



NEWS LINK

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

October 2002



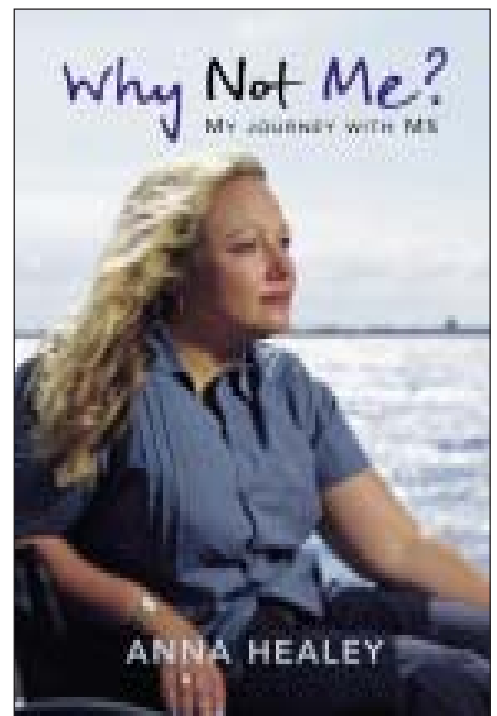
Scienceworks Museum

Get a Grasp of Science & Technology



Book Review

Why Not Me?



Travel

Uluru - The Heart and Soul of the
Northern Territory





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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

I am happy to report that at our Annual General Meeting on 29th October, AQA had four new people elected onto the board of directors. This now gives us a full compliment of nine on our board.



I would like to welcome our new directors and introduce them to our readers.

Ivan Peterson

Ivan is the Access & Integration Officer at the Banyule City Council. Ivan is involved in a number of committees that deal with disability issues. Ivan has much to offer AQA because of his extensive knowledge of disability.

Paul Van Veenendaal

Over the last twelve months, Paul has volunteered his experience and knowledge in business to assist in our Copies Plus Department. During this time, Paul developed an interest in AQA as an organisation which has lead to his nomination as a director. Paul's business expertise will be greatly appreciated by the organisation.

Stefan Galavodas

Stefan has been a member of AQA for many years. Stefan is a Computer Systems Administrator and has a lot to offer AQA, both from a personal and business point of view.

Tanya Clarke

Tanya has also been a member of AQA for many years. Tanya is a contractor for a web company based in Sydney and also does freelance work from home. Tanya has had a long association with AQA and is hoping to give something back to the organisation by becoming a board member.

I would like to congratulate all our new directors and I look forward to working with them.

Ian Bennett

Chief Executive Officer

ianbennett@aqavic.org.au

From the Editor

Thanks must be said to all the members giving us feedback about News Link. We also appreciate very much those of you who write to us about solutions they have discovered that may help other members in doing things easier.



As we near the end of the year, I'm sure that you will be going away or doing something special. If you do, please let us know if it was accessible, peaceful, fun, frustrating etc. so we can help our other members and give them ideas of things to do. Even if you see something of interest on TV or the papers, we'd like to know. You can phone us, email us, or write to us. Do it!

In the last issue of News Link, we had an article about the abuse of disabled parking bays. Well, some of us from AQA took part and noted some disturbing figures. Read the article on page 6 for our report of the day.

Nazim Erdem

News Link Editor

nazimerdem@aqavic.org.au



Special Needs Housing

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



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Uluru – The Heart and Soul of the Northern Territory

A great idea for a mid year holiday is to visit Ayers Rock in the Northern Territory. Whether you choose to travel by plane, train or bus, Yulara is a great destination from April to October.



The Rock itself has many aspects for people to appreciate. It is recommended that before exploring the surroundings of the park and Rock, that you visit the Visitors Centre at Yulara Resort (12 km's from the Rock), where you can get all of the information you need to begin an enjoyable holiday. The Centre itself is fully accessible with ramps to the two levels. Wheelchair accessible toilets are available. You can ring ahead on (08) 8957 7377 or simply drop in at Yulara Drive, Yulara. The Centre is open between 8.30am to 5pm.



