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"WATER OFF"

NEWSLETTER OF THE
RETIRED FIREFIGHTERS'
ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA
(VICTORIAN BRANCH) INC.



May 2002 Vol 6 No2
Inc/No: A16839F

"THE ARGUS"

April 4, 1920.



Barbara McCumisky continues her historical series on significant fires and incidents that occurred during the formative years of the Metropolitan Fire Brigade.

GASOMETER EXPLOSION—PORT MELBOURNE

Without warning other than a rumbling like distant thunder, one of the largest gasholders of the Metropolitan Gas Company located in Port Melbourne, burst at half past 10 o'clock on April 4. A column of flame 150 ft. in diameter leapt fully 400 ft. into the air. The holder had contained 2,000,000 cubic feet of gas. People in the neighbourhood said that the noise was like the roar of steam escaping from a thousand engines.

There was little or no wind at the time, but the flames seemed to momentarily envelop the yards, sending out heat so intense that many people living in the vicinity were scorched, but fortunately not seriously. As the flame shot upwards, the serious damage was confined to the gas holder. Had the force been outwards, there would have been loss of life and extensive damage to the buildings in the vicinity.

(Cont. page 7)

“ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING”

**Notice is hereby given of our next General Meeting to be held at the North Melbourne Football Club Social Club, Fogarty Street North Melbourne (Melway 43 B4)
1030 Hours, Wednesday May 15, 2002**

AGENDA ITEMS.

**Minutes of last General meeting.
President's Report.
Secretary/Treasurer's Report.
Guest Speaker
General Business.**

Please come along, bring your partner and have your say in the running of the Association. Join in the fellowship of your old friends and make new ones.

Lunch and beverages will be provided as usual. @ \$4 per head.
Drinks at bar prices.

**JOHN BERRY
SECRETARY/TREASURER
Ph: 03 9431 2880**

OFFICE BEARERS

**President, Don Brennan
Vice President, Ian Fowler
Sec./Treasurer, John Berry**

General Committee;
John Laverick
Bob McNeil
Ross Medwin
John Schintler
John Wallace
Auditor; Theo Teklenburg

RFA 2002 Calendar

May 15th: General Meeting
August 21st: General Meeting
November 20th: Annual General Meeting
November ?: UFU Annual Luncheon
(ST Kilda T/H)

VALE

Brian Wilson Miss Sturrock, MFB
Clive & Beryl Harris Gen. Office
Ken Clarke

We offer our condolences to the families of these members who have gone on to a higher duty.

SICK LIST

Jim Holmes
Lorna Tamme
Bill Scriviner
Jack Sexton

We wish these members a speedy recovery

Note: If you know of any member who may be ill please notify a committee member. We endeavour to keep you informed, but can only do this with your help.

Another “TOP DOG”

On reading the article under the heading “Top Dog” in the February issue, I was reminded of the time I was walking in the park when I came across a man playing chess with his dog on one of the picnic tables.

I expressed amazement and offered my opinion that this must be the smartest dog of all time. The owner was unimpressed and responded “He ain't so smart—I have played him four times and he hasn't beaten me yet.”

Phil Dunn

WANTED

More information about the Supervisory Units fitted to MFB station watchrooms. Firefighters were well known for their resourcefulness and when faced with this intrusive device they were quick to find ways around it.

If you served at one of the old stations prior to their removal from the watchrooms you must have seen some innovative methods employed to beat the unit.

If you have some information, please contact:
Fred Kerr at the Fire Museum on 9662 2907 or
John Laverick on 9337 9820

WESTERN AUSTRALIA RFA Calendar:

June 28th General Reunion Meeting, September 27th
Half-Yearly Reunion Meeting, December 8th
Christmas Luncheon.

If in WA during any of the of the above dates contact
Secretary Dick Prendergast 08 93528393, President
John Casley, 08 93494517.

All visiting retired firefighters are welcome to be our guest at any of our meetings.

GEELONG REUNION Monday May 6th, 2002

11.30 onwards

Shell Club

Bacchus Marsh Rd.

Corio

Drinks at bar prices



**Contact: Bill Icke 5244 1822
John Wallace 5278 4734**

QUEENSLAND REUNION

**25th July
Southport Yacht Club
A great day if your wintering in Queensland.**

So you want a day off?

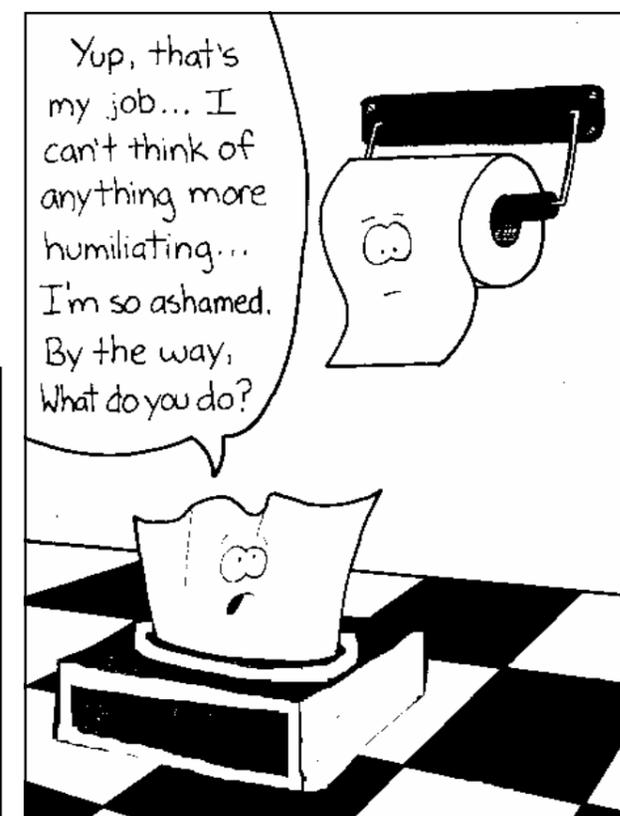
Let's take a look at what you're asking for.

