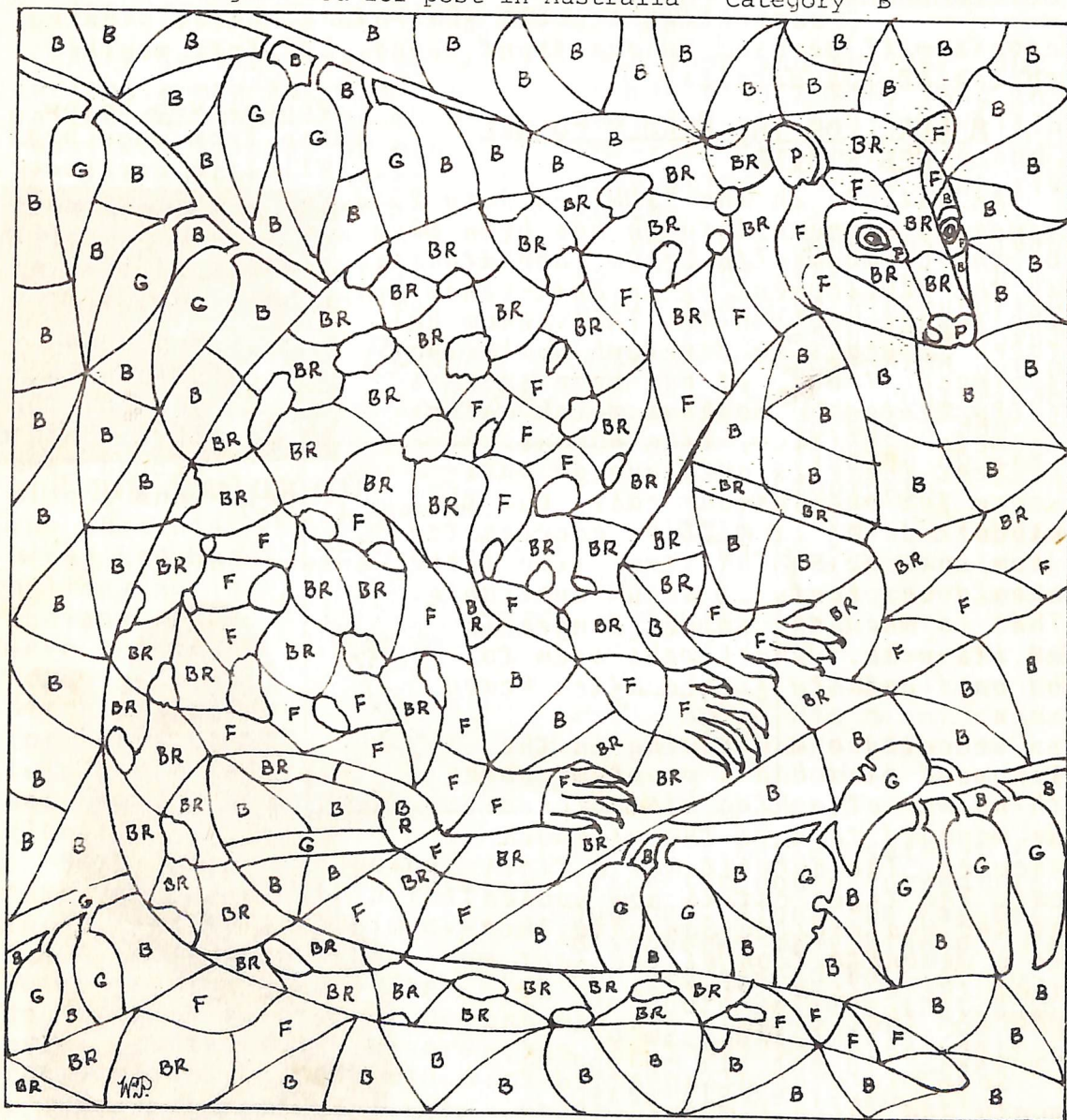


NATURE NOTES

Registered for post in Australia - Category "B"



BR Brown. B Blue. G Green. F Fawn. P Pink. Spaces with no letter shown, White.

VOL. 17 NO. 7

squeak!

Editorial groan!

