

# AQA NEWS LINK

The Official Newsletter of AQA Victoria Ltd., & AQA Tasmania

December 2002



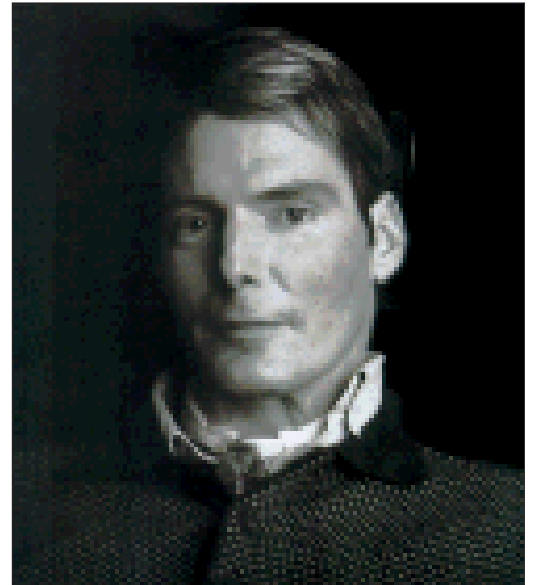
## Environmental Innovations

Our New Column To Make Life Easier



## Spinal Cord Injury Awareness

Christopher Reeve To Visit Down Under



## Health

Keeping Your Cool This Summer



AQA VICTORIA LTD.

Australian

Quadriplegic

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A.Q.A. NEWS LINK is the official newsletter of A.Q.A. Victoria Limited, Australian Quadriplegic Association - Victoria, and is published bimonthly. NEWS LINK seeks to publish material of interest to people with physical disabilities and their families, professional workers and other individuals and organisations concerned with the welfare of those who are physically disabled.

ARTICLES and items of interest are welcome from any individual or organisation.

NEWS LINK reserves the right to edit all submissions as it sees fit. Published articles do not necessarily reflect the policies or opinions of A.Q.A. or its members.

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# NEWS LINK

The Official Newsletter of AQA Victoria Ltd., & AQA Tasmania

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## From the CEO

In this issue of News Link we have some great information to assist people with SCI. I hope you all find the information interesting and helpful.



I would like to thank all those people who have contributed to the newsletter over the last twelve months. Your contributions are greatly appreciated and I sincerely hope you will continue to contribute once again next year.

Take care if you are traveling and if you have any last minute queries please get in touch before 11.30am on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> December, 2002.

I would like to wish all our members and readers a very Merry Christmas and a Healthy & Happy New Year.

*Ian Bennett*  
Chief Executive Officer  
ianbennett@aqavic.org.au

## From the Editor

Welcome to the last issue of News Link. The year has been good with many members letting us know how they have been and what they've been up to. To all of you that contributed to News Link with your articles, jokes, information, etc., I'd like to say a special thank-you,



your help has gone a long way in the way of assisting other members.

It looks like it is going to be a very hot summer season. If you have a problem with the heat, like most of us have, the article on page 6 will be helpful for you so that you are prepared for those hot days.

You will also notice a new column called 'Environmental Innovations' in this issue. It is all about letting others know about solutions and different types of equipment people have found to make life easier for themselves. So, if there's a solution or some type of equipment you've found that makes life easier for you, no matter how silly you think it may be, please let us know.

I wish everyone a Merry X-mas and a Happy New Year!  
**PS: Just a reminder that membership renewals are due! If you're not sure, check the address label on the envelope or give us a call.**

*Nazim Erdem*  
News Link Editor  
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## Special Needs Housing

[www.accesshousing.com](http://www.accesshousing.com)

is a free website to allow buyers and sellers of modified properties to easily access houses for sale that have been modified. If you know of someone in this situation, please tell them (or their estate agent) about the site.

The service is **FREE**. If you have any questions on Real Estate, please feel free to ring Geoff Buck from Special Needs Housing on 0418 306 588

Spinal Outpatients Clinic at the Austin will be closed during the Christmas holiday period from the 20<sup>th</sup> of December 2002 until the 27<sup>th</sup> of January 2003 inclusive.

For urgent attention, people are advised to contact their G.P. or attend the Accident & Emergency department of their local hospital.



Best Wishes for the Festive Season

Noelene Cooper

## The Importance of Equipment Maintenance

The arse fell out of my world last Thursday morning whilst I was having a shower. When I say that, I mean it literally. The seat of the shower chair had an argument with my bottom and decided to try and escape down through the water hole in the shower floor. I suppose over the years it has taken quite a lot of crap from me.

What can I say, after all, if I hadn't gone to all the trouble all those years ago and broken my neck to become a cripple. The sole purpose of creating a reason for this ungrateful piece of work a reason for being combined with its other components, by skilled tradesmen to become what it was – a shower seat, the seat would simply be just vinyl, wood, screws and metal.

In defence of my bottom, perhaps it was having quite a lot to say for itself at the time. However, personally my opinion of their disagreement was just so much piddle and wind. I really don't believe that there was anything malicious in what was being said.