There are 365 days available for work.

There are 52 weeks per year in which you already have 2 days off per week leaving 261 available for work. Since you spend 16 hours each day away from work you have used up 170 days, leaving only 91 days available. You spend 30 minutes each day on coffee breaks and that accounts for 23 days each year leaving only 68 days available.

With a 1 hour lunch period each day you have used up another 48 days leaving only 22 days Available for work. You normally spend 2 days per year on sick leave. This leaves you only 20 days available for work.

We offer 5 public holidays per year so your available working time is down to 15 days. We generously give you 14 days vacation per year which leaves you only 1 day available for work and I'll be damned if you are going to take that day off!!!



The Meal:

Our RFA members enjoyed another beautiful day at the MFESB Training College on Sunday April 14.

Over 100 were catered for with a spit roast and vegetables followed by a choice of sweets. With Our President Don and his good lady Nancy in control, there were no complaints about the quality or quantity of food.

Reunion Day Luncheon



The Talking:

As depicted in the photograph above, there was plenty of catching up to do with old friends and a number of new friends made on the day.

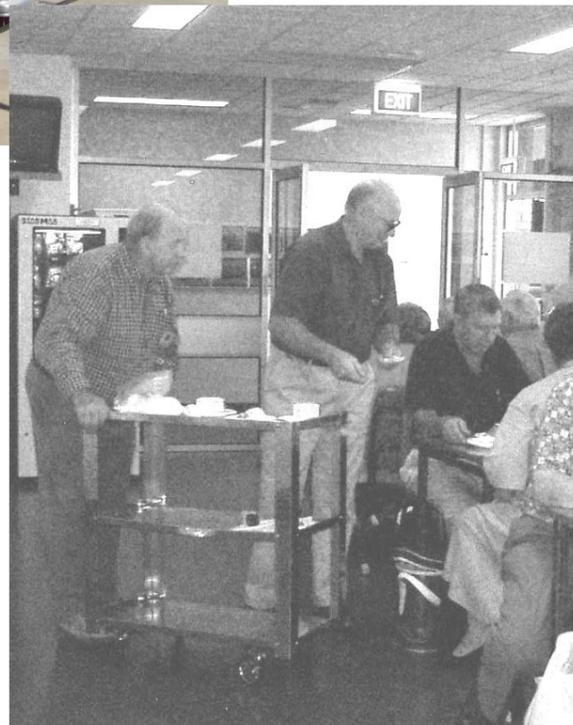
John Brown stirs wife Jean's coffee, while she explains to Pam and Ken Clinkaberry the methods she uses to teach him these simple chores.

The Thanks:

A special thanks to President Don Brennan, wife Nancy and daughter Angela. The Brennans worked hard to ensure the day went smoothly by arriving at the College at 8am to help the caterer set up, then arranged the tables and seating and then spent the rest of the day issuing name tags, selling raffle tickets, waiting on tables and cleaning up. **Pictured right:** Don and committeeman John Schintler serve sweets to those who were still hungry. Thanks also to the other members who assisted on the day.

Thanks to the MFESB for opening the college for us.

The "B" shift crews who displayed the latest equipment (Pictured above). Fred Kerr and the Fire Services Museum crew as always, never let us down, with the Magirus ladders and the historic photo display pictured above



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The annual spit roast was held at the Training College on Sunday 14th April. In excess of 100 members attended and enjoyed a great day. I would like to pass on my thanks to Fred Kerr and members of the Museum with their vehicles and the men from the MFB who attended with an array of new appliances. We held a raffle and Jim Flemming and Peter Coulter were the winners.

As usual some members turned up on the day without letting us know, this makes it very hard for making arrangements with the caterer.

Reminder, to all who may be in Queensland in late July, Don't forget the reunion at Southport Yacht Club on Thursday 25th July for lunch.

Don Brennan



SECRETARY/TREASURER'S REPORT

In this newsletter you will have seen an article and pictures by one of our members (Don Cameron) on his visit to the site of the September 11th, 2001 catastrophe in New York. Well Don has offered to attend our May 15th meeting, to give a talk, show slides and answer any questions you may have regarding his time at the site. I have already had the chance to discuss the trip with Don and I must say from my own personal knowledge this is a must. The knowledge gained by Don, because of his close friendship with his retired Battalion Chief mate from Brooklyn who arranged the visit, is far better than any news or official report you will hear as he got his facts at the coalface from emergency service personnel who treated him as one of their own.

So put off the shopping, the bowls practice or the visit to the grandchildren or any other reason not to attend. **This is a must attend.**

ANZAC DAY

Our returned military personnel would be, I believe, very pleased with the attendance at the various Anzac Day remembrance services throughout the Commonwealth. There is no doubt we all owe them a great deal of gratitude for the sacrifice they made and we must never forget those who did not return.

I must say I am heartened by the younger generation's thirst for knowledge regarding the exploits of our previous generations endeavours to maintain this countries freedom. In fact the Government is now talking about it becoming a compulsory subject at school (about time). When I went to School (I know that was back in the stone age) we never discussed much about Australia, apart from Captain Cook and various explorers. History was all about Britain and its explorers and also the American Civil War. It was not until much later in life that I started to learn more about the country where I was born and grew up in! I found my best source of information were the older generations and I found it very hard to understand why the majority of anglo saxon families tend to disregard the wealth of knowledge the elders of a family have.

European and many other cultures use them as teachers and leaders. I know it is slowly changing amongst the Anglo Saxons, it is however still the case in many areas of business and commerce in this state.