A place of interest to visit is the Kata Tjuta Cultural Centre. The Cultural Centre is open from 7am to 6.30pm. The Centre is situated at the Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park (at the base of Ayers Rock) and will provide you with all the information

and services that are available. When you visit the Centre, you'll gain a fascinating understanding of Creation stories and Laws, which explain the spiritual meaning of the National Park and surrounding areas. The Cultural Centre is wheelchair accessible, with accessible toilets and pathways. Contact them on (08) 8956 3138.

Once you gather all the information and souvenirs that are available at both centres, you can then explore the great rock and surrounding National Park.



The following is only a sample of what is available.

For more information, please contact the Visitor's Centre or Cultural Centre.

Some of the accessible attractions around Uluru are:

- The OLGAS – Kata Tjuta Viewing Area – This 300 metre, wheelchair accessible walk is located 25 km along the Kata Tjuta Road. It offers a magnificent view of Kata Tjuta and a relaxing place to sit.
- ULURU – Ranger Guided Mala Walk – the walk starts at the Mala Walk sign and goes through the different perceptions of the spiritual significance of the park and how it is managed. The walk finishes at Kantju

Gorge. The tour is free and the track is wheelchair accessible. All areas are flat with ramps onto viewing platforms.

- Picnic areas and wheelchair accessible toilets are available throughout the park and near the Cultural Centre.

As well as sights and attractions, tours are available around the Yulara region. AAT Kings Travel operates tours around Uluru, looking at all the sights while learning all the geology, flora and fauna of Uluru. To find out more about these accessible tours phone (08) 8956 2067. There is one accessible bus operating in this area, so it is advised to phone ahead.



If you think that this is a good option for a holiday for yourself, accessible accommodation is also available in the area.

Three accessible hotels that you can choose from are;
The Desert Gardens Hotel
Sails in the Desert Hotel
Outback Pioneer Hotel

Contact 1300 139 889 for reservations or (08) 8957 7888 for more details about each property.

From 'The Newsletter of IDEAS', Jan/Feb 2002.

WOMEN'S ISSUES

Looking Good

By Raelene West
info@aqavic.org.au

Well it is that time of year again girls-Spring Racing Carnival, time to pull out the hat, grab a champas and head off to the races. But what to wear?...the eternal question. Finding a frock is no easy feat, and wanting to still look great while in a wheelchair in that frock can sometimes require a bit of lateral thinking. Having an SCI can mean something as simple as wearing your old jeans can become a problem and some of the most common questions I get asked by newer SCI women are about clothing and how they can still wear the style of clothes they used to wear. After a round table discussion, we came up with a few ideas below on how to wear those old jeans and how to be looking your old fashion best for the racing season (...hmm this is sounding rather Women's Weekly). So how exactly do you get yourself to the races looking good in a frock if you have to cover a drainage bag, have a wheelchair as a handbag, know you are going to freeze if it's below 20°C and are struggling to get those non-complying feet into heels?

Well problem one is an issue most people with an SCI deal with, concealing a necessary drainage bag. Generally, if you are wearing pants, the drainage bag sits below the knee under the jeans, without being really noticeable. As most quads would know, this is the easiest and most practical spot and then it's just a matter of choosing the type of pants you want to wear-dressy or casual. However, say it is racing time and you want to wear a dress or you simply want to wear shorts or a short skirt because it is hot. A number of smaller bags exist that can be worn on the upper thigh and a good idea is to wear hot-pants or bike-shorts under the skirt, dress or shorts to hide the bag.

Although the bags are smaller and therefore have to be emptied more often, it at least frees your legs up for a bit of spring sun and allows you to wear the dress it took you 2 hours to find. Another solution is to wear the layered look with a skirt over pants (or if you're ultra-trendy and hangout in Brunswick St., you could wear a fringed wrap over pants!). At least then you have the standard size drainage bag on, look modern and still get to enjoy the sight of your skirts.

Still on the pants area is the jeans issue. Everyone has their favorite pair of jeans they like to wear and having an SCI shouldn't mean you should stop - it's just a matter of finding a way. The main thing to watch for with jeans is pressure, so look for stretch or worn brands which are softer on the skin and which also make dressing easier. As it is impossible to try these things on, a good tip when shopping for jeans or pants is to take an old pair of jeans or pants with you, which you know fit and measure the waist and/or leg up against the new pair you want to buy. This usually saves you a few returns to the store changing sizes and time trying things on at home. Also partially elastic waisted pants/jeans are a good idea for less pressure on the waistline (...or in my case eating less Tim-Tams) and a wide leg or boot-legged style can make accessing the drainage bag a lot easier.