That being said, the seat literally cracked up and shot through the hole. When it left, it found out that on its own, it was nothing but so much waste material, its entire reason for being was gone. Not a leg to stand on, a wheel to roll up on. Perhaps it believed that the whole chair would go with it and the union members would unite and all picket the unit for better conditions. Un-be-known to the seat, the chair was on a negotiated contract and would have lost all its entitlements if it rolled out, so it stayed.

I have to say that the negotiated contract made with the frame of the chair was meant to include the seat, somehow this was over looked in the fine print. This must have been a bone of contention for the seat, for afterwards, it was heard to mutter that it was carrying all the weight, copping all the crap and was basically at the bottom of things when it was time for me to make use of it.

I have since purchased (the aids for the disabled mob, really paid for it) a new seat and in the renegotiated contract, we have agreed that when the weather is nice that the chair is to spend some of the day in then sun instead of simply being pushed into the shower recess and forgotten.

We humans look upon these pieces of equipment that we literally rely upon for our quality of life, as simple, inanimate objects. We forget that like us, they are a whole heap of atoms arranged in such a way as to make them what they are. They are creations of god. In saying that, I don't in any way mean to upset the creationists who may read this. God through his/her wisdom gave the idea to man who through the dexterity that his being brought together the materials needed, then through careful manipulation, gave birth to what we see as a commode. With all its parts, wheels, frame, footplates and the bearer of the load. Through its very body, every second day, crap does pass and generally for most of us this crap passes with its bad breath and unattractive looks, with not so much as a passing word, never a thank you. I cannot blame the seat for cracking, it after all it has been put through (or been put through it).



After the seat disappeared, I literally had nothing to sit on so what do I do? The only thing any good cripple would do, follow the bloody seat through the frame, arse first. Fortunately for me, the frame of the chair decided that it did not want to be left alone. With Lynne, my erstwhile attendant, as he (being commode frame), believed that it would have trouble consoling her in her distress at losing her first quadriplegic down a drain hole. The frame in its wisdom has an inbuilt catching mechanism for disappearing cripples. This in play, I was hung, as it were, on a wing and a prayer only maybe, never the less I was suspended. Stopped from a one way trip to the sewerage treatment plant at Black Rock via the pipes and tunnels of the Bellarine sewerage system. This you may say would be a change, and a change being a holiday worthy of some consideration. After all, I once said that if an opportunity arose I would accept it with open arms. Call me a piker if you will but I reneged and accepted the chance to hang around for a short period of time.

In two part harmony, reminiscent of some of the greatest singing duo's of all time, Lynne and yours truly let forth an all mighty scream, Lynne, with presence of mind, turned the shower off and released the brakes, then proceeded to pull the commode from the shower. We were brought to a screaming halt when we hadn't gone very far at all. The head of the shower hose had imbedded itself under my armpit and wanted

*Continued next page...*

The office of AQA Victoria Ltd.  
(Incorporating AQA Copies Plus, AQA  
Qualcare and the Information / Peer  
Support Department)  
will be closed for the X-mas - New year  
holidays from;  
noon the 20th of December till the  
6th of January 2003  
(with the exception of the 30th of December)

Everyone at AQA Victoria Ltd. wishes  
all its consumers and members  
a Merry X-mas and a Happy New  
Year.



*...from previous page*

me to stay and keep it company for a while. Deciding that my place was on my bed and not hanging round in the shower with no visible means of support, we dis-entangled the shower head and returned with not undue haste to the side of my bed. Here Lynne threaded the slings behind my back and under my legs, connected them to the hoist and in a most ungraceful, however successful manner, lifted and swung me over and onto the bed.

Finally in the safety of my secure new surrounds, it was time to see the funny side of the drama. We lamented on not having

the whole event on video as it would surely have won first prize on Funniest Home Videos, the T.V show. No visible damage done to the body, scratches, protruding bones etc. so the wash was completed and before long I was sitting in my Electric Legs and mobile again. Mind you, I have been living on Panadine Forte since then, as the pain is unbearable without it.

Apart from that, little has happened down this way lately.

**Tony Carbis**

## Keeping Your Cool This Summer

The summer season is upon us again. For most of us, this means holidays, going away, and enjoying the great outdoors. But some caution needs to be thrown in the wind for some people with spinal cord injuries (SCI) – we need to stay cool and not get over heated. Keeping cool this summer, as with any other summer, can be especially difficult with the pressures some of us put on ourselves trying to keep up with friends and family social demands geared towards the outdoors.

Many of us, as a result of SCI, are heat sensitive. We must remember that if we do over heat, this could mean a serious health problem that may need medical attention.

### Why do some of us suffer from the heat?

Without the ability to sweat, the body's temperature will continue to rise unless alternative action is taken.

Many people with SCI cannot sweat below the level of their injury. The reason for this is that, in most of us, our sweat glands don't expand to release the sweat, which in turn causes our body temperature to stay hot. In other words, our body's natural air-conditioning system has run out of gas. And when you don't sweat, there's no moisture on your body to help regulate your temperature.

### How do you or others know you're overheated?

There are some tell-tale signs that can let you know if you or someone else is over-heating. Some symptoms of serious over-heating are pale skin, dilated pupils, elevated body temperature, cramps, dizziness, nausea, vomiting, headaches, confusion, and sometimes unconsciousness. If someone has these symptoms and doesn't do anything about them like

seeking medical attention, the situation can be life threatening.