A simple example of this is in my past career when they had their hundred-year celebration. It was promoted as a celebration of the future and did not involve the past. I suppose "That" is the reason why most of the senior personnel do not attend our reunion day's etc. even when they are warmly invited. **This is Unfortunate.** Don Cameron found it to be the complete opposite in America and many other countries he has visited; there he found the present members of a service maintain a close association with the retired members of their service.

REUNION DAY.

On behalf of our members and their partners we would like to thank all of the staff of "D" platoon, Fire Museum personnel and the Training College in particular Peter Gibson, who helped make our reunion day on the 14th of April the success it was. (See page 14)

CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

The Chief Fire Officer Alan Richards, who retired on the 18th March, attended the last meeting of the RFA with the Director of Corporate Affairs Keith Adamson. Alan gave a very interesting talk on what the future holds for him after he retires from the MFB. His association with the World Police and Fire Games organising committee and as the Brigade's representative on the Governments new Emergency Communication advisory group his Lawn Bowl's Club is still not going have him at practice too often.

The members present, on behalf of the RFA, wished Alan and his wife Cheryl every success in this next exciting stage of their life, if they are ever able to attend any of our days they are more than welcome.

Communication

Keith Adamson spoke on the changes to his staff and what improvements are going to occur to the communication within the brigade etc. During his presentation I was having a chuckle to myself about

times past regarding the information transfer we had when I first joined the job. It is a wonder we ever survived, there is no doubt the old General Order Book, Occurrence book and the special reference books (exercise books) were a godsend. Many of the book keeping systems devolved by our forebears was fantastic and I have no doubt if the brigade lost all electronic wizardry it could still function! Using the old system.

CFA Chief's Reply

Following a decision of the members at the last meeting to formally invite the new Chief of the CFA and his wife to our reunion day. Russell's Secretary rang to say whilst he was delighted to have been invited he was unable to attend due to pressing work commitments. Being a new Chief and the commitment that goes with the job the RFA fully understand. We hope in the future the many retired members from the Authority we have, may be able to entice him or one of his representatives to attend. His secretary did identify the RFA is not well known amongst the current executive of the CFA. That is the RFA's problem to correct!

World Firefighters Games Committee Report

The 2-Day Albury Pokies trip departing Saturday 25th May still has some vacancies if interested there may still be places by the time this newsletter reaches you. Contact Greg Murphy on 9404-3132.

There is only six months to go before they go to New Zealand if interested contact Linley Bell (Secretary) 97273179.

Water-Saving Idea

In the following picture is an idea how to save water when you are babysitting the grandchildren, however, I must advise the wife and daughter believe I have gone crazy with this concept and will not let me bath them again. What do you think!



Editor's Note:

A most commendable water saving idea. Please note that our Secretary was generous enough to lend the baby his favorite rubber ducky.

Report on General meeting 20/2/02

Item.1. President welcomed members and their partners and gave his opening remarks.

Item.2. Apologies, John Cannon, Jack Gallop, Jim Casley, Graham Edwards, Clarrie Guthrie, John Medwin, Ern Paddon, John Schintler, Frank Stubberfield, Ern Tamme, Bob Wells.

Item.3. Sick list, Jim Holmes, Bill Scrivener, Lorna Tamme, Jack Sexton.

Item.4. Minutes of previous meeting 15/8/01 were read and confirmed Moved I.Fowler, Seconded, G. Annal, Carried.

Item.5. Business arising, discussion on lapel badges.

Item.6. Correspondence: 8 letters out, 4 letters in.

Item.7. Secretary/Treasurers report Moved L Manning that this meeting of the RFA accept the current amounts in the Firefighters credit Co-operative as a true reflection of the accounts II \$4716.98, S1 \$848.61, Seconded R. Currie, Carried.

Item.8. General Business Moved R. Medwin, Seconded K. McGillivray that this meeting of the RFA formally invite the CFA Chief Officer Russell Rees and his wife to our annual Reunion day at the MFB Training College. Carried.

Item.9. Moved, J. Cotter, seconded B. Jackson that this meeting of the RFA approve that the committee investigate the possibility of gaining presentations for guest speakers that better reflect our association. Carried.

Item.10. Moved, J.Berry, seconded T. Reed, that this meeting of the RFA investigate the use of Melbourne Fire Museum appliances for funerals of members if required. Carried.

Item.11. Meeting closed 1130hours.

Guest Speakers: Alan Richards and Keith Adamson addressed the meeting for the next 60 minutes. Members present thank the Guest Speakers for their presentations and presented to each a gift for their support.

Hope to see everyone at the next meeting.

J. BERRY.

THANK YOU

Dawn Wilson wishes to thank all the retired firies who attended the funeral of her husband Brian. Dawn said Brian would have been so proud to see so many of his former work mates giving support to the family during their time of grief.

Embarrassed and extremely sheepish, the officers had to cop the blast.

Suddenly, from this diminutive figure standing to attention, a person "Fronting the Chief," in a mumbling, submissive situation, about to receive some sort of penalty for a misdemeanor, suddenly, Leon said, "Mr Paterson, it was word back from DO Cook, and the message was repeated perfectly to the Chief.

The Chief was shaking with anger and barely able to control himself. Leon had, in a few seconds completely diminished and nullified the charge against

him. What else to do but to reprimand very lightly this person who hears word backs and try and forget this very embarrassing episode.

This story was told to me many years ago by George Tanner, a man who I was very proud to call a mate.

"It's the way we have in the Fire Brigade."

F.C. Kerr

"I'LL HAVE A BEER AND A CHOCOLATE FISH, THANKS"

Though poor diet has a big effect on poor health, science is struggling to pin down exactly which ingredients in a good diet make the biggest difference to health. Alcohol, fish and chocolate have all been found to have positive effects, but fruit and vegetables seem to be emerging as the biggest heroes.

It seems increasingly likely that regular, generous servings of fruit and vegetables offer the most protection against the ravages of degenerative disease. Their magic comes not only from the vitamins minerals and fibre in them but also from phytochemicals. Thousands of these chemicals, many present in only tiny amounts, are thought to have protective effects on our health.

