



# THE MONTHLY BULLETIN OF THE KU-RING-GAI ORCHID SOCIETY INC.

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**Next Meeting : Monday, 17<sup>th</sup> September, 2018**

**Venue :** *The Lindfield Community Centre, corner of Bradfield Rd and Moore Avenue, West Lindfield.*

The hall is open from 6.30pm. If you can help us set up tables, chairs and lighting we would appreciate it. Benching starts from about 7.10, the **Culture Class starts at 7.15pm and this month** we have **Chris Nidagal** talking to us on **how to successfully grow common types of orchids**. Chris has a large collection of a huge range of orchids and has had fantastic success growing them all. It is a great privilege to get him to pass on his knowledge. Thank you Chris.

The **main meeting commences at 8pm**. After the general meeting, the judging, and the tea break, our **guest speakers** will be **Geoff and Jean Fulcher** who will tell us about **The 2<sup>nd</sup> World Slipper Conference** held in Hilo in Hawaii earlier this year. "Slipper" in this context means Paphiopedilums, Phragmipediums, and their relatives Cypripediums and Mexipediums and others. We regularly get a few Paphs benched each meeting but wait until you see what these orchids can look like when you see the best grown by the best. I am sure you are going to be impressed and ready to learn how to grow some of these amazing orchids. Geoff and Jean are two of our most experienced and knowledgeable members so this should be really special. Don't miss it.

Our **supper volunteers** for **September** are **Kitt Reyes & Angie Lyle**. We really appreciate your help, thank you.

**Best of the Evening Species – Trichocentrum (was Oncidium) splendidum - grown by G and L Bromley**



Trichocentrum splendidum is one of the species we used to call 'mule ear' Oncidiums and when you see one of this group, you will know exactly why. Splendidum has a single 30cm long, stiff, fleshy leaf on top of a much smaller roundish pseudobulb. This cactus-like look tells you that it well adapted to a hot, dry environment. The flowers are large at about 4.5cm wide x 6 or 7cm tall and on a well grown plant you get between 15 to 30+ flowers on a 1.2 metres or more tall, branched spike. A very impressive sight.

This species comes from an area in the middle of Central America around Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. In nature it occurs as a hot growing lithophyte (rock dweller) in bright conditions on rocky hillsides at an elevation of about 850 metres. This area of Central America is about 15° north of the equator. It is basically very tropical, although the temperatures would be reduced to some extent by the moderate elevations at which it is found. Orchidwiz gives the minimum temperature in the middle of winter as 16°C and the highest temperature in Summer as 31°C, so you can see this is not an orchid to be grown in a shadehouse in Sydney. The climate in this particular growing areas has quite low rainfall but is still distinctly seasonal. The 6 wet months get about 15cm of rain per month, but there is much less (1 to 3cm per month) in the other 6 months. The dry months

equate to our May through October. Hence the cactus like leaves, and the necessity for perfect drainage.

At the meeting, Garrie told us he grows his plant hung as high as he can get it in his glasshouse. So high in fact that as the spike develops he has to keep lowering the plant a little at a time to stop the tip jamming into the glass. This is a warm grower that needs a heated glasshouse and perhaps a minimum night temperature around 10-15°C.

There are about 23 species in the 'mule ear' group and their geographic range is from about Mexico down to the top parts of South America, even as far south as Brazil for some. Some species are quite small plants with mule ears only 10cm tall but others are giants with massive, heavy leaves up to 80cm tall. I don't think even mules have ears that big. If you wish to know more, there is a more detailed article on the group in our April 2014 bulletin.

Congratulations Garrie and Lesley. A beautiful orchid wonderfully grown as usual.

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**Society News** (if anyone has a news item, please phone Jim on 9476 3383, or email at [jimbrydie@bigpond.com](mailto:jimbrydie@bigpond.com) )

**1. St Ives Fair** – Wow, didn't we get plenty of visitors this year. There were still new faces streaming in through the ticket stalls Sunday afternoon. I just wish we could do something about those cursed August winds that dogged us again. Our volunteers had to park that big van across the door as a windbreak again, and even worse, the coffee stall couldn't keep its burners alight and had to close shop. The horror of it all – no cappuccinos.