If you think that someone is suffering from these symptoms, you need to get them out of the heat quickly and into a cool place. If you have an electric fan or air conditioning, use it! It will also help if you take off or loosen clothing and then cool the body by wetting the skin with water or wet towels.



### Prevention is always better than cure

You've heard this before and it does apply in this situation as well. When you know it is going to be a very hot day, think about what you wear. Dress for the weather. Wearing loose, light coloured clothing, preferably cotton, will keep you cooler than other types of clothing. For footwear, wear some trendy sandals or shoes/runners without socks. Don't be tempted to go around bare foot – feet are very sensitive and can easily get sunburnt.

Have you ever noticed what type of clothing people wear in countries that have a hot climate like Africa or the Middle East? The answer is loose, light coloured, cotton clothing. The reason for this is that the lighter the colour, the less the sun's heat is attracted to it. The looser it is, the more ventilated it is, and cotton is a material that is known to 'breathe'. These people have been dressing this way for centuries.

If you're going to be out for long periods of time, wear a hat or at least take one with you just in case you'll need it. Have a drink bottle, similar to the ones used by athletes, handy.

What I find especially useful is having a spray bottle with me – this is also what Peter V B recommends in his "Environmental Innovations" column on page 9. There are two main types of spray bottles available, trigger action spray bottles and pump action spray bottles.

### Avoid the hottest part of the day

We should all be aware that the hottest part of the day occurs during the early afternoon (1pm – 3 pm). If you have to go outside during these times and you know that it's going to be a hot day, think about wearing a hat or cap and staying out of the direct sun light. Find your own piece of shade under a tree or building. A good idea is to organise your activities around the hottest part of the day. It is a lot cooler during the mornings and late afternoons.

### Keep your fluid levels up

It's very important to keep your fluid intake levels up. You should remember that on an average day, your fluid intake would be about three litres, so if it is going to be a hot one, you'll need to double your regular fluid intake.

A good indicator to see if you are drinking too much or too little is from the colour of your urine. If your urine is dark and concentrated, this means that you are drinking too little and you'll need to drink more. If your urine is very clear, this means that you are drinking too much and you'll have to drink less. You need to have a balance.

**Nazim Erdem**

# AQA Victoria Member Profile

**Name:** Gary Allsop

**Your Age:** 41

**Disability & Level:**

C5/6 Quadriplegic

**Are you Married/Single?**

Single

**Do you have children?** No

**How did you acquire your disability?** I had a football accident in 1989.

**What is your living situation?**

I am living with my parents in Blackburn North.

**Your Survival Tip for others?**

Stay healthy, stay fit, stay positive, a cure is not far away.

**What has been your most embarrassing moment since you have been using a wheelchair for mobility?**

No comment



**Your greatest achievement?**

Like everyone with a spinal cord injury, surviving mentally and emotionally is an achievement in itself.

**What do you do with your time?**

I'm a Honorary Director with the Australasian Spinal Research Trust. I'm involved with public

speaking and songwriting. I enjoy all sports, movies, music, friends and family.

**If money was no object what would you buy/do?**

If money was no object, I would buy a 20 acre farm in the outer suburbs of Melbourne.

**Do you have an internet site you would recommend?**

Everybody should have a look at the Australasian Spinal Research Trust website at [www.spinetrust.com.au](http://www.spinetrust.com.au). I'd highly recommend it.

**Editors Note:** Read below for more about Gary Allsop.

## Gary Allsop

Due to an accident playing Australian Rules Football for Warrandyte in April 1989, Gary Allsop became a quadriplegic.

Never one to be negative, Gary set about educating thousands of primary and secondary students about life in a wheelchair and the dangers of diving. He also speaks to many other people in varied community groups about overcoming hurdles, coping with adversity and self-motivation.

His audiences range from students at Melbourne University, AFL Clubs St. Kilda, North Melbourne Kangaroos, The Western Bulldogs and Richmond, as well as local football clubs, Lions Clubs, Riding for the Disabled and various other groups at luncheons, dinners and other social and corporate functions.

Gary is able to tailor his inspirational and uplifting presentation to suit any audience, though the underlying motivational message remains a same, with its common thread to all.

He allows each person, in a friendly way, into his world and shares with them the personal struggles he has endured, the mental strength and attitude it has taken to cope with his disability, not only now, but also in the initial stages of his injury.

Gary also informs his audiences about the many and varied activities he is involved in, and shows it is possible to live a full and productive life in spite of a major disability. His hope is that each person will take away something positive, that may be of motivation for them personally. His motto is "Never take things for granted and cherish the precious life that we all have".

Prior to his accident, Gary worked as a nightclub disc jockey and was also in Sales and Marketing. More recently, he has written and recorded songs for major sporting events and provided voice-overs for local community radio.

He is also an Honorary Director and Victorian Chairman of the Australasian Spinal Research Trust, a charity organisation raising much needed funds for Spinal Cord Research. His work involves creating public awareness, gaining publicity and lobbying the Government, corporate sector and general public.

Gary's presentations are highly motivational, very inspiring and a must see to any audience.

## \$18 MILLION BOOST FOR HOME AND COMMUNITY CARE IN VICTORIA



**MORE** older Victorians will receive Home and Community Care (HACC) services like Meals on Wheels with an \$18 million funding boost announced today (Monday November 18, 2002) by Federal Minister for Ageing Kevin Andrews.