Source: Choice, May 2002 edition.



RACING TIPS

From My Mate's Cousin

When you're going well there is always something to pull you back to reality.

Our man had some success in his quest to embarrass the bookies and decided to lash out and shout himself a new shed.

It was to replace the "Leaning Tower of Pisa" which housed the pushbike and skateboard for more years than he cared to remember. The ancient edifice had to be demolished to make way for the new, and, this is where things started to go wrong.

Stubbing his little toe on a piece of timber he managed to tear off the toenail. So off to the "Vet" to have some minor surgery to fix it up.

Whilst recuperating, he felt well enough to go to the races. He was leaning on his walking stick in the betting ring, checking the odds, when a big overweight gentleman, who was apparently born fatherless, stepped on our man's good foot, crushing the little toe. This, according to the "Vet," was so badly damaged he could nearly lose it.

The only bright side to this sad tale is that he is saving money, "because" he says, "You can't reach your wallet when you're leaning on two walking sticks."

Once again he finds himself with time to study

the form and predicts the future chances of the following hopefuls.

Lord Essex: This neddy is so upper-crust even the strapper has to carry a storm stick and wear a pommy lid to muck out the stable. He's been racing in Queensland, (we'll forgive him for that), but hails from the coathanger state. Trained by J. Hawkes.

Spadanza: Sounds like a Latin dance routine straight from Arthur Murray's. Be assured, this thing is light on it's feet and it likes to lead. And, no baloney, it's trained by M. Moloney out of Melbourne.

The Fatz: Named after "The Fitzroy Fats," the original owner's father, who frequented the old pool parlors of inner suburban Melbourne. The lad admired his father's speed and agility around the pool table and reckons this horse can do the same around the track. Trained by Paul Richards from Melbourne.

Glitzzy Guru: A flashy and enlightened hay burner that will lead you to the promised land if you follow closely over the next season. Adelaide trained by L. M. McDonald.

May the horse be with you.

Do you remember the "Coke Heaters?" The story below tells about a coke delivery to No 35Stn. In the early sixties. Names have not been changed because the story reflects honestly but not unkindly on the personnel.

THINGS GO BETTER WITH COKE

"All hands front station." Thus was the call over the PA at 35Stn. By Station Officer George Tanner to the firemen in the mess room.

"The bloody coke is here" grumbled the men as they made their way down to the watchroom.

Now, Ted was the truck driver for W. Rogerson and Sons, who had the contract for deliveries to all of the fire stations and he always arrived at 35 Stn. About 3.30 pm. So he could have a shower on his last delivery.

"Right fellas, you know the drill, give Ted a hand to unload the coke." There was about 60 bags of coke on a tray body truck, 40 bags for the big heaters and 20 for the small. The truck was parked on an angle in the rear street so that the corner of the tray protruded through the gate in the fence into a side door approximately 2feet x 3 feet above the coke bin.

As the shift members carried the bags down the tray to the hole in the wall one of the firies, complete with flat cap pulled well down and blue coat buttoned up to the top, was inside the bin emptying the bags.

It was dirty, dusty work and being so close to the heater, very hot. Now, the blokes on shift knew of the dirty work that lay ahead and they moaned with humour to George, except one. "I refuse to unload the coke," said Leon Whittaker who was standing by at 35 Stn. From 36 Stn.

George Tanner could hardly believe his ears, and discussed the problem quite some time with Leon but the answer was quite firmly "No."

Everybody that remembers George Tanner would know he was a great fireman, a good officer and above all, one of the finest men to ever join the Metropolitan Fire Brigade.

During his career, he had never put a man on a charge, it was repulsive for him to even think about it with his very strong union background.

After 15 minutes of discussion, still no headway. Finally, George put his cap on and told Leon he was going to issue an order to him to help unload the coke and the ramifications involved if the order was refused.

After more discussion the order was issued and the reply was the same. Within days, 1st class Fireman Leon Whittaker was standing to attention in the Chief's office with turn out tunic, peaked cap, belt, axe and key.

Seated on either side of the Chief, J. Paterson Esq. J.P. were Bill Seabrook, Bill

Leonard, Jack Steele and George Tanner. As the charge was read out by the Chief the bells went on at 1 Stn. The PA announced, "Hose Carriage and Comb. Ladder to turn out for a fire on the 12th floor of Marland House 560 Bourke Street City.

The Chief brought proceedings to a halt, listened intently to the details of the call then carried on. Soon after came the word back. "Word back from DO Cook, small fire on the 12th floor Marland House, 560 Bourke Street Melbourne and under control.

The Chief leaned forward with head cocked to one side and frowned to Bill Seabrook. "Mr Seabrook, did you hear that word back?" "No, I am sorry Mr Paterson," was the reply. To Bill Leonard, the same question. "No Mr Paterson, I didn't quite catch it." "Mr Steele?" The "Doc" with a shrug said "No." "Well, what about you Mr Tanner?" This time with quite some venom in the tone.

George was the last cab on the rank, surely he had heard it, "No" said George, "I wasn't listening."

A deafening silence descended on the room. The Chief was red faced and absolutely furious. "All of you senior officers with over 100 years of service between you and you have not heard an important word back."

"Congratulations Fm. Whittaker.. You've won five bags of coke for remembering the wordback!!!!"

"Yeah....and who's going to unload them?"



HOW'S YOUR HEART?

Cardiovascular disease is our biggest killer. While some risk factors are beyond our control, it may be prevented through lifestyle changes. The Heart Foundation continually issues warnings but, how many of us heed them....what is your risk factor?

Spare a thought for the hardest working muscle in your body ... your heart. It beats between about 60 and 100 times a minute, pumping thousands of litres of blood through your veins every day. Over your lifetime, it will beat some 2.5 billion times. You can't control this involuntary muscle, but its unceasing work is vital for life to continue.