The displays by all the societies and the tabletop exhibitors were just outstanding, and many, many visitors confirmed this opinion. The competitive placings among the displays hardly matters, but in case you wanted to know, North Shore was first, Kuringai second, Eastwood third. But every display was unique in its approach and the amazing orchids they featured. You could stand in front of any one of them for ages and keep seeing new things you hadn't noticed. Fantastic. Congratulations to our team led by Cynthia Brydie and Margaret Barrett. It was a beautiful display and the team worked really harmoniously. A great effort by all of you, and also a special thanks to all those who provided plants AND to everyone who volunteered for duty to actually run the show. You are all much appreciated.

**2. Hornsby Westfield Orchid Show** – With St Ives over, our next event is our combined show with the Berowra Orchid Society, which is set for Thur. 27<sup>th</sup> September through to 12 noon on Sunday 30<sup>th</sup>. Set up is the day before on Wed. 26<sup>th</sup> and those exhibiting must have their plants in position by 3pm Wed. You are requested to bench between 12.30pm and 3pm at the show area outside David Jones on level 3. Just after that, the set up team will begin to build a display with all your lovely orchids. If you can't get your orchids there, but wish to enter an orchid, please contact one of our committee (numbers on the front page of this bulletin), but please allow enough time to make arrangements.

**Now don't rest on your laurels.** We need your plants and your physical help all over again for this one. There is a show schedule and a nomination form being sent with this bulletin. Those entering plants, do need to complete a "nomination form" but don't be put off. It is just a formality to help us manage what we have and what should be judged in which class. If possible, email your form by 5pm Tues (25<sup>th</sup>), to [margaret.barrett@bigpond.com](mailto:margaret.barrett@bigpond.com)

During the show there will be a members' sales table operating opposite the display. There is a 15% commission on all sales (distributed equally between the two clubs), but this is a great opportunity for you to move on some of those spare divisions, and to make way for a few new orchids. Make sure your sales orchids are clean, disease free, and well established. We want your plants, but we reserve the right to reject any plants that are not up to the required standard. You don't need to provide a written list of sales plants, **just put a removable yellow price tag in/on each orchid, clearly marked with a sales price AND your name or initials.**

**And finally, we need your help to run the show.** Rosters will again be circulated at the Sept meeting (which is just a few days before the show). Roster shifts have been defined in 3 hour periods but please don't feel that means we only want you for 3 hours. If you can possibly offer to help us for more than one shift we will love you to come for as long as you can offer. We beg you to be generous with your time. If you can't be at the meeting, but can volunteer, contact Kevin on 9484 7072.

**3. Our Society's Annual General Meeting (AGM)** – The monthly meeting in October is also the time we hold our AGM and this is your official notice (as required). The minutes of last year's AGM are attached, as is a form for nomination to join the committee. If you are interested, please contact Kevin Crocker on 9484 7072.

### **Best of the Evening Novice – Cymbidium unknown - grown by Lina Huang**



I really like these dark red mini to intermediate types. With an "unknown" one can never be sure what they are, but this one reminds me a lot of the old Cym Beacon Fire from about 1966 when these dark reds were just being developed. For the next ten years or so the handful of dark, dark reds that existed were crossed with just about every red/pink Cymbidium any breeder could think of as they tried to enhance the shape and intensify the colour. And, although many duds were created, they did eventually lock in the genes and created some lovely orchids. Breeders are very persistent.

Lina's orchid is not Beacon Fire but is very likely the result of one of those experiments. Most of this type were bred from Cym floribundum, a mini Cymbidium species that used to be called Cym pumilum. This species comes from mountainous areas from Myanmar to Taiwan and often occurs at relatively high elevations, making it a cold grower. It has a shortish, arching to pendulous spike to 30cm long with up to 30 densely packed 3cm flowers. Some



can have a more directly pendulous spike than others. Colours can range from whitish green right through to dark red and floribundum is the core species behind almost all of the early pendulous, miniature Cymbidiums of all colours. Its red forms are the ones used to accentuate the dark reds in orchids like Lina's.

In more modern times, Cym devonianum from India has also been used to create dark pendulous miniatures, but its influence is usually quite easily detected. It has a sharply pendent spike, and its flowers have a particularly solid dark lip whose colour and colour pattern is reliably passed on in breeding. It is very distinctive as you can see from the

pictures below. The species *C. devonianum* is at the left. At the right is *Miss Muffet*, a first generation hybrid of devonianium that clearly shows the influence of the species lip.