Other HACC services that will be increased include domestic assistance, home modification, nursing, personal care, property maintenance, community transport and respite care.

“HACC is a Commonwealth and State Program with the Commonwealth contributing 60 per cent of funding,” Mr Andrews said.

“The Commonwealth will provide \$178.703 million for HACC services in Victoria while the Victorian Government will provide \$119.334 million, a total of \$298.037 million.

“This \$18 million funding boost will provide more services for older Victorians - as well as younger people with disabilities and their carers - so they can live independently in the

community, which is where they want to be.

“Without HACC services, and Community Aged Care Packages (which provide a higher level of aged care in people’s homes) many of these people might have to enter residential aged care.”

Mr Andrews said priority has been given to services experiencing high demand and special needs groups including those:

- from a culturally and linguistically diverse background;
- from an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background;
- people living in remote rural areas; and
- people who are homeless, or living in unsuitable and/or insecure housing.

For more information, contact Felicity Dargan (Press Secretary) 0409 550 446.

## BACK ON TRACK FOR ACCESSIBLE PUBLIC TRANSPORT



**Good news today (23 October 2002) for Australians and Australia’s public transport system, with Parliament approving the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport.**

The Transport Standards provide practical measures to be taken by transport operators and providers to make public transport more accessible, both for people with disabilities, as well as the elderly and those travelling with young children.

Of course, taking public transport should have been easier from 15 October, which is when the Standards were originally due to take effect. However, the

Democrats stopped that happening on 14 October by giving notice of their intention to amend the Standards.

It is indeed heartening to see that they have come to their senses and did not proceed with this course of action.

Australia’s public transport system will then be able to focus on the important issue of achieving accessibility for all.

A copy of the Transport Standards and accompanying Guidelines are available at <http://www.law.gov.au/DSFAPT/Welcome.html>.

From the office of John Anderson, the Minister for Transport and Regional Services.

## "E.I." - ENVIRONMENT INNOVATIONS.

G'day members, this new column is about sharing information on special ways of doing a task, special tools or a set up that helps you do things easier - some little trick that would suit SCI person's in their environment - Environment Innovations "E.I."

Nothing is too small or silly because if it helps you, it will definitely help others. If you know of some new technology that would fit with E.I., let us know. It can be hard to know all of what's out there. If you have some good tips or ideas, let's share information and get this column moving. All innovations are what WE want - so information can be shared and used by all. Here are some things I do or use to suit my environment.

### Flexible Keyboard and Mouse Stand

Flexible keyboard and mouse stand for the computer. This stand clamps onto the table where its height and distance can be adjusted to suit any position. Add a little Velcro to hold down keyboard/mouse. Because I use a large power-chair, it is hard to get close or under a normal table and this stand's flexibility allows me to clamp it onto the table or the bar of my wheelchair (if I wanted to use a laptop computer). Note the track ball mouse in the picture below which is much easier for me and my limited hand movement. Also I use a mini-keyboard where the keys are closer together which means there's less distance for me to move from one end of the keyboard to the other.



### Large Toggle Switches

Large toggles to turn on/off light switches for easy use. There are lots of different brands of these toggle switches on the market, make sure that they are easy to flick on/off, not stiff.



### Water Mist Spray Bottle

Having a water mist spray bottle for those hot days can be a life saver. This is an old one but a good one and really does work. Spray your face, neck and hair when you're hot and bothered, to cool down, it's a real relief spraying some water mist on yourself during those stinking hot days - "cheap A/C".



These are small but practical ideas that I have found that make my environment comfortable. **Don't forget to help out;** News Link needs more tips and ideas from members to make this column work.

See ya next year...

Peter Van Benthem

Ho! Ho! Ho! Merry Christmas!

Christmas Time Has Come,  
2002 Is Almost Done.  
Where Did The Year Go,  
I Really Don't Know,  
But What I Would Like To See,  
Is A Great 2003!

*Wishing You A Very Merry Christmas,*

*And A Wonderful New Year!*

What an interesting year 2002 has been, it started with a mild summer, not nearly as hot as was expected, which was good, as I don't handle the heat very well. At the end of last summer, on the 10<sup>th</sup> of February, I finally moved in to my newly renovated and modified house, my independent living started very well. I had made myself become more organised, and with a roster system in place, my carers and I had independence progressing well.

I had my house warming party during the school holidays in April, laughter and joy filled my backyard as we partook in some social drinking to celebrate my independence, quite a few friends and family made the effort to join us and a good night was had by all.

Unfortunately a slight pressure problem which had started just before Christmas was soon to become a major problem, it put a dampener on the amount of time I could spend up in my wheelchair and caused a great deal of discomfort. It was a degree of pain, different to the nerve pain I have had to endure over the past 13 years. Within days of my housewarming party, I was completely confined to bed again. I had really overdone the amount of time in my wheelchair and not treated a minor pressure sore with the medical attention it required, it had turned from minor and manageable, to major and in need of hospital attention.

On the 16<sup>th</sup> of May, I was admitted to the spinal unit of the Austin & Repatriation Medical Centre, to begin the long healing process. I was very lucky to start in a room with 3 other men with good attitudes and a degree of humour that made it quite bearable.