So it pays to look after it, right? Unfortunately, this is precisely what many of us fail to do. Cardiovascular disease (heart, stroke and vascular disease) is our biggest killer, responsible for 40 per cent of all deaths, according to Dr Lyn Roberts, Principal Executive Officer and Director, Cardiovascular Health Programs for the National Heart Foundation of Australia.

"Contrary to what people may think, cardiovascular disease is the largest single cause of death," she explains. "It's not just a disease of old people; people in their 30s and 40s can also have heart attacks and strokes."

What goes wrong?

The main thing that goes wrong with our cardiovascular systems is atherosclerosis - the gradual build-up of fatty deposits (plaque) on blood vessel walls, making them narrower and less elastic. When this process affects the arteries supplying the heart with oxygen, the result can be angina (temporary chest pain or discomfort cause by insufficient oxygen reaching the heart) or, if a blood clot blocks already narrowed arteries, a fully fledged heart attack.

Who's at risk?

Risk factors for heart disease can be grouped into two categories - those you can do something about, and those you can't. In the latter category are age (risks increase with advancing years); sex (men are at higher risk than women, at least up until menopause - see *Issues for Women* on page 6); and family history (if close relatives have/had cardiovascular disease, it increases your risk particularly if they developed this at less than 60 years old). "Modifiable risk factors include cigarette smoking, a high blood cholesterol, diabetes, physical inactivity, high blood pressure and being

overweight," says Dr Roberts. "In 1995 more than 10 million Australian adults (over 80 per cent of the population) had at least one modifiable risk factor for heart disease."

It's a pity because it's largely preventable. So how to avoid becoming a statistic? You can reduce your risk in the following ways.

Avoid smoking

Every minute counts

Heart attack is a term used when a coronary artery (artery on the heart's surface) is suddenly blocked by a blood clot and heart muscle supplied by that artery is starved of oxygen. The warning signs:

- Squeezing, discomfort, pressure or pain in the centre of the chest or behind the breast bone lasting more than 10-15 minutes.
- Pain may spread to the shoulders, neck, jaw and/or arms. This may be accompanied by sweating, shortness of breath, a sick feeling in the stomach or dizziness.

Regard this as an emergency. Don't waste vital seconds. Rather than attend your doctor's clinic:

- ♦Dial 000. Ask for ambulance service.
 - ♦Report a possible heart attack.
 - ♦If available, an aspirin should be taken unless it is known that the person has been advised not to take aspirin.
 - ♦The affected person should rest quietly while waiting assistance.
- Note: In particular circumstances, such as in a rural environment when an ambulance is not readily available:
- Quickly notify the nearest hospital, health clinic or the person's usual doctor for advice.
 - It may be appropriate to drive the person suffering a suspected heart attack to hospital.

Cigarette smoking is a major cause of cardiovascular disease, narrowing the arteries, restricting the flow of blood and reducing its oxygen content. Smokers have a 70 per cent greater risk of death from coronary heart disease than non smokers. The good news is that if you can quit, your excess risk of heart disease will have dropped by half within a year. Fifteen years after you quit, your risks will be about the same as if you'd never smoked. For help to stop smoking, call Quitline 131 848 or check out the Quitline website www.quitnow.info.au

Reduce high blood pressure

Blood pressure is the pressure of the blood in your arteries as it is pumped around the body and is a reflection of how hard the heart must work to pump blood through the vessels. Almost three million Australians have high blood pressure (also known as hypertension), according to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. High blood pressure increases the risk of cardiovascular disease by two to four times; having other risk factors such as being a smoker, physically inactive and/or overweight compounds the problem. Many people need drugs to control high blood pressure; however, lifestyle is extremely important in its management. High blood pressure can be reduced by undertaking regular moderate physical activity; if you are overweight, achieving and maintaining a healthy weight; limiting alcohol; and restricting salt intake (by avoiding high-salt foods such as processed meats, canned soups, commercial sauces and gravies, packet seasoning,

(Cont. over)

(Cont. from page 5)

canned anchovies, stock cubes, potato crisps, salted nuts, etc). Ensure your blood pressure is checked by your doctor on a regular basis.

Keep cholesterol down

Cholesterol is a waxy 'blood fat' produced by the body and is essential for many physical functions. However, if levels in the blood rise too high, it increases atherosclerosis. Most of the total cholesterol in the blood is made up of 'bad' (LDL) cholesterol. Only a small part is made up of 'good' (HDL) cholesterol, which helps protect against heart disease. There are no hard and fast rules about what levels of total blood cholesterol are "high". This is something you should discuss with your doctor. Generally, the lower your levels of blood fats, the better. This is especially true for people with other risk factors or with coronary heart disease. A blood cholesterol of 4.5 millimoles (mmol) per litre is better than one of 5.5 mmol/litre. Over six million Australian adults have total blood cholesterol levels higher than 5.5 mmol/L.

In most cases, high blood cholesterol is due to a diet high in saturated fats (found in fatty meats, full-fat dairy products, palm oil, coconut oil and many processed foods, including biscuits, cakes, pies and pastries).

The solution? A change in eating to include more plant-based foods as bread, cereals, rice, pasta, vegetables, fruits and legumes (dried peas, beans and lentils), and moderate amounts of lean meats, poultry, fish, reduced-fat dairy products, and spreads and oils such as canola, sunflower, soybean, olive and peanut. Limit cholesterol-rich foods such as egg yolks and offal.

Cholesterol-lowering medications are very effective in lowering coronary heart disease risk. They are an important treatment for those at the highest risk of coronary heart disease who have been unable to lower their blood fats to satisfactory levels as a result of changing their eating and lifestyle habits.

Ensure you are aware of your risk for cardiovascular disease by having regular checkups, particularly if you are in a high risk group. These allow problems to be identified early, often before long-term damage has been done.

