

**"WATER OFF"**

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



November 2002 Vol 6 No4  
Inc/No: A16839F

## PAYNES BON MARCHE BURNS

The Age: 22 . 7 . 1929



The most spectacular and destructive fire which had occurred in the city since the Town Hall outbreak in 1925, swept through the premises of Paynes Bon Marche Dept. Store on the morning of July 21, 1929. The flames spread to adjoining buildings, including a furniture warehouse owned by Patersons Ltd, three floors of which were severely damaged.

For more than four hours 77 firefighters fought the flames. There were thousands of spectators. Damage was estimated at between £ 300,000 and £ 400,000. Little more than a brick shell remained of Paynes Bon Marche. The roof had gone, and huge holes had been

*(Continued on page 7)*

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# “ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING”

**Notice is hereby given of our next Annual General Meeting to be held at the North Melbourne Football Club Social Club, Fogarty Street North Melbourne (Melway 43 B4)  
1030 Hours, Wednesday November 20, 2002**

## AGENDA ITEMS.

**Minutes of last General meeting.  
President's Report.  
Secretary/Treasurer's Report.  
Election of Office Bearers  
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  
John Schintler  
John Wallace  
**Auditor;** Theo Teklenburg

### **RFA 2002 Calendar**

**November 20th:** Annual General Meeting  
**November 23rd:** UFU Annual Luncheon  
(ST Kilda T/H)

## VALE

Charlie Blythe	Doug Ackers
Norma Mitchell	Bill Severn
Margaret Medwin	Rita Jorgenson

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

## SICK LIST

John Finkelde	Bill Scriviner
Arthur Graham	Jack Sexton
Clarrie Hart	Peter Hornsey
Allan Sanders	Bill Carter

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.

## RETIRED FIREFIGHTERS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA VICTORIAN BRANCH INCORPORATED

### NOMINATION FORM.

For election of Office Bearers of the Association and ordinary members of the committee.

We hereby nominate;

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **For the position of;** \_\_\_\_\_

**Proposer's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ **Post Code** \_\_\_\_\_

**Seconder's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ **Post Code** \_\_\_\_\_

**I hereby accept the above nomination; Signature of Nominee;** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date;** \_\_\_\_\_

Return by Friday November 15, 2002, to:  
The Acting Secretary  
Retired Firefighters Association of Australia  
Victorian Branch Incorporated.  
24 Lincoln Drive Lower Plenty 3093

## HEYFIELD HAPPENINGS

August this year and the visit to Heyfield beckoned. Freddie Kerr pointed the Magirus Ladder north on Friday 3rd at 7pm and the event was on.

All went well until approximately half way, an obnoxious noise emanated from the engine department. Investigation found a dry speedo cable and efforts to correct same resulted in the loss of windscreen wipers, horns and turn indicators.

Arriving safely all went well until the CFA siren operated. Volunteers converged on the station and after returning pointed out that since we were on the spot we could have done the job with the Magirus, (a veritable rubbish fire extinguished by a 146ft ladder) phew!!!

The return journey was interrupted with a visit to a wheelwright at Bessie Creek Road, Nar Nar Goon. This man repairs the wheels on the Com-Ladders for the MFB. Included in this establishment is a museum dedicated to the 1st World War, cannons, ambulances etc, all kinds of equipment are on display. Definitely worth a visit.

**Ted Osland**

## WHERE'S THE CHUTE?

A parachute instructor was videotaping the lessons he was giving to a group of trainees. He had attached the video camera to his helmet so that it would capture the entire day of instruction. The group of enthusiastic beginners went up in the plane, and the instructor led them through preparations for the jump.

When they reached the jump site, the students and instructor jumped from the plane, tape still running. A few minutes later, the instructor realized that he had been so focused on preparing his trainees for the jump, which needed to be perfect for the sake of the videotaped lesson, that he had forgotten to strap on his own parachute.

All but the last ten feet of his fall was recorded by the camera. The very last part of the tape was destroyed by the impact.

## RETIREES TARGETED

### With mortgage lending schemes offering sky-high returns

In a Courier Mail article, ASIC's Executive Director of Consumer Protection, Peter Kell, warns investors to be wary of mortgage lending schemes that are currently offering sky-high returns. He says that investors should be very careful of high-risk schemes. "Any offer that promises a high return, will inevitably involve higher risk," he says. "Borrowing to invest adds another dimension to that risk. It's not the sort of road most investors should be going down, especially if it's their only major investment."

**If the property scheme runs out of money, second mortgage holders may lose all or part of their investment.**

Several such schemes, including those referred to as mezzanine funding, have been brought to our attention.

The article also quotes a property lawyer, who points out that mezzanine finance should not be confused with first mortgage lending. It's a form of second mortgage and therefore it ranks behind the first mortgage which must always be paid out first. If the property scheme runs out of money, second mortgage holders may lose all or part of their investment.

Second mortgage scheme promoters are advertising the high returns possible to attract investment funds from retirees. They go for it, explains the property lawyer, because the returns are much higher, but some people do not

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## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

This will be my last Presidents Report. I announced at the last meeting that I would be standing aside at the end of this year. After a decade as President I feel it is time for new blood to take over to bring in new ideas to keep the association going. I will make myself available to assist in any way if called upon.