Congratulations Lina. You are getting pretty good at this orchid growing caper, and it is wonderful to see all the lovely orchids you bring in. In years to come you will be benching champions all over the place. The shape of this one isn't quite champion class, but it is a lovely open flower with great colour. If I was a Cymbidium grower I am sure I could find a place on my bench for it.

### Deep Philosophical Considerations

I wonder if my dog only brings back the ball because he thinks I like throwing it?

CO2? - Maybe it is the oxygen in the air that is slowly killing us and it just takes 75-100 years to fully do it?

Did you know that if you replace "W" with "T" in "What, Where and When", you get the answer to each of them?

**Forward Dates** (for details of other shows in Sydney, see the "shows" tab at <https://www.orchidsocietynsw.com.au/>)

Sat 22, Sun 23 Sept – Kariong Plant Lovers Fair. A great day out, all sorts of plants available. google fair website.

Thur 27- Sun 30 Sept - the combined Berowra and Kuringai Orchid society's show at Hornsby Westfield.

Fri 5 – Sun 7 Oct - Southern Orchid Spectacular (multiple society displays, many interstate vendors, Caringbah High School, 85 Willarong Rd, Caringbah)

Sat 13 Oct – Species Orchid Society Show and public auction day. Catalogs available in Sept, auction starts 10am, West Pennant Hills Community Church, 43 Eaton Rd, West Pennant Hills

### My Wife is Missing

A man goes to the police station and reports that his wife is missing. He tells the policeman at the counter that she went shopping yesterday and has not come home.

The policeman asks: "Height?" - Husband says: "I'm not sure. A little over five-feet tall?"

"Weight?" - Husband: "Don't know. Not slim, not really fat."

"Colour of eyes?" - Husband: "Sort of brown I think. I never really noticed."

"Colour of hair?" - Husband: "Changes a couple times a year. I think it is sort of dark brown now."

"What was she wearing?" - Husband: "I think it was a pants suit but it could have been a skirt or shorts."

"What kind of car did she go in?" - Husband: "She drove off in my truck."

"What kind of truck was it?" - Husband: "A 2016 pearl white Ram Limited 4X4 with 6.4litre Hemi V8 engine ordered with the Ram Box bar and fridge option, led lighting, back up and front cameras, Moose hide leather, heated and cooled seats, climate controlled air conditioning. It has a custom matching white cover for the bed, Weather Tech floor mats. Trailing package with gold hitch, sunroof, DVD with full GPS navigation, satellite radio, Cobra 75 WX ST 40-channel CB radio, six cup holders, 3 USB ports, and 4 power outlets. I also added special alloy wheels and off-road Toyo tyres, and it has custom retracting running boards and under-glow wheel well lighting."

At this point the husband started choking up, getting over emotional. Tears ran down his cheeks. The policeman says: "Take it easy sir, we'll find your truck for you!"



**Mistaken identity** - The woman who was tailgating the Mercedes convertible in front of her was absolutely furious. She continually honked her horn and when she missed her chance to get through the traffic lights because of his slow driving she screamed out the window at him in frustration. As she was still in mid-rant with her finger in the air, she heard a tap on her car and looked up into the face of a very serious police officer. The officer ordered her to exit her car with her hands up. He took her to the police station where she was searched, fingerprinted, photographed and placed in a holding cell. After a couple of hours, a policeman approached the cell and opened the door. She was escorted back to the booking desk where the arresting officer was waiting with her personal effects.

He said, "I'm very sorry for this mistake ma'am; but you see, when I pulled up behind your car you were blowing your horn, giving the guy in front of you the finger, and cursing at him using very bad language. I noticed your car's bumper stickers - "What Would Jesus Do", "Follow Me to Sunday-School", and the chrome-plated Christian fish emblem on the trunk, and the "Choose Life" licence plate holder, and, I naturally assumed you had stolen the car!"

**Best of the Evening Hybrid – Cymbidium Vanity Fair ‘Hollywood’ - grown by Geoff Le Marne**

Boy, how does this guy do it. I am by no means a “Cymbidium grower”, but even I can recognise a classy Cymbidium grown to perfection.