Two weeks after being admitted to hospital, I was due to become 30, I thought that if I didn't think about turning 30, it wouldn't happen... No such luck, my family and friends

hijacked me from my ward and gave me a birthday party on the balcony outside. It was a wonderful afternoon, full of good food, good friends and good bourbon. If one has to become 30, and is stuck in hospital at the time, then this was not a bad way to do it, Thanks Guys!

Being totally confined to bed, it was not long before I became quite sick of television, and I could only listen to the radio... a few days of that, and then I started to look for something more stimulating. I made some arrangements, and mum brought my computer in for me. Within a week I had it back online, and had many people passing on a multitude of internet humour.

On the computer, I also have my complete music library, and by plugging my headphones in to the computer, I could listen to music and play games all I wanted without annoying the others in the room. I also had my brother Paul go shopping for me, he got me a DVD-Rom for the computer, and with his brother-in-law's help, installed it in to the computer for me.

Soon I was able to watch movies at a full 17 inches on the computer monitor instead of on the tiny little over the bed TV.

With the computer online, all my music, a DVD-Rom and a supply of movies, what more could I need in hospital? **Alcohol** would be good, so with the Doctors consent, I was allowed to self supply a bourbon a day if so desired. And so with a few good's messengers, I was able to enjoy a drink on those evenings if and when I wanted.

Paul was in Melbourne this year doing 12 months study, he was staying in the barracks at Watsonia, just a few minutes away from the hospital, and would visit me once or twice a week. Some of these visits would include take-away, bourbon and a DVD. A pleasant way of wasting a night in hospital.

I had a few other regular visitors too, Uncle Frank would come in, usually on a Monday afternoon and we'd play cards until his 2 hour parking limit was up, this was always enjoyable as sometimes you win and sometimes you lose. Every Monday night, Uncle Henry would call in after work, help me with my dinner, and then we'd have a 45 minute discussion about computers and whatever the current problem was. He would also bring in my weekly treat, a small tin of champignons, yum, eat 'em straight from the tin.

Mum and Dad would come down every couple of weeks, whenever they had a free weekend, and just to spoil me a bit



*Continued next page...*

# What's new in PEER SUPPORT

By Peter V. Benthem  
petervanbenthem@aqavic.org.au

## WHAT'S UP IN PEER GROUP DEPARTMENT

G'day AQA members. Well another year has rounded and it's time to get used to the idea of 2003, very scary...

AQA has had good results this year in the "Life Skills Day" program thanks to the Royal Talbot Staff, the many people that helped out on the panel who shared their experiences, and the exhibitors that bought their excellent accessible hobbies. The work done by all of these people was recognised and AQA was presented with a 'Certificate of Appreciation' by the Austin Hospital. Many Thanks to all these people that made "Life Skills Day" program work.

I have been inviting members to come and share their experiences, after having a spinal cord injury, to the

"Life Skills Day". We need more people to help because we do tend to rely on a small group, which needs to be larger. So, come and join in on the life skills program in 2003... call AQA, you'll enjoy it.

2003 will be a big year for spinal cord research in the sense of stem cell research. You will see the debate flair up with all issues, pros and cons, positives and negatives, of stem cell research. Christopher Reeve will be in Australia for the stem cell research forum, trying to push Australia to commit more, so there's something to watch, the outcome will be interesting.

AQA's Peer/Group department wishes everyone a Merry Xmas and a fantastic New Year. See ya next year, cheers, chin chin, down the hatch and as a matter of fact I've got it now. Bye.

### *...from previous page*

more, mum would either bring food from home to heat up, or would cook something wonderful, like steak and mushrooms, made the room mates envious sometimes, but how good do you want it.

Every week, the leisure group would come around looking for participants for their art group, constantly I would decline, saying "I can't paint lying in bed". Well eventually, after about 6 weeks, their persistence payed off, and I gave it a go. The first week I tried to paint with my arm, and managed to make the ugliest rainbow ever, (the arm method does not work while lying in bed). The following week, they suggested trying some mouth painting, (my first thoughts were no, I should be able to use my arm, I'm not that disabled). Within a few minutes, I thought, don't be too proud, give it a fair go, and I did. My first mouth painting effort was a crumby landscape, green hills, blue sky, white clouds, brown tree and a bird, reasonable for my first effort, not too displeasing. My second effort was a sunset, very pleasing, but was not allowed to take it home – me and my painting had to go to Melbourne for the opening of

an art exhibition at the Royal Talbot Rehab Centre in Kew as one of the featured artists. Daunting!

After nearly 6 months in hospital, my pressure sore had healed (with the assistance of surgery) and I had successfully completed the Mobilisation program (4<sup>th</sup> time lucky), and was finally discharged and sent home. Stephen & Pauline came and picked me up. They packed up all the gear I'd accumulated around me, and brought me home. Home sweet home!

After settling back into my house, training a new carer and organising a new roster, things are starting to feel like normal again, whatever that is!

Hope your year was a good year and look forward to a better 2003!

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!