I would like to pass on my thanks to John Berry who took over when Peter Holton Passed away and has done a terrific job. I think we may have gone backwards if not for the time and work in which John has put in.

To John Laverick, thanks for all the time and effort you have put in with the "Water Off" magazine,

a first class effort. To Bob McNeil, Ian Fowler, John Schintler, John Wallace, Ernie Tamme and the late Ross Medwin for all your effort and support you have contributed over the years. To the wives of the committee members thanks for your help with the magazine and assistance at the spit roasts.

And finally, to you the members, for attending the meetings and spit roasts which makes it all worthwhile being involved. My Wife and I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a safe and happy New Year. Hope to see you all at future meetings and get-togethers.

Don Brennan

## SECRETARY/TREASURER'S REPORT



### Annual Report

Well we have reached that time of the year again when all positions of the committee will be declared vacant, however, prior to that we must first thank all of the following for their on-going support. Mr Peter Akers C.E.O, Mr Keith Adamson Director of Corporate Relations & staff, Training College Commander & staff, including library staff, Operational Response Teams & Inspectors. All of the aforementioned are Metropolitan Fire & Emergency Board Personnel.

I would also like to thank the North Melbourne Social Club staff, the United Firefighters Credit Co-operative Staff for their guidance, the United Firefighters Union Secretary, Mr Peter Marshall & staff & the Social Committee for their on-going support & individual assistance to the many members in areas of poor health etc. [a major problem for emergency service retirees]. And last but not least the Melbourne Fire Services Museum President & staff, I am sure that without the support of all the aforementioned our association would have great difficulty in maintaining it's existence.

This year we have a number of the outgoing committee who have identified that they will not be available for re-election, this I see as a wonderful opportunity for our group to blood a new committee with fresh ideas & direction. **Do not be afraid to have a go**, the camaraderie & interface with the many members is not only stimulating but also very rewarding.

The association this year has had one of it's more successful years if the attendance at the various functions is any guide, the increase in numbers has also

been quite significant. I am not sure if this is due to the quality of the guest speakers or the members wanting to maintain contact with a group of people where they feel more comfortable & who talk the same language. Whatever it is keep it up as your attendance drives the association.

Example of this can be seen in the fact that the membership directed the Committee to change the logo to one that is accepted worldwide & truly reflects the services they were proud to serve. They also directed the Committee to ensure that gifts presented to guest speakers include the new logo. This direction & the increase in numbers attending has of course increased the association expenditure, to keep this increase to a minimum the committee has worked strenuously to ensure that our term deposit was not affected so all of the cost came from income. The members will, at the Annual General Meeting, receive a full running cost of the Association for the 2001/2002 fiscal year for their acceptance. Financial Statement will be printed in the February 2003 newsletter.

It seems blasphemous to identify such a rewarding year in light of recent events, however the Committee believe if we allow ourselves to become closeted & act in a pessimistic way the perpetrators of evil will have succeeded. **So let's all be vigilant & protective of the way of life our forbears fought to give us & ensure evil & lawlessness never wins.**

### Report on Last Meeting August 21st

**Item 1.** President welcomed the members & their partners & gave his opening remarks.

**Item 2.** Apologies Jack Etherton, Ted Osland,  
(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)

Clarrie Hart, John Cannon, Bob Wells, Jack Gallop, Trevor Reed, Laurie Coulson, John Tullis, Colin McHugh & Lindsay Lyons.

**Item 3.** Sickness Bill Scrivenor, Jim Holmes & Alan Sanders.

**Item 4.** Minutes of previous meeting May 15th were read & confirmed. Moved R. Mawson, Seconded R. Knowles. Carried.

**Item 5.** Business arising Public Liability Insurance, the Secretary reported on quotes gained for insurance etc. F. Churchill move that this meeting of the RFA instruct the Secretary to gain the most competitive quote and purchase same Seconded P. Lang Carried.

**Item 6.** Correspondence 6 Letters out 3 Letters in.

**Item 7.** Secretary/Treasurers report Moved B. Jackson, this meeting of the RFA accept the current amounts in the Firefighters Credit Co-Operative as a true refection of the accounts II \$4,815.47, S1\$1,057.68, Seconded M. McCumisky Carried.

**Item 8.** Peter Lang address the meeting regarding the investigations being conducted by the retired State Employees Assoc. Into what was the direction they will take to ensure they have a future, eg membership, amalgamation etc, including the problems all retired groups are facing because of the raising cost of insurance etc.

**Item 9.** Brian Jackson address the meeting regarding our status with other states retired Fire Service groups. The Secretary reported to the meeting the action

already initiated by the RFA and the results of same. R. Knowles volunteered to use his network of contacts in the other states that did not respond to the our initial communication.

#### Meeting closed 1120 hours.

Guest speaker Lionel Rose was introduced to the meeting were he kept us entertained with anecdotes of his life and answered the many questions raised from the floor. Lionel joined us for lunch and allowed many photo shots.