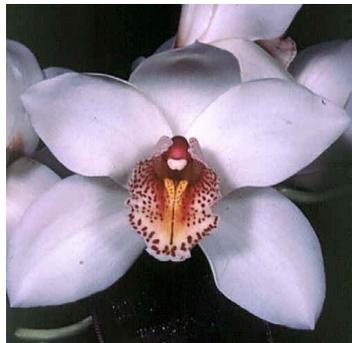
Cym. Vanity Fair was registered in 2004 from the cross of Cym. Poetic Winter x Joan’s Carisma (pictures below). Both the parents are similar, being big whites with purple/red speckled lips. what is surprisingly though, is that neither parent shares a single common forebear in the previous 3 generations. Despite both parents being of similar colour, markings, and shape, each has been developed from quite different breeding lines.

Of course, if you go back further and further, nearly every Cymbidium hybrid has common forebears. Early hybrids like eburneo-lowianum (1889), Wiganianum (eburneum x traceyanum -1902), Alexanderi (eburneo-lowianum x insigne - 1911), Gottianum (eburneum x insigne - 1911), Doris (insigne x traceyanum 1912), and Dryad (insigne x sanderae 1914) are the underpinning of nearly all classic shape Cymbidium breeding, but as these are not far removed from the species, you certainly wouldn’t recognise their influence in stunners like Vanity Fair today.

Perhaps a more recognisable forebear would be the old Stanley Fouraker (1959 ) (picture below) which does appear on both sides of Vanity Fair, although more prominently in Poetic Winter. You can clearly see the shape and colour from Stanley continued with improvement in Vanity Fair.



The key species in the make up of Vanity Fair are C. insigne (38%), lowianum (19%), and eburneum (17%), but there are also another 5 contributors and Vanity Fair has come an awful long way since any of these gene providers.



Stanley Fouraker



Joan’s Charisma ‘Vanity’



Poetic Winter ‘Caroline’

The species are so far back, I don’t see much value in evaluating their characteristics in Vanity Fair.

I haven’t discussed Geoff’s Cymbidiums with him for a while but the last time I did he explained how he had set up a drip feed system into every one of his Cymbid pots, and that he applied regular water, and at the flick of a switch, also fertiliser, through that same delivery system. All set up automatically. Wow. They virtually do it all themselves. Hey, does that mean Geoff isn’t the guru grower after all? Maybe we should ask him to give back all those champion sashes etc? On the other hand, maybe not. I don’t think I could even get the watering schedule right let alone the light, the fertiliser, and everything else. Perhaps he is a guru after all.

Congratulations Geoff, just superb, as were all those amazing Cymbids you put in Kuringai’s display at St Ives.

**Celebrations of Life**

As a bagpiper, I play many gigs. Recently I was asked by a funeral director to play at a graveside service for a homeless man. He had no family or friends, so the service was to be at a pauper’s cemetery in the Nova Scotia back country. As I was not familiar with the area, I got lost and, being a typical man, didn’t stop for directions. I finally arrived an hour late and saw the funeral guy had evidently gone and the hearse was nowhere in sight. There were only the diggers and crew left and they were eating lunch. I felt badly and apologised to the men for being late.

I went to the side of the grave and looked down and the vault lid was already in place. I didn’t know what else to do, so I started to play. The workers put down their lunches and began to gather around. I played out my heart and soul for this man with no family and friends. I played like I’ve never played before for this homeless man. And as I played "Amazing Grace", the workers began to weep. They wept, I wept, we all wept together.

When I finished, I packed up my bagpipes and started for my car. Though my head was hung low, my heart was full.

As I opened the door to my car, I heard one of the workers say, "I’ve never seen anything like that before, and I’ve been putting in septic tanks for 20 years".

Apparently, I’m still lost ... it’s a man thing.



A Sad Dog??

## **Slow Release - Fast Relief?** written by "Friendii".

*Introduction by Jim Brydie : The following article is republished with the permission of the author and by courtesy of the Rockhampton Orchid Society, in whose monthly newsletter it was first published.*

*This author is a man who really knows his stuff. I have been exchanging communications with him for some time and he is the one who gave me some tips on insecticides that I have found particularly effective and still use today.*

*He discusses here some of the basic principles that apply to feeding orchids, and more specifically, usage factors you need to understand in the use of slow release fertilisers.*

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How often have we heard the following? :- **'I don't have time to fertilize my orchids' -- 'Orchids need to be fertilized "weekly, weakly" -- . 'It is best to alternate fertilizers' -- . "Use "Bloom Boosters" (high potassium, high phosphorus) on flowering sized plants and high nitrogen fertilizers on seedlings' -- . 'Slow release fertilizers are no good for orchids because they burn the roots' -- . 'My orchids grow alright without any fertilizer'**