So you find the perfect outfit and are ready to show off the legs-and the weather report for the day: rain and 16°C!... Brilliant, prepare to freeze. Temperature regulation is a big issue for most quads and the day will hardly be fun if you are freezing all day. Thankfully the races dictate that you wear a hat, and as 30% of your body

heat is lost through your head, any hat (even covered in tulle) will help. Other ideas are to wear as many layers as possible. A thin thermal under a good shirt won't be seen, a fashionable scarf and/or a good fitting jacket (short so it doesn't get caught in the wheels) are ideas. Even a large wrap that is easy to take on and off while you are outside in-between going to places might keep you warmer for longer. Wearing long over the knee leg stockings under the pants may also keep the pegs a degree or 2 warmer. And my advice is to try and set up camp somewhere near the action but inside if it's going to be a long day-preferably near a bar and not too crowded.

Lastly, as for the heels, we found this a difficult one. Generally, it is hard for the ankles to balance properly and sit straight in higher heeled shoes on the footplates, so opt for something fashionable maybe, but with a lower heel. Strapy sandals are always easier and look good. If you are having trouble sliding your foot into narrower fitting sandals and if, unlike me, you are ultra organised, take the shoes to a boot maker beforehand and have them insert an extra piece of elastic into the shoe to increase the width. Then you and those around you still get to enjoy the fun of wearing your weekly pay-packet on your feet. And remember, most of the women will be drunk and shoeless by race 6 if they're having a good day anyway, so simply take your shoes off if they are causing pressure areas and you'll fit right in (joke!). And as for the wheelchair for a handbag?... We decided you'll be looking so good with all of our advice that no-one will notice the wheelchair.

I'm off to the Oaks.....Happy Punting

National Day of Action – Disabled Parking

As you will all recall, in the last issue of News Link, we had an article about the abuse of disabled parking bays throughout Australia. The Physical Disability Council of Australia (PDCA) organised a “National Day of Action” where they asked people (disabled people, friends, colleagues, family) to spend some time at their local shopping centre, business district, university, public parking area – generally anywhere there may be disabled parking bays, to observe how many people park in the disabled bays without the correct parking labels. This issue has been raised many times and continually frustrates people with disabilities who drive vehicles or are passengers in vehicles.

The aim of the day was to document how often these spaces are abused.

Well, the National Day of Action was held on Wednesday September 25th and AQA Victoria got involved (if anyone else got involved, we would be interested in hearing how they went). Peter, Phil, Raelene and myself went to various areas in Melbourne where there were disabled parking bays. We had to take notes on a form which was provided by PDCA. Peter, Phil and myself spent a few hours in our own designated areas, which we had predetermined a few days earlier, watching and noting who parked in the disabled parking bays.

We noted a total of 48 cars parked in disabled parking bays while we were there. Of the 48 cars, 45 had ‘Disabled Parking Labels’ displayed and were OK to park there, the remaining 3 vehicles didn’t have labels and shouldn’t have been parked there (see figure A).

What we found as very disturbing was that of all the cars parked with disabled parking labels (45), occupants from only 25 vehicles seemed to have a genuine disability of some nature or were frail. This means that 44% of the

disabled parking bays were abused by people who had a parking permit but didn’t show ANY signs of disability (see figure B).