**I WOULD LIKE TO WISH ALL OUR MEMBERS AND THEIR LOVED ONES A GREAT FESTIVE SEASON AND NEW YEAR. I LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU AT THE NEXT MEETING MY LAST AS SECRETARY.**

**John Berry**  
Secretary/Treasurer

**P.S.**

Well we have all heard our mother say went we were much younger make sure you have clean underwear on when you go out in case you are in a accident and have to go to hospital. Well one of our members (we will call him Jim) was required to be taken to a major hospital down the beach way by his wife (we will call her Dot) because he was very ill, in fact he was that crook he did not care if they took him straight to the mortuary. Well they did not, but in this case they did leave him on trolley fully clothed around 4.AM his pants and shoes were removed by persons unknown three days later he was allowed to leave minus pants and shoes. The moral to this story is make sure you have clean underwear on" as you may be required to go to hospital".

## The Meaning of Life

On the first day God created the cow. God said, You must go to the field with the farmer all day long and suffer under the sun, have calves and give milk to support the farmer. I will give you a life span of sixty years." The cow said, "That's kind of a tough life you want me to live for sixty years. Let me have twenty years and I'll give back the other forty."

And God agreed. On the second day, God created the monkey. God said, "Entertain people, do monkey tricks, make them laugh. I'll give you a twenty year life span." Monkey said, How boring, monkey tricks for twenty years?! I don't think so. Cow gave you back forty how about I give back ten?" So God agreed (sigh).

On the third day God created the dog. God said, "Sit all day by the door of your house and bark at anyone who comes in or walks past. I will give you a life span of twenty years." "Geez! That's too long to be barking! Monkey gave back ten so that's what I'll do okay?"

And God agreed again. On the fourth day God created man. God said, "Eat, sleep, play, have sex, enjoy. Do nothing, just enjoy, enjoy. I'll give you twenty years." Man said, "What?! Only twenty years? No way man. Tell you what, I'll take my twenty, plus the forty cow gave back, the ten monkey gave back and the ten dog gave back. That makes eighty, okay?"

"Okay," said God. "You've got a deal." So that is why for the first twenty years we eat, sleep, play, have sex, enjoy, and do nothing; for the next forty years we slave in the sun to support our family; for the next ten years we do monkey tricks to entertain our grandchildren; and for the last ten years we sit in front of the house and bark at everybody.

Life has now been explained.

## CAN YOU SURVIVE A HEART ATTACK WHEN ALONE?

*This article appeared in the Spring edition of "The Superannuant" the journal of the Retired State Employees Association. We have not heard of this method before but if you find yourself in this situation it would certainly be worth a try.*

Can you survive a heart attack when alone.?

What do you do if you have a heart attack while you are alone?

It's 6.15 pm and you're driving home alone after an unusually hard day. You're really tired, upset and frustrated. Suddenly you start experiencing severe pain in your chest that starts to radiate out into your arm and up into your jaw You are only about five K's from the hospital nearest your home. Unfortunately, you don't know if you'll be able to make it that far.

What can you do? You've been trained in CPR but the person who taught the course did not tell you how to perform it on yourself.

Without help, the person whose heart is not beating properly and who begins to feel faint has only about 10 seconds left before losing consciousness.

However, these victims can help themselves by coughing repeatedly and very vigorously. A deep breath should be taken before each cough, and the cough must be deep and prolonged, as when producing sputum from deep inside the chest. A breath and a cough must be repeated about every two seconds without let up until help arrives, or until the heart is felt to be beating normally again. Deep breaths get oxygen into the lungs and coughing movements squeeze the heart and keep the blood circulating. The squeezing pressure on the heart also helps it regain normal rhythm. In this way, heart attack victims can get to a hospital.

This procedure was discovered by staff of the Johnson City Medical Centre.



## RACING TIPS

From My Mate's Cousin

The local vet summoned our man to his surgery recently, which alarmed him somewhat. On arrival at the Doc's, our man was solemnly invited to come in and sit down—

"This is it", he thought, "a bloody man's a goner, I'm about to catch the Stygian Ferry for a trip down the River Styx". His life was flashing before his eyes. He even remembered the time when he was a newspaper boy and took his boss down for a quid.

He was repentant of all his passed sins when the vet snapped him back to reality by announcing that "He was closing his practice and heading north to Darwin where his talents would be more appreciated".

Our man was so dumfounded with the announcement that all he could blurt out was, "What flight will I have to catch to keep my next appointment?"

In spite of this traumatic experience, our intrepid punter has managed to make a nuisance of himself at an out of town PubTab. A modest wager on a hay-burner he'd been following for some time yielded a tidy sum—so much in fact that the manager had to make a trip to the local bank, (is there still such a bank?) to make good the wager.

This tipster is hot at the moment so catch hold of his reins and hang on for the following.

**Sandmason:**

The owner was a Gobi Desert sand dweller who made his fortune selling egg timers to tourists flocking to the region for the annual canoe races.

Trained by T. McAvoy out of Angeston in South Australia.

**Gentle Genius:**

You don't have to be a genius to see this one is smart enough to stay in front and has the potential to make the big time.

From N.S.W., trained by Gay Waterhouse.

**Rain Gauge:**

This rain gauge has never seen rain in it's life but it thinks it a race horse and is that good you should hock your broly for it's next start.

G. Hanlon is the trainer.

**Beach Symphony:**

We mentioned this one recently as being the whole Brass Band but has had only moderate success over the short distances. Wait for a start over 1800—2000 metres and it will be music to the wallet. It's still trained by S. R. Richards.



