller establishments where children can learn and grow with real individuality.

Sallie Hand

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To Jude and Sonia for taking our Cobargo girls to the Sydney Opera House for an amazing musical adventure for all involved. Thanks, Maryann Green



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