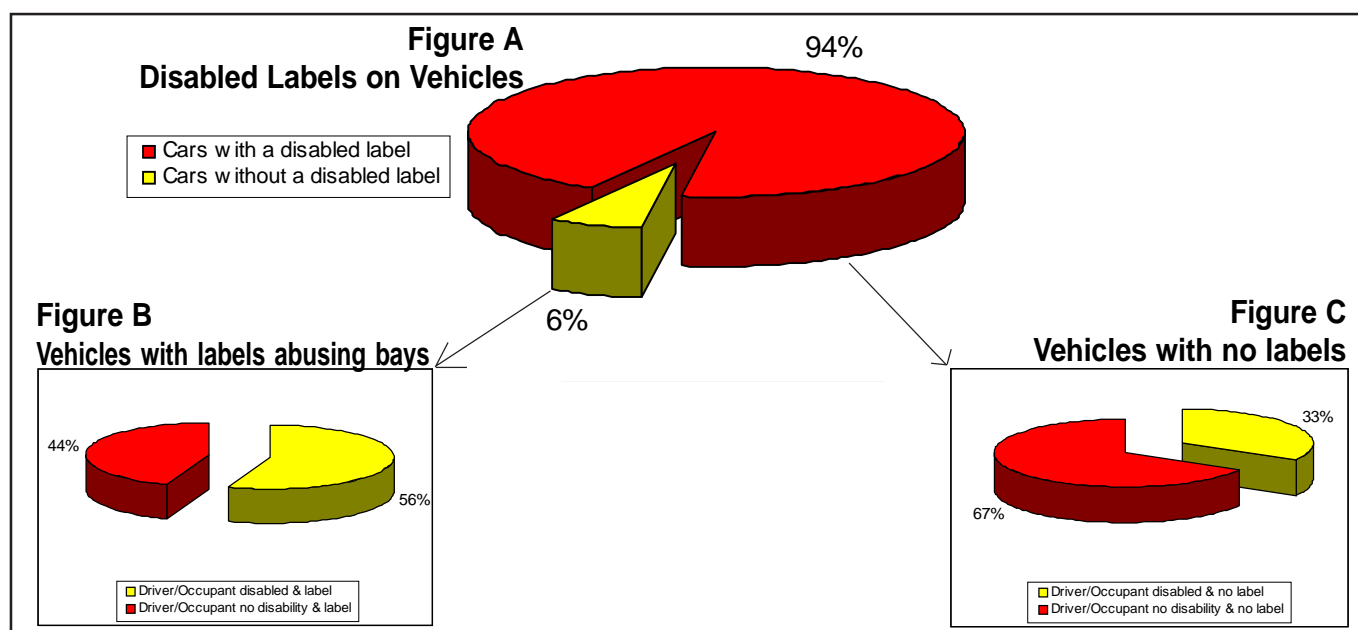
Of the 3 cars that didn’t have a disabled parking label but were parked in a disabled bay, only occupants from one of the vehicles seemed to have a genuine disability. The other 2 vehicles didn’t have a label or an occupant with a disability. This equated to a 67% abuse rate if they had labels (see figure C).

Another thing we noticed was that the average time a vehicle spent parked in a bay was about 1 hour and 15 minutes (some vehicles were parked for the duration that we were there). Ten minutes was the least amount of time a vehicle spent parked in the bay.

If we had to answer the question, “Are disabled parking bays abused by people who didn’t need them?”, we would definitely say YES. Looking at the pie graph below, you would most likely agree with us.

Once the PCDA has collected and compiled the forms, they will start the campaign of informing Transport authorities, councils etc. on how many abuses there were on a given day in Australia. Hopefully then, the responsible authorities will do something about this abuse of the disabled parking bays by people who really don’t need them.

Note: These results were gained by our own experience (in three areas across Melbourne) and in no way are we saying that these figures would be similar nationally but we think they would be close. Although more than 44% of occupants of vehicles we noted didn’t look like they had a noticeable disability, that doesn’t mean that they were abusing the parking bays (they may have had a disability that wasn’t noticeable). Be your own judge. **Nazim Erdem**



AQA Victoria Member Profile

Name: Penny Mortell

Your Age: Old Enough

Disability & Level:

C7 Incomplete

Are you Married/Single?

Divorced, but single

Do you have children?

I have two kids, a boy and a girl

How did you acquire your disability?

I had a car accident in 1974

What is your living situation?

I live on my own in a unit, which is accessible of course. Sorry, forgot, I have a dog too!

Your Survival Tip for others?

If you are having a bad day, don't go out in public.

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

A little girl asked me once, "Why are you in that Wheelbarrow?"



Your greatest achievement?

Having people get to know me and forget I'm in a chair!

What do you do with your time?

I'm an advocate for ParaQuad in Northern Tasmania.

Why did you choose to live in Country/City? (Draw backs/Positives)

I live in the suburbs. I like shopping, I also like people. I would love to live by the sea

someday, although sand can be a problem.

Your best holiday spot and why?

Bicheno, down by the sea. There are lots of crayfish and scallops and I love the fresh sea air.

What food do you like best?

I like Italian and Chinese, but have been known for craving McDonalds occasionally.

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

I would buy a black Audi car - I'd love one. I would also maybe travel to France and Egypt.