**Until next time,  
John F. Van Aken**

## Christopher Reeve To Visit Downunder

Actor Christopher Reeve is to visit down under (Sydney) in January, it will cost New South Wales taxpayers \$134,300. Christopher Reeve is famous for his role as Superman in the Superman series of movies. Reeve, 50, fell while competing in an equestrian event in May 1995 and was paralysed.

He will travel to Sydney on a specially modified plane as a guest of the Premier, Bob Carr, to address a Forum on Spinal Cord Injury and Conditions.

A spokeswoman for Bob Carr today confirmed the State



government would foot the bill for his appearance. "It's the second time Christopher Reeve has left the US; it's a huge plus for

Australia and NSW. He is a strong advocate for people with disabilities", she said.

While he will travel in an ordinary Qantas jet for the long-haul

flight from the US, the first-class cabin will be stripped of its normally plush seating and will be sealed off to form a makeshift medical ward for the star and his team of doctors. Qantas would pay for the jumbo's refit. Reeve

requires 24-hour medical attention and a ventilator to breathe.

Mr Carr said the actor's visit could help sway the Senate to vote in favour of embryonic stem cell research. Advocates say such research could potentially lead to advances to help people with spinal injuries walk again. The conference would involve discussions on stem cell research, rehabilitation and clinical care.



**Peter Van Benthem**

## Celebrity Shirts For Spinal Cord Injury

The Australasian Spinal Research Trust is holding a fundraiser for Spinal Cord Research on Saturday May 31<sup>st</sup> 2003 at a dinner function at the Atrium, the Grandstand 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Flemington Racecourse.

At Celebrity Shirts For Spinal Cord Research, we will be auctioning the Celebrity Shirts donated by various celebrities including sportspeople, actors, TV personalities, authors, politicians and various sporting clubs from all around the country and overseas. Your support is encouraged and everybody is welcome to come to the event at the Flemington Racecourse, enjoy a 3 course meal, all drinks, entertainment, special guests, auctions, raffles and lots of prizes.

Tickets are \$110 per person and if you get a table of 10 together, \$100 each. Bookings essential, please call Gary on (03) 9878 3249 or email me at [madge@alphalink.com.au](mailto:madge@alphalink.com.au)

If you would like to register a bid for any of the shirts or items prior to the function, have a look at the items listed at: [www.celebrityshirts.com.au](http://www.celebrityshirts.com.au) and you can email me on [madge@alphalink.com.au](mailto:madge@alphalink.com.au) to register a bid for any of the items.

Please pass this message on to family, friends, work mates, colleagues, or anyone you think might want to bid for any of the Celebrity Shirts, or support the A.S.R.T. by attending the function on Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> May 2003.

If you have a website, it would really help if you could post this message and link on it, to help us promote our fundraiser.

If you can help in any way by putting me in touch with any potential sponsors, donors of products, or celebrities, or if you have something you can donate personally, I would sincerely appreciate it.

**Regards Gary Allsop.**



## The Rude Parrot

A young man named Jon received a parrot as a gift. The parrot had a bad attitude and an even worse vocabulary. Every word out of the bird's mouth was rude, obnoxious and laced with profanity. Jon tried and tried to change the bird's attitude by consistently saying only polite words, playing soft music and anything else he could think of to "clean up" the bird's vocabulary.

Finally, Jon was fed up and he yelled at the parrot. The parrot yelled back. Jon shook the parrot and the parrot got even angrier and ruder. Jon in desperation threw up his hands and grabbed the bird and put him in the freezer. For a few minutes the parrot squawked and kicked and screamed. Then, suddenly there was total quiet, not a peep was heard. Fearing that he hurt the parrot, Jon quickly opened the door to the freezer.

The parrot calmly stepped out onto Jon's outstretched arm and said "I believe I may have offended you with my rude language and actions. I am sincerely remorseful for any inappropriate transgressions. I fully intend to do everything I can do to correct my rude and unforgivable behavior".

Jon was stunned at the change in the bird's attitude. He was about to ask the parrot why he had made such a dramatic change in his behavior, but the bird continued..."May I ask what the chicken did?"

**John Van Aken**

## The Handy Man

A husband is at home watching the football, when his wife interrupts: 'Honey, could you fix the hall light? It's been flickering for weeks now'....

He looks at her and says, angrily: 'Fix the light? Now? Does it look like I have TXU printed on my forehead? I don't think so!'

'Well then, could you fix the fridge door? It won't close properly.' Fix the fridge door? Does it look like I have Whirlpool written on my forehead? I don't think so!'

'Fine,' she says, 'well then, could you at least fix the steps to the front door? They are about to break up.' 'Does it look as though I've got Bunning's written on my forehead? I don't think so. I've had enough of this, I'm going to the pub.'

So, he goes to the pub and drinks until closing time. When he arrives home, he notices the steps are fixed and the light has stopped flickering. He goes to the fridge to get a beer and notices that the fridge door is also fixed. 'Honey, how did all these get fixed?'

'Well,' she said 'When you left, I sat outside and cried. Just then a nice young man asked me what was wrong - so I told him. He offered to do all the repairs and all I had to do was either bake him a cake or have sex with him.' 'So, what kind of

cake did you bake him?' 'She replied: 'HELLO!!!..... Do you see Bakers Delight written on my forehead? I don't think so!'