ART TEACHERS There is a competition for school children to design a cover for Nature Notes. Winning covers will be used on our front cover. See last month's editorial for details.

A CURE FOR THE DEADLY FUNNEL WEB'S BITE?

An article in the "SUN" on July 23rd, reported a break through has been made by the Commonwealth Serum Laboratories in the development of an anti-venom for the funnel web's bite. This serum has taken 22 years to develop! How's that for persistence. It has been successfully tested on monkeys which are extremely sensitive, like humans. At present there is only enough anti-venom for one serious case, but the production of it will be accelerated from now on. By Christmas time there should be plenty of serum available. This is when the spider danger is at its peak. Funnel webs seem to be particularly fierce after heavy rain.

Recently a man living in the Ringwood area had a problem; something was attacking his chickens. He managed to have the offender trapped. The culprit was a tiger cat. The tiger cat is now housed at the Healesville Sanctuary. This is a demonstration of the fact that there is a solution to a problem that is good for man and equally good for the tiger cat.

Some pictures disappeared last month and while I'm not saying Wally took them, I've had a little talk with him and he's promised that he will never "borrow" drawings, or change page numbers

Funnel web below taken from page 928, "Wildlife Heritage".



Can You Guess What This Is?

Answer on page 15.



Bobbie's Love.



Adapted from 'Strange Stories Of Life'-Joann A. Lawless
("As far as can be told this story is true")

At a service station in Indiana, a man and his dog waited for their car to be repaired. Bobbie, the man's dog was suddenly chased from his owner's car by wild dogs. A fierce bull terrier attacked little Bobbie, who fled in fear.

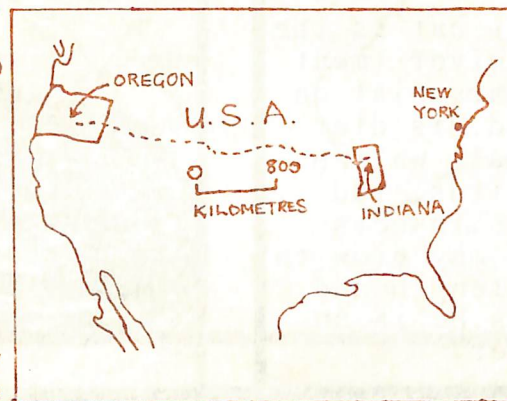
with food and shelter. But Bobbie didn't stay long in any place, he kept travelling onwards. This horrible and exhausting journey took six months.

Bobbie's owner had given up hope of ever seeing him again. Imagine his surprise when, one morning he looked out of his front window to see a dog limping up the footpath.

With bloodied paws, swollen legs, three missing teeth, and a lot of scars, Bobbie had come home. His owner was shocked. How had Bobbie found his way?

Poor Bobbie ran in circles not knowing which way to go. What Bobbie didn't know also was that his owner had been holidaying in Indiana. They were heading home to Oregon. After searching for hours Bobbie's owner sadly set off for home alone.

BOBBIE'S INCREDIBLE JOURNEY.



Bobbie too, was going home. He began a trip that would finally take him over 4,800 km. (Further than from Melbourne to Perth.) The dog trekked across, hot deserts, mountains, icy rivers, rocky plains, and farmlands. He even swam the Mississippi River. People along the way sometimes helped

Bobbie's master set out to trace the dog's incredible journey. Along the way he discovered many kind people who had helped Bobbie. No one could believe that Bobbie had made his amazing trip. But Bobbie and his owner certainly believed it.

Bobbie was home.

Tiger Cats.

TEXT: R. HALL.

DRAWINGS: W. PROHASKY.

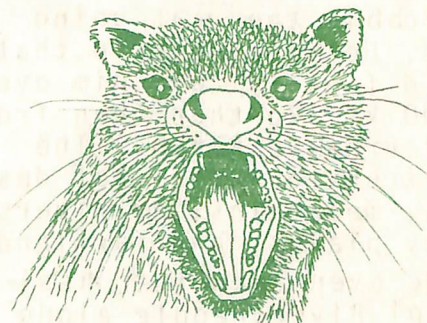
There are 4 species of native cats. The largest is the tiger cat. The quoll, the chuditch or western native cat and the northern native cat are the smaller members of the species. The **Geelong Native Cat** appears Saturday afternoons and is a ferocious fellow.