***If we accepted each of these statements at face value we could be excused for believing that fertilizing orchids is quite complex. While there is an element of truth in each of these comments, overall there is also about as much myth as fact. For those who value simplicity, the following may assist with your fertilizing program.***

### ***The Basics***

Orchids cannot grow and flower unless they are supplied with all of the major and minor (trace) elements (TE). The major elements (ie. those required in the greatest amounts) are nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P) and potassium (K). Calcium (Ca), magnesium (Mg), sulphur (S) and iron (Fe) are required in lesser amounts. The elements that are required in trace amounts only are boron (Bo), copper (Cu), manganese (Mn), molybdenum (Mo) and zinc (Zn). Orchids grown in organic media, such as bark or sphagnum, can obtain some of their nutrients from the medium itself. However, inorganic media, such as diatomite, granite ('pink rock') or Quinkan do not supply any nutrients. All nutrients must be supplied from external sources. For dedicated souls, there is no cultural reason why these nutrients should not be supplied by regular foliar applications of a highly soluble complete fertilizer (ie. one containing all nutrients in the correct proportions). There is however a simpler way to fertilize and still obtain equivalent results. For those who are time poor, lazy or who want to use their time more efficiently, a simple and highly effective solution to your fertilizing problems is to use an appropriate slow release fertilizer.

There is a bewildering array of slow release fertilizers at most garden outlets. Which one is best for orchids? Should I use a 3,6,9 or 12 month type? The choice is simplified if we understand that '3month' means that at an ambient temperature of 21degrees Centigrade and in the presence of moisture, the granules will release a steady stream of nutrients over about 3months. However, for every 10 degree rise in ambient temperature, the active life of the granules is halved. Thus, at 31degrees, a 3month fertilizer will remain active for about 6 weeks and at 41degrees it will remain active for only 3 weeks!!! At these higher temperatures, the release of nutrients is so rapid that the roots may burn and the supply of nutrients is soon exhausted. Basically, in our region (ie Rockhampton), slow release fertilizers last for between 50-60% of their stated time. For that reason, it is recommended that 9month forms are used. They have a much greater margin of error and minimise the number of yearly applications required. An application of 8-9month in Spring will provide a steady supply of nutrients for about the next 5 months. Another application in Autumn, when watering frequency and temperatures are both decreasing, will provide nutrients for about 6-7 months. Spring and Autumn applications are required for those orchids that are in continuous growth or that flush at least twice/year. The Cattleya and Oncidium alliances, hardcane Dens and the Vandaceous group are examples of this type of orchid. For orchids that have a winter dormancy, such as softcane Dens and Catasetums, the dose should be restricted to a single application in Spring only.

Not all slow release fertilizers contain all of the required elements. Since we are trying to simplify the system, the first step is to choose a slow release fertilizer that specifies NPK +Mg+TE (\*\*TE means Trace elements). The only nutrient that is lacking is calcium (Ca). Under most circumstances, Rockhampton town water contains sufficient Ca for optimum growth and flowering of most orchids. However, there is no Ca in tank water. Symptoms of calcium deficiency (progressive blackening of the tips of new growths generally with a yellow halo preceding the blackening) can occur where tank water is used exclusively. However, even when town water is used, calcium deficiency can occur, particularly in some Cattleya alliance clones, when high amounts of NPK are used to promote rapid growth. Depending on the potting medium used, top dressing the medium with powdered dolomite (Ca + Mg) or a 50/50 mix of dolomite and gypsum (Calcium sulphate) may correct the deficiency. The addition of excess dolomite or lime can however alter the pH of the medium and thus affect the uptake of other essential elements. Hence, the surest way to avoid or correct calcium deficiency is to apply calcium nitrate as a foliar spray on a weekly basis during periods when the plants are in an active growth phase.