## The Affair

A man was having an affair with his secretary. They took the afternoon off one day and went to her flat. After a pleasurable afternoon, they both fell asleep and didn't wake up until 8pm. The man panicked because it was so late. He quickly got dressed and rushed out the door.

When he got home, his wife asked him "Why are you so late?". He felt very guilty and admitted to having an affair saying "I'm having an affair with my secretary and went to her flat for the afternoon and then fell asleep". "That's a likely story, look at the grass on your shoes, you've been out playing golf again, haven't you" replied the wife. "Yes dear" said the husband with great relief.

## The Nurse

Three doctors were talking over morning tea. "Have you come across Nurse Nancy?" asked the first doctor. "Yes" replied the other doctors. "She always gets things wrong!, doesn't she?" said the first doctor, "I asked her to give Mr. Beal 2 tablets every 4 hours and she gave him 4 tablets every 2 hours".

"That's nothing" said the second doctor "I asked her to give Mr. Smith an enema every 24 hours and she gave him 24 enemas in one hour".

Just then, there was a loud scream from one of the other doctors. "Bloody hell" he said, "I just sent her to prick Mr. Jones 'boil'".

## Lucky?

A doctor told a patient that he had a rare, fatal disease called D24 and had only a month to live.

The man went to a pub to drown his sorrows. While there, he played the pokies and won the jackpot. While waiting for the supervisor to come, he won another jackpot on the next machine.

When the supervisor finally made his way next to the man, he said "This is your luck day". The man replied "Lucky... I've got D24". "D24" said the supervisor, "... you've won the chook raffle as well".

**Robin Woodroffe**



Have you heard any good jokes lately? Get them to us by phone, email, snail mail...

Thanks to everyone that sent in jokes for this issue!

# Wheelchair Rugby

Nazim Erdem  
nazimerdem@aqavic.org.au



## At Seasons End...

The local competition of wheelchair rugby has just been completed for this season. It has been a fairly tight competition throughout the season with three teams hoping to finish first, the Harley Eagles, the Red Backs and the Spoke Busters.

The fourth team of the competition, the Country Vikings probably had a season that they'd rather forget. At the beginning of the year they were looking very good, and then they lost their AB player (Mark, who was their main man). And then their number two player, Gordon Caldwell, who is a 3.5 pointer, couldn't turn up for games on a regular basis because of other commitments. Even though they didn't have a good season, they deserve some praise, especially Darrel Coyne, Christian Brackley and Hailey Brackley, for turning up week in, week out. It takes real commitment driving to Melbourne from Shepparton every Friday night. Special mention must also go to Rose Brackley, who was there to give a hand to not only the Country Vikings but anyone else who needed to get ready for games.

The finals, which were played on the 6<sup>th</sup> of December, saw a good turnout from supporters, prospective players and players who used to play the game until recently, like Nigel Steele, Steve Mollison and Sue. Some of the people who played the game until a few seasons ago, would have seen a game that has come a long way in a short time. There are new rules, better chairs, and better skills from all players, which makes for a quick moving, tactical and entertaining game with metal bending hard hitting.

The team, the Spoke Busters (Muhammed Erdem, Kevin Perrett, Andrew Brandolin, Nazim Erdem) won the bronze medal by default – the Country Vikings didn't have the numbers to put a team on court.

The gold medal game was fought between the Harley Eagles and the Red Backs. The Harley Eagles were undermanned throughout the season with their 'number two' player, Nathan Bezzant, who is a three pointer, out of action – this was also the case with the final game.

The game started fairly evenly but the Red Backs managed to better the Harley Eagles (who fought ferociously throughout the game) score at each change. The Red Backs did an amazing job of keeping the Harley Eagles scorers (Terry Serong, Con Giannopoulos, Steve Odgers), in check. The highlight of the game came in the third quarter after a Red Back's goal. Bryce, who had just scored, was heading towards Steve who was waiting up court for a pass. But before the whistle had been blown, Bryce hit Steve with an almighty blow, which caused Steve's chair to roll over.

**Note For Naughty Bryce:** No contact before the whistle;

**Note For Silly Steve:** DON'T try taking on Bryce tempting him by saying "Come on, come on".

Terry was bugged at the end of the game after having two to three players on him, stopping him from getting anywhere near the ball. By the final siren, the score board showed that the Red Back's had won comfortably to receive the gold medal. The Red Back's players also received a \$50 Westfield shopping centre voucher for their win. If Westfield continues with their support, the players are going to play so much harder next season. Well done John Koumourou, Cliff Clarke, Andrew Kendall, Bryce Alman, Rod McNeil, and Stuart Alman.

The celebrations were put on hold for a moment with the announcement from Con, who plays for the Harley Eagles, saying that he had played his last game and would be retiring. Con has been involved with the game of wheelchair rugby since its inception in Victoria many moons ago and has played for over 300 games locally and nationally. We all wish Con the best on his retirement and hope to see him, be it as a spectator, at some of our future games.

### Awards for the night

Gold – Red Backs

Silver – Harley Eagles

Bronze – Spoke Busters

Best AB (able bodied) player – Bernie Nolan

Encouragement Award – Darrel Coyne

Most Valuable Player – Andrew Brandolin

Basket of Goodies – Rose Brackley

After the awards, everyone was invited to catch up with one another over pizzas. The Whitehorse Aquatic and Leisure Centre is supposed to close at 10pm but we were still chatting away well after that time.