## RONKE'S ROVINGS

*Move Over Silvers Travels Ronke's Rovings are here for one magazine at least.*

On Thursday 15/8/02 John Ronke and Eddie McMullen set off from Mordialloc in Eddie's trusty 1988 Nissan Pulsar and headed for Sydney to watch the Saints play the Swans in Round 20 at the SCG. I was on annual and John is retired we weren't bothered with time constraints so we decided to go a roundabout way. 6 Days and 3200 kms later we arrived back in Mordialloc with a few stories to tell of drought wild animals on the road and JR trying to negotiate the NSW TAB.

### DAY ONE

We headed due north aiming for Griffith but were unable to find any Pubs open with accommodation so we carried on to Hillston aiming for Tattersalls Hotel. Little did we know that earlier in the week there had been a train derailment causing damage to the track so all the accommodation was taken up by railway workers. We ended up sleeping on mattresses on the floor of the landlords sons flat above the pub after refusing a very generous offer from the barmaid to use her house just out of town. Due to the problems locating accommodation no attempts were made to place a daily double on the TAB.

### DAY TWO

Headed further north to Cobarthen east to Coonabarabran staying at the Royal Hotel \$15 pp and this is where JR starts terrifying NSW TAB staff trying to get his daily double bets on. The bar staff of the Royal were very patient with JR but he couldn't get the message that the doubles in NSW were on different races than Vic and each meeting had different races as the double which totally confused the old bloke who totally confused the bar staff.

### DAY THREE

Continued east to Tamworth then south to Newcastle and Gosford where we stayed at the Hotel Gosford on the Saturday night for \$32 pp. JR still struggling to get his bets on in the pub and the Central Coast Leagues Club so 3 days into the trip how much he has saved or lost by not getting his bets on is anybody's guess but I would say a fair bit having only got 1 bet on so far and that was at Muswellbrook after using the day before's form guide. Top pub the Muswellbrook if you ever go past check out the verandah it is one of the widest in Australia.

So far he didn't know how to fill out the betting slip for his doubles but was using day old form guides.

### DAY FOUR

easy drive south into Sydney for a 1310hrs start to the game. after booking in at the Moore park View hotel across the park from the SCG we went to the ground to pick up our tickets which Young JR had organised for us, this went smoothly so we then went to the Captain Cook Hotel which is where we wanted to stay but they

were full, so we had a few beers and a half a meat pie each, (there was no food on as it was Sunday). The beer JR had before leaving the Pub about 1245hrs to go to the ground, a few minutes walk across the park, were the last he would have until the gay pub on Oxford St Darlinghurst after the game and the St Kilda after match function in the Bradman Stand.

So JR was dry for about 4 1/2hrs which would have to be a record. This weeks question is Why didn't Johnny Ronke have a beer for over 4 hours at the football? (Answer at the end.)

After we left the ground JR was dry and hungry so we headed down Oxford St Sydney's gay capital and he led me into the first pub we came across which was full of blokes, nothing unusual you say but they weren't our sort of blokes and we made a move after one bloke started getting friendly with John.

### DAY FIVE

Headed south along the coast road back to Melbourne staying overnight at the Grand Hotel Bega \$22 pp and this was the night JR totally confused the staff and management of the Bega RSL with his efforts to get an all up running double. After 2 hrs of filling out betting slips and getting them rejected getting the staff and management to fill out the slips he finally got a bet on. Yes you guessed - it lost.

### DAY SIX

We leave Bega after being run out of town by the RSL staff even though he apologised to them and headed for Victoria JR was now in familiar territory and had no trouble getting his bet on but still the same result it lost. The last we heard JR is barred from putting bets on the NSW TAB.

Seriously though, we had a good trip which assisted John in getting over the loss of his dear wife Gloria and we can recommend blokes traveling together to try country pubs as there is nothing better than on a mild night in a country town sitting on the verandah of a 2 story pub drinking a stubby and watching the world go by with good company.

Driving hazards are aplenty in outback Victoria and NSW with emus Kangaroos and Cattle all on the road side looking for food.

I now hand the travel page back to Silver. Our trip might not have been as glamorous as Hawaii or New York which I visited with Silver but Hillston with the Rail-gangs in town takes some beating.

### ANSWER TO THE QUESTION

Why JR didn't have a beer was they only served it in plastic glasses so he refused. He had the last laugh though the Swans got up by 7 points.

**Happy Travelling**

## DO YOU REMEMBER?

On Thursday, 17 July, 1969 at approximately 0653 hours the Kerang Fire Brigade turned out to a fire involving HAWTHORNE'S DEPARTMENT STORE located at the corner of Wellington Street and Victoria Street, KERANG.

The fire commenced on the first floor in the general office area in the vicinity of the Strong Room, it subsequently spread to the saw tooth roof above thus creating three separate areas of fire above the initial fire.

The entry to the first floor was by internal stairs, which the Fire Brigade successfully blocked off using water curtains to prevent the spread of fire down stairs.

Entry through the saw tooth roof construction proved to be difficult and the use of S.E.C. hydraulic platforms were engaged to assist the firefight.

The estimated fire damage to the building and stock, together with loss of trading was in the vicinity of \$1m.

Subsequent investigations found that there had been forced entry into the premises and the strong room had been cut open, cutting gear was found.

Police intelligence were of the opinion that a family of known TANK MEN, who resided in the northern part of the state were suspected of supplementing their rural income with the occasional safe job.