For flowering-sized plants of most orchid genera, optimum growth and flowering is promoted by using fertilizer that has an NPK ratio of about 10:5:15. However, N ratios up to 15 are quite satisfactory for both flowering-sized plants and for seedlings and help reduce complexity in that one fertilizer fits all. A top dressing of 8-9month

15:5:15+Mg+TE at re-potting will help the plant to establish and maintain vigorous growth. A note of caution....Addition of slow release fertilizer to organic media will accelerate the rate of breakdown of those media. There are therefore distinct advantages in using inorganic media particularly if heavy applications of fertilizer are used. Heavy applications of slow release also seem to deter cockroaches from taking up residence in orchids potted in diatomite. The definitive studies have not been done but it is my experience that the heavier the application of slow release, the fewer the cockroach problems. This observation is confined to diatomite, certainly not to bark and charcoal, which 'cockies' just adore. Perhaps someone should do some further investigating!

### **Application Rates**

These depend on your particular set of growing conditions eg watering frequency and type of medium, but for most orchids growing in 7-15mm diatomite in 100mm pots, I apply a level teaspoon of 8-9mth 15:5:15+Mg+TE at each application in Spring or Autumn. For a 200mm pot containing mainly 15-25mm diatomite I increase the dose to a heaped tablespoon. For plants growing on slabs, I put the required amount of slow release in a piece of stocking and tie it to the top of the slab so that each watering provides a steady flow of nutrients to the roots below. For those who want maximum performance from their orchids, there is no cultural reason why appropriate concentrations of foliar fertilizers should not be used in conjunction with the slow release fertilizer.

The availability of a huge range of slow release fertilizers allows the selection and use of the type best suited to your conditions. Appropriate types have effectively eliminated the need for the time-consuming task of fertilizing 'weekly, weakly'. The results speak for themselves. Next time you re-pot or plan your fertilizer schedule, maybe you should try an appropriate slow release fertilizer. You might be surprised at the results!!!

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**The Two Kinds of People** by Ella Wheeler Wilcox (\*\* please read as bi-gender)

There are two kinds of people on earth to-day; Just two kinds of people, no more, I say.  
Not the sinner and saint, for it's well understood, The good are half bad and the bad are half good.  
Not the rich and the poor, for to rate a man's wealth, You must first know the state of his conscience and health.  
Not the humble and proud, for in life's little span, Who puts on vain airs is not counted a man.  
Not the happy and sad, for the swift flying years, Bring each man his laughter and each man his tears.  
No; the two kinds of people on earth I mean, Are the people who lift and the people who lean.  
Wherever you go, you will find the earth's masses, Are always divided in just these two classes.  
And, oddly enough, you will find, too, I ween, There's only one lifter to twenty who lean.  
In which class are you? Are you easing the load, Of overtaxed lifters, who toil down the road?  
Or are you a leaner, who lets others share, Your portion of labour, and worry and care?

(?? are you able to help with the on-going management of our little club, or even some other ??)

### **What was that again?**

When you've seen one shopping centre you've seen a mall.  
Marathon runners with bad footwear suffer the agony of defeat  
Bakers only trade bread recipes on a knead to know basis  
The man who fell into an upholstery machine is now fully recovered  
Time flies like an arrow. Fruit flies like a banana.

### **The Atheist and God**

One day an atheist was walking through the woods beside a stream. As he walked along he admired the wonderful features of nature that were on display - beautiful trees, flowers, butterflies, the murmur of the water bubbling along, light clouds scudding through an azure sky. But all of a sudden, he heard a loud rustling in the bushes behind him, and as he turned he saw a 2.5 metre grizzly bear charging toward him. He ran as fast as he could away from it but when he turned back to check, he saw that the bear was even closer. His heart was pumping furiously with fear now, and he tried to run even faster. Soon however, he tripped and fell to the ground. As he rolled over to look up, he saw the bear loom above him with its right paw raised to strike. At that instant, the atheist cried out : "Oh my god".

Suddenly, time stopped and the bear froze. The forest was silent. A bright light source shone above the man and a voice came out of the sky : "You deny my existence all these years, teach others that I do not exist, and even credit Creation to a cosmic accident. Do you expect me to now help you out of this predicament? Am I now to count you as a believer"?

The atheist looked directly into the light. An honest man, he said: "It would be hypocritical of me to ask you to treat me as a Christian at this moment, after all I have done, but perhaps you could make the bear a Christian"?

There was a pause and the voice said "Very well".

The light went out and the sounds of the forest resumed. The bear above him slowly lowered its raised paw, brought both paws together in front of itself, bowed its head and spoke: "Lord, please bless this food which I am about to receive and for which I am truly thankful".