Stay active

Regular physical activity has a host of benefits,

including healthier blood pressure and blood cholesterol levels and weight loss. Unfortunately, almost half of us (43 per cent) don't undertake a healthy level of physical activity, according to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.

People who are inactive are almost twice as likely to die from coronary heart disease than their more active peers. Aim for at least 30 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity (such as cycling or brisk walking) on most, if not all days of the week, more is better. Make sure it's something you enjoy and will stick with, for the important thing is to make it regular. And try to increase "incidental activity"; that is, take every opportunity to move, whether taking the stairs instead of the lift or walking to shops, not driving.

Watch your weight

Obesity, and being overweight, are linked with high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol and heart disease. The heavier you are, the harder your heart must work. Over seven million adult Australians are overweight or obese, according to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. The keys to achieving and maintaining a healthy weight are to enjoy healthy eating and be physically active. For weight loss to occur, it is necessary to use up more energy through physical activity and consume fewer kilojoules (calories) from food and drinks.

Issues for women

Contrary to what many people think, cardiovascular disease is not a 'man's disease', according to Dr Lyn Roberts. While it's true that women's risks tend to be lower than men's proportionate to age, possibly due to the protective effects of the female hormone oestrogen, these risks increase with age, particularly after menopause. "Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death for both men and women," says Dr Roberts. It causes over 26,000 female deaths annually. In fact, women face some special risks. Importantly, diabetes and smoking are even more potent risk factors for coronary heart disease in women than they are in men. The risk of cardiovascular disease is dramatically increased for women who smoke while on the contraceptive pill.

Source: Medibank feelbetter magazine. Heart Foundation infoline.

Don't forget your Medicare card when you get your prescription.

Your pharmacist may have already been asking to see your Medicare card when you get a prescription filled, but as of **May 1st** you can't buy subsidized medications without it.

All Australian residents are entitled to subsidized medicines. People who forget their Medicare card may have to pay the full price, but will be able to claim the amount of the subsidy at a Medicare office. For more information regarding your entitlements phone 1800 020 613

BROWN'S BITS

From the roving correspondent of the north-west of our fair city.

Who can forget that infamous fellow who evolved from the big strike in 1950—we'll call him "Lofty."

Fortunately for me I only had dealings with him once and that was enough to convince me that all I'd heard about him was true.

My run in with him occurred when he was a D.O., I was then on the one on two off system, being on "A" shift and never had dealings with Lofty who was on "B." Friday was D.O.'s inspection day and as the only D.O. in the old "G" District was on "C" shift we had outside D.O.'s on "A" & "B."

Well, Duncan McLean always copped him and he told me what a difficult person he was to deal with. Duncan wanted to go away for a few days gold mining, so I did a double shift Thursday and Friday. On the Thursday we lost a filling hose returning from a grass fire. I rang the Control Supt. Jack Steele and asked him did he want the police notified as well as a report. He said yes and By the way, Mr. Seabrook was on his way to our station. So a quick clean up

took place and by the time he arrived everything was spick and span. I asked him to write in the book what good order the station was in and he obliged.

Friday arrived and so did Lofty, after a curt "Hello" he said "get the petty cash book and tin out." He counted it and declared it wrong, I said it was correct. So he counted it again and got a different total again. So after a third count he got it right and a gruff "get rid of the rats and mice out of the tin."

He then went through the Occurrence book trying to find any errors. He went through the station finding fault with everything until I said, "It's a funny thing Mr. Lofty, Mr. Seabrook was here yesterday and wrote in the book how good the station was." The reply was a sarcastic, "a lot can happen in 24 hours," then abruptly left.

Many years after he retired I went to visit a retired Firie in Belgrave Heights, he said Lofty was now his neighbour and that we could pop over later and see him. I replied, "I met the man once and that was enough for me."

**Les Girls...**

...Or members of the RFA indulging in cross dressing?

They would've needed more than knapsacks and beaters to extinguish the grass fire if they'd stood any closer to the BBQ.

At least a fire would have thinned out the fleas in those mangy looking wigs they're wearing!

Who are these three characters? When and where was the photo taken? If you have information that may lead to their identification please let us know!

Amphibian???

Last summer down on Lake Isabella, in the high desert east of Bakersfield, a woman was having trouble with her boat.

No matter how she tried, she just couldn't get her new 22-foot Bayliner to perform. It was sluggish in every maneuver, regardless of the power applied. She tried for an hour to make her boat go, but finally gave up and putted over to a nearby Marina for help.

A topside check revealed that everything was in perfect working order. The engine ran fine, the outboard motor pivoted up and down, and the prop was the correct size and pitch.

One of the Marina workers jumped in the water to check beneath the boat. He came up almost choking on water, he was laughing so hard.

Under the boat, still strapped securely in place, was the trailer.

ASIC'S GULL AWARDS

Welcome to the Gull Awards, brought to you by the **Australian Securities & Investments Commission**. Every day people lose lots of money to scams and swindlers. By drawing attention to the gullibility and the unfortunate fate of those people who were the victims of fraud and dishonesty, we hope to make people more aware of the dangers lurking out there.

What the email didn't say is that applicants would have to enlist other people to the scam in order to

get their money back - something that's commonly known as a 'pyramid scheme'.

How does paying off \$200,000 worth of debts with just \$2,200 sound? How about too good to be true?!

This is the offer the Australian Securities and Investments Commission's (ASIC) latest Gull award winner received by email. 'We'll pay your debts and you don't have to pay us back....EVER' the email says.

This story is yet another example of how people use junk e-mail, or 'spam', to promote dodgy scams, a quick and easy way to reach thousands of potential victims.

Our Gull winner was contacted by 'Debts Processing Agency' via a Hotmail account, which promised all he had to do to repay up to \$200,000 worth of debts was send a cheque or money order to a Coffs Harbour post office box in the amount of \$2,200. Once the money was sent, all the debts would instantly disappear.