**Above:** The fire commenced in the vicinity of the Strong Room in the General Office. Note the cutting gear in the left of the photograph.

There were never any charges laid and it was not known if the fire had been caused by accident during the cutting of the strong room or deliberately lit to destroy evidence

**Peter Lang**

**Below:** Damage to the upper level is obvious from this photograph. Hydraulic platforms were engaged from the S.E.C. to assist the firefight.



## Get rich quick investment seminars

### Protect your money from 'get rich quick' pushers

You have probably seen or heard advertisements for investment seminars that claim:

'You can become a millionaire in three years' 'Traditional investments are too slow and lack excitement' 'You can turn your financial dreams into reality' 'Amazing, fabulous, unbelievable strategies for building massive wealth' In ASIC's experience most of these seminars push dangerous strategies, such as borrowing huge sums of money to buy property, unusual investments or shares. Some are simply scams.

### Keep your eyes open to the risks

ASIC sees the shattering impact from rip offs and investment disasters. People tell us about the shame and guilt at losing money they had spent years building up for their dreams or their retirement.

Many people also tell us how disappointed they became when the money they spent on 'get rich quick' investment strategies failed to live up to the promises, even if they did not lose money.

By all means try to make your savings and investments work hard and grow fast. But keep your eyes open to the risks. Many of these seminars make money from attendance fees, over-priced reports or books, and from selling property and investments from which the promoters rake off fees, commissions and other profits.

The worst 'get rich quick' schemes will simply be scams designed to take your money. Some seminars try to get you to invest in offshore schemes where you will have no protection, and will probably never see your money again.

Avoid 'get rich quick' pushers. Higher returns mean higher risks, and if it sounds too good to be true, then you'll end up the loser. The 'get rich quick' promoter will be the only winner.

### Five safety checks to protect your money

1. Take your time before investing your money.
2. Research any investment - *only get involved if you understand the offer.*
3. Make sure you're comfortable with the risks, especially if you're borrowing to invest.
4. Get information and advice only from reputable people - licensed financial advisers or genuine educational organisations such as the ASX, Securities Institute or Centrelink's Financial Information Service.
5. Visit ASIC's consumer website [fido.asic.gov.au](http://fido.asic.gov.au) for financial tips and safety checks, tips on choosing licensed advisers, and scams to avoid. You could also join Fido News to get a free monthly newsletter.

### Avoid seminars that make these claims:

'You can become a millionaire in three years' 'Traditional investments are too slow and lack excitement' 'You can turn your financial dreams into reality' 'Amazing, fabulous, unbelievable strategies for building massive wealth' Don't get sucked in by glossy brochures, over-the-top testimonies from past customers, pictures of people punching their hands in the air in triumph, or pictures of the promoter relaxing on his yacht.

### Avoid salespeople who:

Pressure you into investing and/or borrowing money

- Promise you high returns with no explanation of risk
- Promise you access to 'secret' or 'exclusive' techniques for building wealth
- Lure you with free seminars only to hit you later with high fees

## Several things that has taken me 63 years to learn

1. Never, under any circumstances, take a sleeping pill and a laxative on the same night.
2. Never lick a steak knife.
3. There is a very fine line between "hobby" and "mental illness."
4. When trouble arises and things look bad, there is always one individual who perceives a solution and is willing to take command. Very often, that individual is crazy.
5. **No matter what happens, somebody will find a way to take it too seriously.**

## BROWN'S BITS

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

### Changing of the guard

With our President Don Brennan and Sec/Treasurer, John Berry stepping down from office, it is imperative of the membership to stand up and be counted if the RFA is to survive. If it is to survive, "YOU" have to contribute.

The present committee have done a marvelous job and believe me, there is a lot of time and effort put into the printing, photo copying, folding, sorting, putting together then posting of the newsletter before it gets to you.

### Don Brennan our President

If you mention Don you have to include his wife Nancy. She's always there helping out, even at the union picnic. They are like Darby and Joan. They have made their home available with the help of volunteers to sort, fold, tape and address the newsletter so the Secretary can post out.

To hold any position for 9 years you must have done an exceptional job. I know they are going to be a hard act to follow. They will be sadly missed. If the RFA is to survive someone has to take on the President's position.

### John Berry, our Secretary/Treasurer

When John Berry announced that he was stepping

down from his position two years ago I told him no one would be game to take his place as they would be compared to him. He "pooh poohed" this. Two AGM's went by and no-one put their hand up. Feeling the RFA would fold, I told John if he showed me the ropes for twelve months I would give it a go. I feel there are a lot of better qualified people than me in the Association. John, in his seven years at the helm, has done so much to bring the Association together and make it what it is today—one of the most progressive of its type in Australia and taking us from the red to the black. To Don, John and their wives I'm sure the members will endorse the great job you have done over the many years.

### John Laverick, our Editor

The amount of time and effort John puts into producing the magazine is mind boggling. Not only has he have to chase people for their articles, he has to edit every word, eradicate mistakes and any contentious issues that may offend. It takes nearly two months to sort and arrange articles and photos and John is prepared to donate all that time for our benefit. I shudder to think what would happen if John gives it away.

## LIONEL ROSE GUEST SPEAKER AT RFA MEETING

Members were entertained at the August meeting by ex-world champion boxer Lionel Rose.