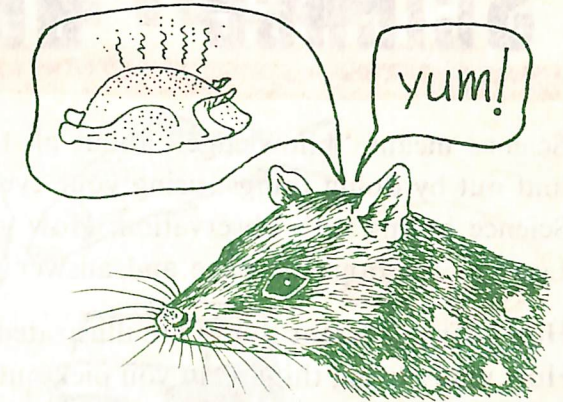
The tiger cat is the largest carnivorous marsupial on the mainland. His diet includes small wallabies, large birds, rodents, lizards, insects and eggs. He may grow to a metre in length and weigh 3½ kgs. He is an agile climber.



The tiger cat has an impressive set of teeth. His ability to open his mouth very wide enables him to kill quite large animals which he does with a lightning-like bite behind the neck. This fellow's canine teeth stick out beyond his lips even with his mouth closed.



Once he has tasted fowls he will return again and again and is often trapped or shot eventually. He is regarded as a bloodthirsty killer because it will kill all the hens within reach. One theory is that because of this unnatural caging, the killing of one causes noise and fluttering-sparking

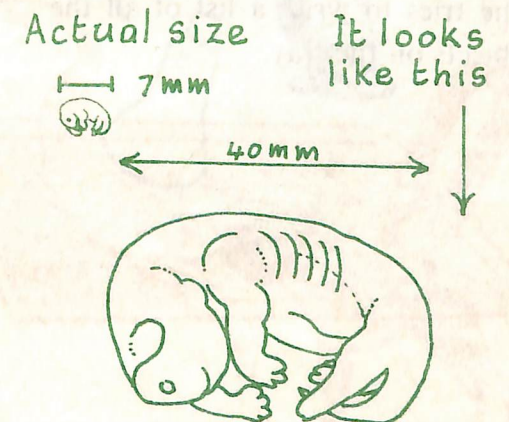


off a killing frenzy. In nature, the first noise made would make the rest fly.

The tiger cat is found in the dense forests of the east from Cairns right down to the south-east of South Australia, and in Tasmania particularly the south-west; its main stronghold.



Young are born partly developed and complete their development in the mother's shallow pouch. As many as six young may be reared by the mother at one time. When born they are 7mm. At 4 weeks they have reached 40 mm. By 7 weeks brown fur and the lighter spots appear. 12 weeks sees them clinging to mum's back.



Science Begins

Science means "knowledge" about all the things around us. You find out by doing things, using your eyes and by asking questions. Science begins with observation. How good an observer are you? Look at the opposite page and answer the following questions:

How many different things are illustrated?

How many living things can you pick out? Make a list.

How many objects are made of metal?

How many objects have names beginning with the letter M?

Make a list of the things you have seen before and say where you saw them.

A game which tests both your powers of observation and your memory is *Kim's Game*. Put about two dozen small objects on a tray and cover them with a cloth. When everyone is ready, lift the cloth for two minutes and then cover the tray again. Now everyone tries to write a list of all the objects on the tray.