The local competition of wheelchair rugby is taking a break until February 2003. Guys, that doesn't mean you can get on the piss or anything like that – try to keep your fitness levels up!!! But in the meantime the State team is looking for a coach for the 2003 year. The new coach will be responsible for the State team competing in the 2003 National Wheelchair Rugby League as well as other competitions, including the local league. If you are interested in the position or would like to get involved in anyway, please contact Wheelchair Sports Victoria on (03)9473 0133. We are always on the lookout for volunteers and new players. In January, I will be heading to the U.S. with the Australian team to play in three tournaments over two weeks – I'll keep you all in touch in the next issue of News Link.

**Nazim Erdem**

## Wheelchair Tennis - Are you interested in Tennis?

Wheelchair Tennis? If you are, did you know that the **Australian Wheelchair Tennis Open** for 2003 is coming up very shortly? Well, it is... See speed, power and skill at its best at Melbourne Park from the 5<sup>th</sup> till the 9<sup>th</sup> of February. So pencil it in now... ..and best of all **ENTRY IS FREE!!!**



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This busy office provides an office overload service to the public, which includes, digital printing, photocopying, desktop publishing, laminating, word processing and other related services.

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Please call **Natasha** on **9489 0777** for further information.

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# CLASSIFIEDS

## For Sale

- **Van – Freewheeler Series 1**  
1999 model, seats 3 people plus wheelchair, air conditioning, power steering  
**PRICE:** \$29,820
- **Van – Freewheeler Quinto**  
2000 model, white, seats 4 people plus wheelchair, Holden warranty  
**PRICE:** \$37,450
- **Van – Freewheeler Quinto Auto**  
2001 model, white, seats 4 people plus wheelchair, Holden warranty  
**PRICE:** \$42,500
- **Van – Freewheeler Berlingo**  
2000 model, Rouge, barn doors, extras  
**PRICE:** \$36,500
- **Van – Freewheeler Berlingo demonstrator**  
2001 model, silver, low km's, lowering suspension, lift-up tailgate, power windows/mirrors  
**PRICE:** \$45,698
- **Freewheeler Berlingo demonstrator**  
2001 model, Innsbruck green, lowering suspension, lift-up tailgate, power windows/mirrors  
**PRICE:** \$45,698  
**PHONE:** Fleetworks Mobility 1800 222 377

- **Single King Size Bed**  
Electric High and Low, adjustable head and feet, on castors, built-in 12 point massager, excellent condition  
**PRICE:** \$2,800  
**PHONE :** Jerry 9776 0522

- **Motorised Wheelchair - Fisher & Paykel 'Harrier'**  
Very good condition  
**PRICE:** \$3,400 ono.  
**PHONE:** Graham 5765 2244.

- **Lightweight Folding Wheelchair**  
Push handles, arm rests, new tyres, foam cushion, anti tip bar, fold up footplates, 17 inch wide, back 16 high, all parts detachable, excellent condition  
**PRICE:** \$450 ono
- **Wheelchair Hoist**  
To suit folding wheelchair, suit older model car with roof gutters, motor just serviced, excellent condition.  
**PRICE:** \$700 ono  
**PHONE:** Tony 9579 0812 after 4.30pm

- **Stair Lift Chair**  
Stair lift chair that takes occupant up or down stair case, 6 months old, mains operated with battery back-up, cost \$7,650 new  
**PRICE:** \$5,500  
**PHONE:** Ray Harman 5334 1148 Ballarat

## For Sale

- **Electric Wheelchair**  
Shopperider, 4 years old, good condition, charger  
**PRICE:** \$1,500 ono  
**PHONE:** Christine 9439 5053
- **Free Rider 3 wheel scooter**  
12 months old, captains seat, delta controls, charger,  
**PRICE:** \$2750 ono
- **Electric adjustable bed**  
mattress as new  
**PRICE:** \$3000 ono
- **Electric Lift Reclining Chair**  
Smokey Dawson model  
**PRICE:** \$1000 ono  
**PHONE:** Bianca 0403 504 101, 9534 5641
- **Gazelle Motorised Wheelchair**  
4 yrs Old, very good condition  
**PRICE:** \$3,000 negotiable  
**PHONE:** Sue 9878 2947

- **Wheelchair Trailer**  
Manufactured by RAL in Bendigo  
trailer with ramp on board, suitable for carrying Scooter or Power chair, hooks onto tow-bar, near new, single wheel, cost \$1850 new  
**PRICE:** \$800 ono (Queenscliff)  
**PHONE:** Chris Jolly 5258 2698

- **Plega Life & Massage Chair**  
(similar to a Jason recliner), lays back & takes to standing, electronically operated with a massage function, velour material, excellent condition 3 years old  
**PRICE:** \$1,000 neg.  
**PHONE:** Kim 9748 7776

## WANTED

- **Second hand wheels to suit "Mobility Plus".** Must be 24 inch. Will pay up to \$200 for a pair  
**PHONE:** Steve 9876 2576 or  
**EMAIL:** steve.mollison@axa.com.au
- **A hoist and or sling** (with neck support) wanted for a C4/5 quad.  
**PHONE:** 5526 7181 Brad