Lionel told of his sometimes amusing career and what goes on in the world of boxing and its promotion.

Members were then given time to question Lionel on some of the behind the scenes happenings during his world title bouts.

He also told of some of the characters and celebrities that sought him out during the height of his career.



*Above: President Don Brennan, Lionel and Frank Stubberfield*



*Left: John Howe, Lionel, John Schintler and Roy Treverton. Lionel took time to talk with and be photographed with the members.*



## 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.*

In South Africa, car-jacking has become popular in recent years. The South African law has lenient provisions for self defence, and allows "lethal action" if someone's personal property is in danger. Citizens are inventive in creating martial security systems for their cars. Poison gas, acid showers, flamethrowers and automatic gunfire are not unknown.

One such security system relied upon an airbag installed in the car roof. If a driver sat down without disabling the mechanism, the airbag would inflate and hit the victim atop his head with a force strong enough to render him unconscious.

And that is exactly what happened to Pieter Niewoudt, who, armed with a pistol, attempted to steal this vehicle. When the airbag exploded, he thought that someone was shooting at him, and he instinctively fired the pistol twice. Unfortunately for him, his gun was still in his pocket at the time.

One bullet hit his knee, and the other lodged in the base of his penis. The consequences of his injuries may include sterility, making him a contender for a Darwin Award.

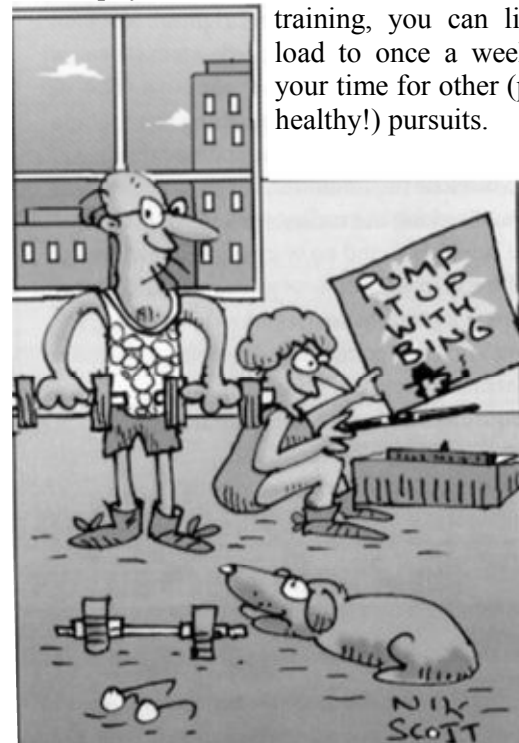
## Once-a-week workout keeps the elderly strong

As we age our muscles tend to lose bulk and become thinner and weaker. This can develop into a vicious cycle - as they become weaker, we use them less, and they become weaker still. Reduced weight-bearing activity also affects our bones, making them thinner and more brittle. These two processes can be a dangerous combination - weaker muscles make us less steady on our feet and more prone to falls, with bone fractures more likely.

Studies have shown that if older people do regular muscle-strengthening exercise they can lessen the risk of falls and fractures. The good news, according to September CHOICE Health Reader, is that after building up your muscle size and strength, you only have to work out once a week to maintain the benefits.

It reports on a study where a group of ten 70 year-old men who hadn't been exercising undertook a weight-training program three times a week for 12 weeks. At the end of the training period, their muscle size and strength had improved by an average of 50%. Half the men then stopped the exercise program, while the others continued for six months, but dropping down to once a week.

The men who stopped regular exercise experienced significant loss of muscle strength and size, but were still better off than before the initial training. The men who continued it maintained muscle strength and size. This suggests that once you've built up your muscles with some more intensive training, you can lighten the load to once a week, freeing your time for other (preferably healthy!) pursuits.



Source: Choice, October 02

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

The one thing that unites all human beings, regardless of age, gender, religion, economic status or ethnic background, is that, deep down inside, we ALL believe that we are above average drivers.

*(Continued from page 1)*

burnt in all the floors. Through the broken windows and gaps in the walls the charred remains of the stock could be seen.

Paynes Bon Marche was in Bourke Street between Russell and Exhibition Streets. It was bounded on each side by two narrow lanes – Paynes Place on the Exhibition Street side and Brien Lane on the Russell Street side. Portions of the top floor formed a bridge across Paynes Lane, connecting the building to Cohen's Bros. premises.

The cause of the fire was not known, but it was believed that it started on the first floor of Paynes, where the mantles, millinery and underclothing depts. were situated, and it had apparently been burning for some time before it was discovered.

The alarm was given from several locations about 20 minutes past 10 o'clock, when smoke and flames were seen to be issuing from the windows of the premises. In a few minutes a column of dense black smoke, visible for many miles, belched through the roof, and the interior of the building became a mass of flames. The smoke enveloped the city in a fog like pall.

Thousands of spectators assembled, drawn by the sight of the smoke and by an announcement made on Radio 3LO. Bourke Street, for a time was completely blocked, and a large force of police including six mounted troopers had some difficulty in clearing a way for the firefighters. At one stage a hose was turned on the crowd. Eventually the throng was driven back to the intersections of Exhibition and Russell Streets.