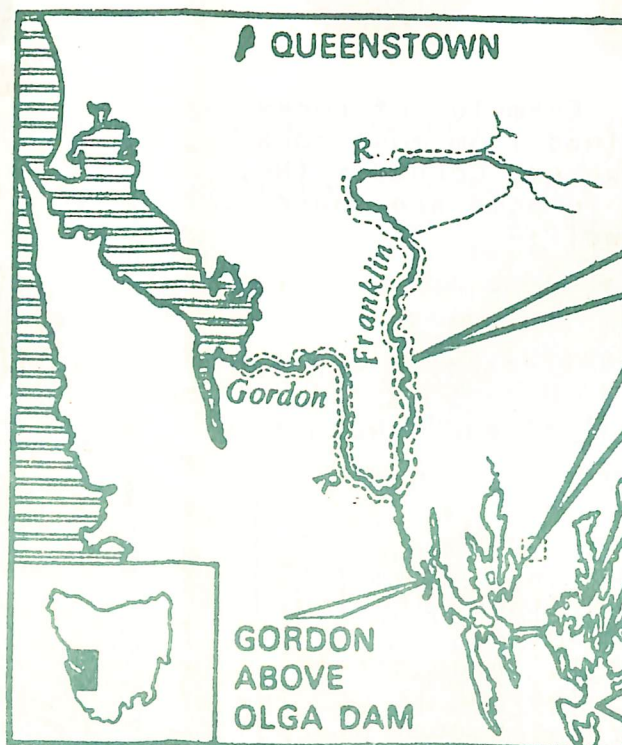
With Observation



TAKEN FROM "SCIENCE ACTIVITIES" - HANSON & BRIDGES.



In 1840 surveyor James Calder descended into the great ravine and gave the Franklin its name. The Franklin Wilderness area abounds with adventure for those able to gain access to the more secluded parts.



The Franklin!

by B.L. Archibald.



Tasmania's Franklin River over recent months has been upper-most in the minds of conservationists. At one stage the river seemed doomed.

Its flora and fauna which for centuries had been tucked away in a 'time capsule' were to be washed away when the river was flooded to make way for 'progress'...man's search for future increased energy output in the form of hydro-electric power. However it seems the river and its environs were 'saved by the bell'. The Tasmanian Government decided last month that the Franklin and Lower Gordon Rivers would be part of a new wild rivers national park. An "Age" reporter in Melbourne wrote, "Yesterday's decision is a major victory for conservation over the Tasmanian Hydro-electric Commission"... (The Age: 12/7/80, p.1). We all need to become 'conservation conscious' to preserve and protect the natural beauty of our land. On this occasion all parties in the discussions worked in the end toward saving a valued and unique part of one of Australia's last remaining wilderness areas.



Last month we mentioned Moh's Scale. Examples of rocks used in this scale can be readily obtained from most rock shops (lapidary or gemstone shops). However, Corundum (No. 9) may be difficult to acquire. Closer to home are these items- their hardness is indicated as well:-

FINGERNAIL- 2.5
COPPER COIN- 3
GLASS- 5-5.5
KNIFE BLADE- 5.5-6
FILE- 6.5-7
SILICON CARBIDE-9

When testing for hardness the scratch made should be a distinct rather than a mere surface scratch.

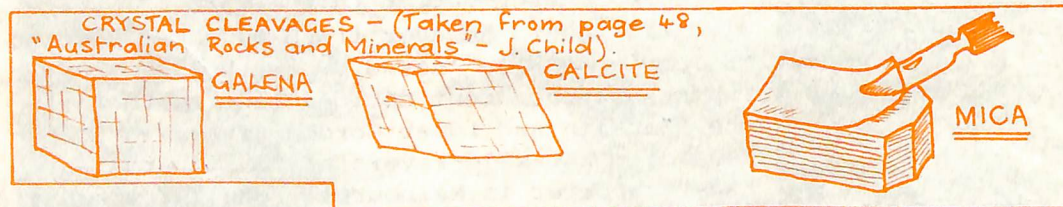
CLEAVAGE

Some minerals split along planes leaving a smooth surface. An example of this is mica.

Galena splits or cleaves in three directions, giving three cubes. Complicated cleavage is obtained from broken calcite which gives a rhombohedral piece.

Cleavage is usually described in the following terms:

Perfect Easily obtained, like calcite cleavage.
Good or Distinct Not as easily obtained as perfect cleavage.
Imperfect Fairly difficult to obtain.
Poor or Difficult Difficult to obtain.



FRACTURE

The fracture of a mineral occurs when it will not cleave along a plane or surface. The types of fracture obtainable are described below:

Conchoidal- The surface is covered by circular or concentric waves, as obtained with quartz or glass.
Subconchoidal- This curved surface is not as obvious or pronounce as conchoidal.

Details-everyday hardness, p.10; cleavage and fracture p.12, "Where to find Australian minerals"-Stone&Butt.