Typically, a potential member pays to join the scheme (in this case, the payment was disguised as a fee for eliminating debt). The only way to advance is to recruit others who also pay to join. In Australia, it is illegal to promote or participate in a pyramid selling operation.

After our Gull winner alerted ASIC, our Electronic Enforcement Unit immediately began a joint investigation with the NSW Fair Trading Department, which took only two weeks to complete.

The NSW Supreme Court issued orders against the company behind DPA, Klassikal International Pty Ltd of Coffs Harbour and its directors, Joseph and Afaf Helmy, to cease operating immediately.

Although this operation was shut down very quickly, pyramid schemes and other scams like it can potentially cause consumers to lose large amounts of money.

DARWIN AWARDS

Named in honor of Charles Darwin, the father of evolution. The Darwin Awards commemorate those who improve our gene pool by removing themselves from it.

Strickson's face, blinding him. Forensic reports say Strickson apparently also swallowed some

A 39-year-old Charlottesville man died Thursday in a freak accident involving his washing machine. According to police reports, Samuel Randolph Strickson was doing laundry when he tried to speed up the process. Strickson apparently tried to stuff approximately 50 pounds of laundry into his washing machine by climbing on top of the washer and attempting to force the clothing into the basin. Strickson then apparently accidentally kicked the washing machine's ON button. When the machine turned on, Strickson lost his balance and both feet went down into the machine, where they got stuck.

The machine started its cycle, and Strickson, unable to free himself, started thrashing around as the machine's agitator went into gear. Strickson's head banged against a nearby shelf in the laundry room, knocking over a bottle of bleach, which poured over

of the bleach. He then vomited, but was still unable to free himself.

Strickson's dog, then apparently came into the laundry room. At about the same time, according to police, a large box of baking soda fell from the shelf, startling the dog, who then urinated. Urine, like vinegar, is acidic, and the chemical reaction between the urine and the baking soda resulted in "a small explosion," according to police reports. The dog, however, escaped unharmed. Strickson remained stuck in the washing machine, which eventually went into its high-speed spin cycle, spinning Strickson around at about 70 miles per hour, according to forensic experts. Strickson's head then smashed against a steel beam behind the washing machine, immediately killing him. A neighbor heard the commotion and called 911, but Strickson was pronounced dead at the scene.

IT'S LOGIC!

A fourth grade teacher was giving her pupils a lesson in logic. "Here is the situation," she said. "A man is standing up in a boat in the middle of a river fishing. He loses his balance, falls in, and begins splashing and

yelling for help. His wife hears the commotion, knows he can't swim, and runs to the bank. Why do you think she ran to the bank?"

A girl raising her hand asked, "To draw out all his savings?"

(From page 1)

The holder was enclosed by a brick wall which was surrounded by Graham, Pickles, Danks and Johnson Streets. On the eastern side there was a retort in which gas was being manufactured at the time of the explosion. This gas was being let into a second and smaller holder on the other side of Graham Street. Workmen had attended to minor jobs on the larger gas holder earlier in the morning, and when they left about an hour before the occurrence everything seemed to be as it should. There was no fire near the place, and no one could get near the gasholder without climbing over the high brick wall.

The holder which burst had a capacity of 3,000,000 cubic feet of gas, and on the morning of the explosion, supplies were being replenished from West Melbourne, the inlet pipe being operated from the northern corner. Here, also was an outlet pipe, and it was at this spot that it is believed that the trouble originated. What caused the gas to ignite is a matter of conjecture. Even the Company's engineers could only say that the fire somehow came in contact with gas that was exposed to air, but as to what caused it, they would not even hazard a guess.

A call was received by the Fire Brigade shortly after half past 10 o'clock, both from a street alarm and through the telephone exchange. Nine men with two hose carriages, under Station Officer Hawkins, turned out from the South and Port Melbourne stations. Later Deputy Chief Officer J.T. Wilkins took charge.

Lines of hose were run out to check the several small fires which had been caused in the vicinity, and simultaneously the fire in the ruined gas holder was attacked. It consisted of a jet of flame leaping from the intake pipe, 3 ft. in diameter, and playing on some of the twisted plates like a huge burner on the base of a giant kettle.

In the valve house the supply of gas had been reduced as far as could be done with safety. Had the valves been entirely shut, there would have been a danger of the flame burning back further along the pipes with the absence of forward gas pressure to keep it at the mouth of the intake shaft. Much trouble would have been caused in extinguishing it, including the piercing of a main and the insertion and inflation of a large rubber bladder to serve as a barrier against further encroachment of the flame. The only thing to be done was to insert the nozzle of a hose into the mouth of the intake shaft, where the gas was burning fiercely, and pour in enough water to make a 'water seal' at the bend of the shaft some 30 ft. below. This plan was carried out, and finally combustion ceased, with a loud detonation. The valve could then be completely closed with safety.

After the mishap the huge gasholder, still hot, appeared for the most part as a shapeless mass of crumpled steel lying close to the south wall of the yard, abutting on Danks Street. Round the greater part of the circumference only a narrow rim remained, where the centre portion had been torn away cleanly at a joining in the plates. In the gaping aperture thus made, could be seen the massive wooden framework of the gasholder, the main beams 12 x 6 inches in thickness, some of them split, but for the most part still intact.

One of the most remarkable features of the occurrence was the trifling extent of damage caused to premises outside the area of the gas works.

Discussing the mishap, Deputy Chief Officer Wilkins said later in the afternoon, that it might have been due to a rent or flaw in the covering of the top 'flight' of the gasholder. Possibly the gas had been escaping, and as it was a still morning, it very likely drifted in a horizontal and partly downward direction until it reached a light or some other means to cause it to ignite. It would immediately flash back from there to the leak, and if there were a sufficiently bad leak to allow a certain percentage of air to become mixed with the gas in the vicinity of the leak, it would cause an explosion.