When the first firefighters arrived with their equipment, Paynes was ablaze from one end to the other and from the basement to the roof. Flames and smoke leapt into the air, while at one corner of the building a tower acted as a giant chimney, from the top of which poured a spiral column of smoke.

Four extension ladders were run up in Bourke Street. The ladders were operated by electricity from below, and much excitement was caused among the spectators as the ladders turned this way and that, with the firefighters swaying dizzily as they directed water where the flames were burning the most fiercely.

The fire was also attacked from the lanes on either side and from the rear, and water was directed into the building from the parapets of adjoining premises. When Payne's roof collapsed with a crash, the firefighters were showered with sparks, and pieces of blazing timber and red hot iron.

Soon after the arrival of the Brigade, several firefighters approached the front door of Payne's with

the intention of breaking in, but a warning shout from some of their colleagues caused them to turn and run just in time to escape being showered with fragments of heavy plate glass from two display windows on the first floor which had burst out by the pressure and heat. Windows on the ground floor were smashed to allow the smoke and heat to escape.

The premises of London & Parisian Pleaters, the Baptist Gospel Hall and the furniture store of Paterson's Ltd stood side by side in Brien Lane. Directly at the rear of Paynes was a number of alleyways forming a network between it and Lt. Bourke Street. It was believed that the fire spread to Paterson's due to the radiation of intense heat through the windows. The flames swept through the first, second and third floors and destroyed most of the contents. The company's factory which adjoined the store, was saved from destruction after a hard fight by the Brigade.

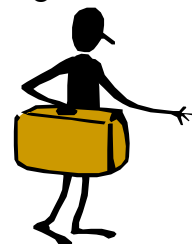
As soon as it was practicable, entrance was effected to Paynes building from Paynes Lane. Smashing the windows with their axes, firefighters climbed into what appeared to be the heart of the furnace and, dragging heavy hoses after them, they crawled along the floor towards the centre of the building. Their forms were scarcely visible through the smoke, but occasionally the reflection of the flames could be seen gleaming on their helmets. Several firefighters narrowly escaped being buried beneath tons of bricks when portions of the side wall of Paynes collapsed into Brien Lane. The men were operating a hose beneath the wall and jumped clear just in time.

While the fire was at its height the horse of a trooper who was holding back the crowd in Bourke Street, put its hoof on a hose, causing it to burst. Many people were drenched. Several women in the crowd fainted, one of which had to be carried into a nearby hotel by two constables.

The Brigade officers announced shortly after 11 o'clock that the fire was under control, and there was no further danger of the flames spreading, but the buildings continued to burn for some hours. They were expected to smoulder for some days.

The 77 firefighters on scene worked under the directions of Acting Chief Officer Mr. Kemp, the DCO. Mr. Lindsey, and Fourth Officer, Mr. Meehan. The six hose carriages, six pumps, five extension ladders and two salvage vans were dispatched from Eastern Hill, William Street, Carlton, Collingwood, Nth. Melbourne, Sth. Melbourne, Prahran, South Yarra and Fitzroy stations.

**Barbara McCumisky**



## TRAVELLING WITH SILVER

### PARADISE REVISITED

Once again a mid-point meeting place with friends from the U.S. mainland. If endless sunshine, sparkling beaches, a great night life and better food the Pacific's leading tourist is what you desire, this is the place for you. It's just a short 10 hour flight north east of Sydney.

There are five main islands in the Hawaiian chain with a total population of just over one million.

Each is within a short inexpensive flight of one another, time and budget permitting, go to as many as possible.

**OAHU**, home to Honolulu is the gathering place. It is famous for it's beaches stretching to the islands north where during northern winter some of the biggest surf in the world can be found.

**HONOLULU**, is the cosmopolitan centre of Hawaii, high rise hotels, night clubs, restaurants and the famous Waikiki Beach. Surfers Paradise with an American accent.

**MAUI**, known as the Valley Island, it has an enormous resort complex on KAANA PALI beach and this is really a great beach.

**HAWAII**, The Big Island, is home to the volcanoes. The tops of these huge mountains, which rise only a few kilometers from the warm ocean swells, have snow on their caps.

**KAUAI**, the Garden Island is the oldest of the Hawaiian chain and the first visited by Captain Cook. It is now becoming more popular with tourists.

**MOLOKAI**, the Friendly Isle is the most

traditional and retains much of the spirit of "Old Hawaii." For those who want to get right away from it all, this is the destination.

As far as the climate goes you can't go wrong in Hawaii. They say the only way to tell which season it is, is to look at the vegetation on Diamond Head. If Diamond Head is green it's Autumn or Winter, if it's brown it's Summer.

Accommodation is varied to suit everybody's budget from 5star Sheraton to back packers hostels. Very popular are the 2 bedroom condo's. The main difference between these and hotels are the fully appointed kitchens. For families or large groups cooking your meals is often a solution to a familiar problem of "where are we going to eat tonight."

Just a word of warning, razor sharp coral festoons many of Hawaii's surf beaches and a cut foot quickly becomes infected if not properly treated.

### Happy Travelling Silver

P.S—Never test the depth of the water with both feet at the same time.

P.P.S—Went to Sunday breakfast at a restaurant with Elaine and John Berry the other day. Great surrounds, better food, but "oh no" - no high chairs!!!

### Silver

the span of some 30 minutes. Beyond the statistics lies the emotional course of the past year, which cannot be described by the department's own members.