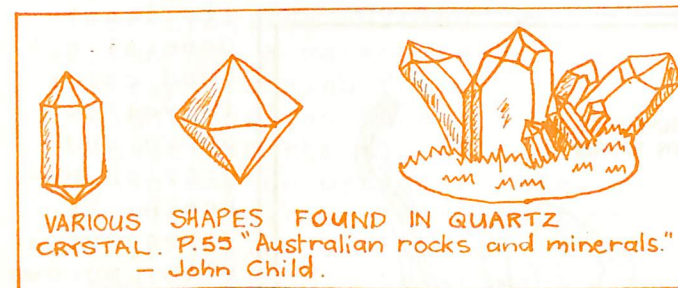
Even- The break is flat and reasonably smooth, like galena, or chert.

Uneven- The surface is rough and covered by small elevations (raised bits) or depressions (hollow bits), like barite.

Hackley- The surface is rough pointed and jagged, like silver or copper.

Earthy- A chalk-like composition that breaks into pieces as dirt or clay.

Splintery- Breaks into splinters and fibres.



These columns of basalt are an example of natural cleavage. They are six-sided.

PHOTO: Junior Science Book of Rock Collecting by P. Crosby page 39

THIS 'N'

AFTER THE RAINS.....

After sustained periods of rain it is interesting to see what creatures come to light. Among the most common would be the ordinary earthworm who seems to enjoy "swimming" along on the surface of the numerous rivulets. At night while driving during or just after heavy rain frogs are a very frequent sight as they hop across the road in the beams of the headlights.

A lesser known visitor is the shovel-headed garden worm. This fellow is more commonly found after rain in the warmer months, especially in the Sydney region.

It was first thought that the worm had been brought originally from Europe to Australia as it was first described from the hot houses of Kew Gardens in England. However later evidence proved that it was in Australia before being

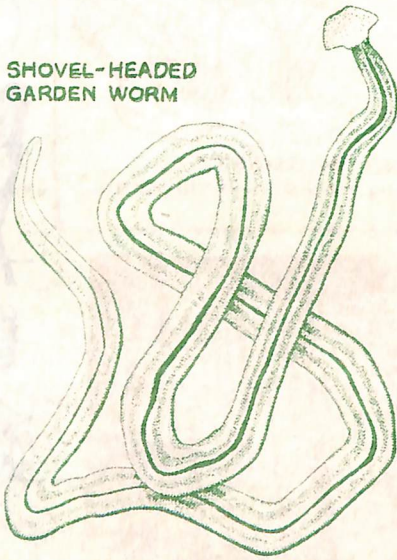
found in Kew Gardens and that it is likely to have been transported there and to other parts of the world from Australia.

The worm has a long flattened body with five dark brown stripes along its length. General ground color is yellow above and greyish beneath. It gives out a slimy mucous as it moves and is not really nice to touch. However it is carnivorous and useful as its diet includes insects and their larval and young

snails. Watch out for this unusual specimen especially if you visit Sydney in the wet-of course it is usually wet up there anyway.

Another worm which often turns up after heavy rain

SHOVEL-HEADED
GARDEN WORM



THAT... L. Delacca

is the Blue Planarium worm. He is normally found in dark damp spots but dull, humid weather also brings him out in the daytime. He is about 6 to 8 centimetres long and pointed at one end with a smooth body not divided into segments. Color is generally deep Prussian blue (navy), on the back but lighter on the crawling surface. He also has a narrow white stripe running down the middle of the back and sometimes the tip of the head may be orange colored. An interesting fact about this fellow is that he has no blood! The stomach branches through the entire animal and has the ability to receive food direct. *Geoplana caerulea*, to give him his scientific name, is a native Australian and is found over most of the continent. I have found an odd specimen under rocks after long periods of wet weather. So now is a good time to look for him or her.

In the semi-desert areas of N.S.W. AND W.A. occurs a very tiny mysterious creature called the shield shrimp from the ostracod family. As they only occurred after heavy rain, it used to be thought that they had come down with the rain. Heavy rain in these parts may only occur once every few years. Science has now discovered that the eggs of these crustaceans are so tough that they can survive the blowing about for years by the dry winds of the area until the rain finally arrives to assist with their hatching. They have even been known to be blown as far east as Sydney. It is even claimed that these eggs will not hatch unless first subjected to drought conditions. So next time you read of it raining shrimps, don't laugh-it may just be true!