Again, the gas might have become ignited by the rending of the metal cover, due either to extra pressure of the gas or deterioration of the metal. The greater force of the explosion, Mr. Wilkins continued, had been spent at 200 ft. to 500 ft. above the gasometer itself. The explosion was sufficient to tear the top covering from the holder and liberate a tremendous quantity of gas, which did not form part of the explosion inside the holder. It escaped into the upper air, and formed slow combustion. That was why the flames were seen as far away as Hurstbridge (23 miles distant) and the heat was felt fully a quarter of a mile from the scene of the explosion.

The last time a gasholder in Victoria burst was on April 30, 1910. The Brighton Gas Company had built a holder of 200,000 cubic feet capacity, and before filling it with gas, was testing it with water, the jacket absorbing a massive 500,000 gallons. The manager was superintending the filling, when shortly before midnight on April 30, there was a crack and a rumble and the wall of the tank burst. So great was the strain on the holder, some of the iron stanchions snapped. The water ran away to the sea, and subsequently the damage was repaired, the retaining wall was strengthened, and the holder was still in use at the time of the Port Melbourne explosion.

Barbara McCumisky



TRAVELLING WITH SILVER

Silver gives us an update on the World Trade Centre following his recent visit. He was given the opportunity to enter "Ground Zero" and see first hand the grueling task that firefighters still face.

At the time of putting pen to paper it's Easter and having just returned from New York City it's time for some relaxation.

This was a surprise (for me) trip to look up old friends and see how New Yorkers are coping 6 months after September 11. I'm glad to say they are managing really well, they are very resilient people.

St Patrick's Day was also on the agenda, at which I managed to return to some of the old days, which was good. A couple of days wandering the streets of Manhattan, a quick trip upstate and it was time to come home.

First, aircraft security: - All luggage x-rayed, shoes off for x-ray, in the U.S. armed National Guardsmen at all gates. Even New Zealand was strict, but guess where it all stopped—right here at Melbourne, fair dinkum, I think we want something to happen here.

On arrival, (in New York) I was picked up by friends and taken to their home for a nights sleep. In the morning it was off to "Ground Zero." My host's son in-law is a FDNY Lieutenant working there cleaning up with about 50 others. Three hours on and three off for 24 hours then a day off, then back again for more 3x3 then 2 days off. The engine house adjacent to the "hole" as it's called, No 10 is boarded up at the front but the mess is still used.

George McLennan is very familiar with this station through his friend Paul Mallory. Well George, I can tell you it's rooted and will have to come down. Food and drink by the truck load are delivered by various companies for the rescue teams but a lot goes to waste.

We hopped on a Fire Dept. jeep after getting a uniform with an old red D.O's helmet, (wonder where that came from) and down the 100 metre ramp we go. They are working about 100ft below street level and man, I've never been so cold in my life. Two cranes with grappling hooks remove the girders from an area the size of a building block. The whole area affected by the collapse, the 2 towers and other buildings in the complex, covers about 16 acres.

Once the girders are moved and I'm talking about RSJ's 6ft wide, the rescue crews move in and using garbage can size buckets and shovels, sift the concrete dust and dirt for body parts. As the bins are filled they then empty them into a pile where Fire Dept.

small front end loaders take the soil up the other end where 20 Firemen are spreading it with rakes for a second search. Finally, it's removed to a laboratory for search by hand on tables.

I had only been there 20 minutes when a gun was found so they knew a cop was close by. When found, the body was pulverized to the extent the remains went into a plastic shopping bag then into a body bag, laid on a stretcher with the flag over it. All work stops and everyone working line the ramp and takes the salute as he is carried up the ramp. Pretty moving stuff.

A further three firefighters were found later that day with about 130 still missing. They know there are more bodies under the ramp and when removed they will dig there. Some bodies are mummified by the cement dust and soil compacted around them by the collapse.

There is a bathtub wall on three sides of the hole, concrete 4ft thick, as the Hudson River is about 4 blocks West and this prevents water seeping in. Some buildings still standing have earthquake sensors in them to check for movement, these are at street level next to the hole.

Nearby, St Paul's Church is covered in messages from well wishers. A church volunteer, a very religious looking lady took us on a tour of the church, it's open 24 hours

for food, drink and sleeping. Around the gallery were stretcher beds for the volunteers and rescue workers.

She said she got up around 2am to go to the bathroom and on return found a fireman in her bed and she spent the rest of the night in one of the pews. I nearly said that was common down under but thought, maybe it's not the time and place.

I found it embarrassing the hundreds of people shaking hands with the rescue workers I was with up on the streets as they thought I was one of them.

That's about it for the World Trade Centre. Enough to say, it's an experience I won't forget.

Don't be intimidated by the threat of flying, you're only here once.

Happy Travelling
Silver

PS. If you're wondering about St Paddy's Day, you had better ask me when you see me, there's not enough room for it this issue.

A further three firefighters were found later that day with about 130 still missing. They know there are more bodies under the ramp and when it's removed they will dig there. When a body is found it is laid on a stretcher with a flag over it. All work is stopped, they line the ramp and give a salute as the body is carried up.

Ground Zero!

Pictured left:

They are working about 100ft below street level and man, I've never been so cold in my life. Two cranes with grappling hooks remove the girders from an area the size of a building block. The whole area affected by the collapse, the 2 towers and other buildings in the complex, covers about 16 acres.



St Paul's Church

Right:

The fence surrounding St Paul's Church NY is covered in prayers and messages from well wishers.

Silver found it embarrassing being mistaken for one of the rescue workers he was with. There were hundreds of people wanting to shake their hands and thank them.



Left & below:

ST. PATRICK'S DAY MARCH—NEW YORK

Marching, 334 probationary firefighters, each carrying a flag representing a lost member on Sept.11.