The firefighters of New York have confronted death, guilt, hero worship, disillusionment, fear, hordes of tourists and the numbness of having to tell their stories over and over again yet still managed to go out each day and do their jobs.

I am in the possession of the "Debrief" of the event of 9/11 and it sure points out a lot of faults from all emergency departments.

### Silver

### Postscript to 9/11

If you think you have worries, how's this for a problem?

It's ranks depleted, a weary Fire Department is trying to regroup.

With 343 members killed, that's 49 years of the average 7 per year killed on duty to make up.

91 vehicles destroyed.

213 members of senior command lost to retirement. \$104 million paid out in death benefits. As many as 500 firefighters at risk of leaving the force because of lung complaints at Ground Zero.

Only 4971 applicants for the department, a fraction of the 25,000 who apply in a given year. 4,400 years of collective experience vaporized in

## CONGRATULATIONS

### Fire Services Museum Victoria Wins Community Award

*Fire Awareness Community Service Awards 2002 received a nomination in the Community Award category on the basis of an initiative by the Fire Services Museum. R.F.A. members congratulate the Museum in taking out this prestigious award. The following is taken from the nomination application.*

Like all Australians, volunteers from the Museum were angry and upset by the complete devastation that was left behind when Indonesia departed East Timor, and deeply touched by the strength and determination of the East Timorese people to enjoy their newly acquired freedom.

Museum volunteers watched the media coverage from East Timor with despair as hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of donated goods such as electrical appliances were destroyed as the East Timorese people did not have the luxury of homes, or electricity to use them.

This was the catalyst that spurred Museum volunteers into action - they decided that they could help the people of East Timor by providing a vehicle to access and transport one of our most basic human needs - drinking water.

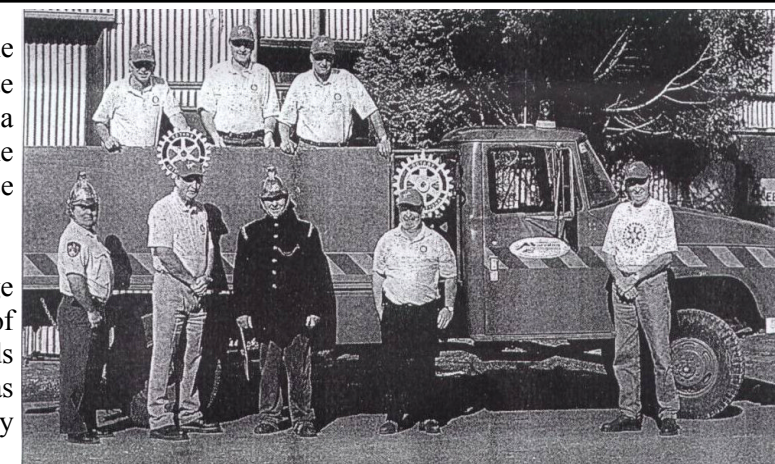
Museum volunteers decided that they would initiative the donation of a decommissioned water tanker to the people of East Timor - the donation would provide a two-fold benefit. The pumper tanker can both pump and carry drinking water, and be used in case of a fire emergency.

In June 2001 the Museum had the opportunity to acquire two decommissioned CFA water tankers. The Museum's Board decided that one of the water tankers would be restored and donated to East Timor.

The Museum coordinated the support of the Rotary Group of Wandin in the project. Whilst the Wandin Group were seeking sponsors, members of the Museum commenced restoration of the vehicle.

The three-tonne, four-wheel drive International, was over thirty years of age and whilst it had only travelled 29,000kms, conditions had been severe. Over a six-month period, volunteers worked out of the Newport workshops, replacing the 300 gallon water tank, renewing the water pump, reconditioning the brakes, and completing a partial repaint, cut and polish of the duco to restore the old fire engine to its former glory.

In this time, the Rotary Club of Wandin had raised \$12,000.00 and been able to encourage many sponsors to lend their support. The Wandin Group planned to drive the fire engine to Darwin (accompanied by a support vehicle), put the vehicle on board a vessel, ship



*Members of the Wandin Rotary and Fred Kerr (centre) with the restored tanker prior to the departure for Darwin.*

it to Dili, East Timor, and then drive it to Baucau.

On Friday 6 June 2002, a handing over ceremony was took place at Eastern Hill Fire Museum. Members from the Macedon Ranges Shire Council (the last owners of the truck) members from the Museum, Country Fire Authority representatives and many sponsors enjoyed the ceremony and the Rotary Club of Wandin took possession of the vehicle.

A few weeks later, members of the Museum travelled from Newport to Wandin with nine old fire engines to say farewell.

When the truck arrived in Dili it was registered and insured and then departed for Baucau. After instruction in the operation of the vehicle and pump and a driving test, several volunteers were selected.

### Initiative a success

Within a short time, the donated pumper tanker was carting water and giving great joy to the locals and it had replaced the very old and decrepit original fire engine as the first responder.

Members of the Fire Services Museum of Victoria, the Rotary Club of Wandin and all sponsors are extremely pleased that the concept to donate an old fire engine to the people of East Timor, which had its gestation in the Boardroom of the Museum, has been so successful.

It has also given everyone involved, pride to know that such a small gift can transform so many lives.

**Fred Kerr**