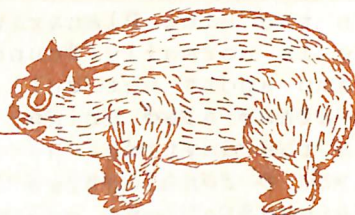
BLUE
PLANARIUM WORM



Wally Award

Ed:-
Congratulations
Alison! Your prize
is "Australian Bush-
craft" - A Periwinkle
Guide

We liked your
letter so much
we printed it
this month.



Very
Neat Work,
Alison.

The Ringtail Possum

Dear Editor,

The ringtail possum is found in Eastern Australia. It builds its nest out of bark, leaves etc, and carries the material for the nest in small bundles with its tail. It is a reddish grey colour and has a yellow stomach. It is nocturnal and is also marsupial. The female has twins once a year.

Once when I was riding my bike I saw a baby ringtail possum on the ground. When I looked up in the tree I could see its mother coming. I thought the mother only had one baby on her back but when it came nearer, the mother had two babies on her back. It is not usual to see a mother with three babies. I saw the mother let the baby settle on her back and then she ran past me with her babies on her back. I could see why the baby had fallen off it was because it was very crowded on the mothers back! Then I saw the mother go in to a bush it then disappeared.

Periwinkles make an
excellent addition to
any library - Ed.

Yours

Sincerely

Alison Ousebury

Don't forget
the cover com-
petition.



James, what is
long, thin and lives
in the lounge room?



A carpet
snake, silly



(Riddle from Gillian Howell, Ringwood
Heights School.)

CRACK THIS CODE!



a=z, b=y, c=x, etc.

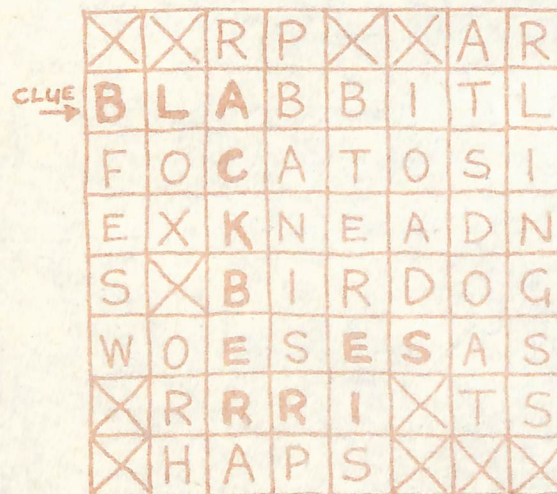
All these animals have something
in common; what is
it?

pldzir, plzoz,
izyyrg-vzirw
yzmwrzllg,

mfnyzg, Gzhnzmrm grtri, ktrnb klhhfn, xfhxfh,
Gzhnzmrm wrero, dlnyzg, pzmtzill. Now what do
they have in common? ♦ See answer on page 16 - in code.
Find out what a "mfnyzg" and a "izyyrg-vzirw yzmwr-
zllg" eat when they are hungry.

There are 11 names of
plants and animals that
have been introduced into
Australia hidden in this
JUMBLE. They have all become
pests in some areas!
(Answers hidden)

JUMBLED PESTS



Would You Believe- A Seal?

Pictures on pages 2&15
are taken from "Austra-
lasian Post", July 3, 1980



◆ All these
animals are -
nzihfkrzoh.

LETTERS.

WRITE TO - NATURE NOTES,
P.O. Box,
RINGWOOD EAST, 3135
'PH: 879-1263

THIS LETTER COMES FROM LILYDALE WEST P.S.

To Dear Wally, I brought my
Gum - Emperor to school When
I brought it home with me it
was a pinky brown color and
that night it spun its cocoon. It
was a greeny colored cocoon.
Mum said that it could be
dead. BY Susan McConachy

EDITOR:- Susan what you have noticed appears to be the
normal changing of color of the gum emperor just before it
spins its cocoon.

This disturbing letter comes from Catherine McAleer:-

"My brother was walking in the bush and found
a possum. Three weeks later my brother went to see
the possum again, the possum had died.
The tree had been taken away and the possum
was left lying there."

Wally & the
crew enjoyed
your story,
Catherine.
Thanks.