Do you have an internet site you would recommend?

I do go on the internet, but am not into it that much. I just get what I need and out. I keep up with Christopher Reeve and his Newsletter on line at <http://www.christopherreeve.org/>

SEXUAL IDENTITY, WELLNESS AND CARERS

Susan Peake is doing research based on "Sexual identity, Wellness and Carers". She is looking at prospective people to be interviewed for about an hour for the study (You could also join in a teleconference). To participate, you need to have a physical disability, be over 18 years old, have care from either a nurse or carer.

If you would like to participate, contact Susan on (03)9244 6622 or peakes@deakin.edu.au

Sexuality & Women With Spinal Cord Injury

The Victorian Spinal Cord Service is currently involved in a drug trial to look at sexual function in spinal cord injured women. If you are more than twelve months post injury, over 18 years old and interested in participating in the trial, please contact any of the following people.

- Dr. Doug Brown – Principal Investigator – 9496 4220
- Dr. Steve Hill – Co-Investigator – 9496 4220
- Annie Norrish – Study Co-ordinator – 9496 4732, Mobile 0408 035 849

Physical Disability Research Project

Sally Bailey, who is currently working on a research project titled "Transition to adulthood of people with a physical disability", is looking for people to interview who are in their early 20's with a physical disability. If you are interested in participating, give her a call on (03)9766 2403.



CELEBRITY SHIRTS

The Australasian Spinal Research Trust is going to hold a fundraiser for spinal cord research in March 2003. Part of that function will be the auctioning of Celebrity Shirts, signed by celebrities to raise money. If you know anyone

- famous or have a friend who may have a contact who could help, I would appreciate your assistance. Please give me a call on 98783249 or madge@alphalink.com.au if you have any contacts.
- Gary Allsop (Honorary Director, Australasian Spinal Research Trust)

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AQA Website Update

Humble apologies are being made for a lack of activity/interactivity on our website. The reason for this is a range of improvements involving new libraries and mapping (generally more efficient programming code). What this means to you is that you will be able to access our website pages a lot quicker. Once the work is finished, the site will be a lot bigger with a great deal of information. But remember that our website is a work in progress (always changing and improving) and may take time.

One new change you will notice on our website is the new section added to Qualcare's page. We have added a new 'Employment' section for carers and other interested people.

Now did anyone read Gary Allsop's most excellent digest of things afoot in Spinal Cord Injury (we had a version of his article in Acrobat .pdf format which he has recently updated). If you have not seen it yet, I cannot speak highly

enough about it. I recommend you have a look at it and find out for yourself what is happening in Australia in the area of spinal cord research. If you do not have access to the internet, don't despair, give us a call and we will be happy to send you a copy by post. If you have read the article, what do you think about it? I would like to hear what others think. Gary has also agreed to come on line to our chat room to discuss the article and field any questions at a future date.

Email me at philbutterworth@aqavic.org.au or give me a call on (03)9489 0777 and let me know what you think. If you would like Gary to hold a forum in our chat room, what day and time would suit you? I need to get some feedback from you in order to organise this. Personally, I think a Sunday would be good because most people are home and have access to their computers.

Phil Butterworth
philbutterworth@aqavic.org.au

DYNAMIC WHEELCHAIRS

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mike De Santo

“Why Not Me – My Journey with MS” by Anna Healey.

First published on e-bility.com

“It seems strange that being diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis could be a good thing, a positive thing, that Multiple Sclerosis could make someone a better person.”

Back in 1991 Anna Healey was told that MS was devastating, that it would destroy her body and undermine her self-worth. The overwhelming response from people she met back then was negative. She recalls “no-one ever discussed how empowering something like this could be ... my disease has taught me to accept my faults, my strengths, my weaknesses, my talents - my self ... it has also taught me to enjoy life in all its guises, the small pleasures as well as the big ones”.

Anna Healey’s world was turned upside down, when at 28 years of age she found out she had multiple sclerosis. The reality of her diagnosis initially seemed to be a life sentence, and coming to terms with the effects of MS left her feeling depressed and dependent.

The severity and onset of MS varies from one person to another, but for Anna it meant she lost the effective use of her legs and had difficulty walking and maintaining her balance due to paralysis and spasms. Suddenly the simplest of tasks became near impossible due to the pain and limited mobility, as she tried to care for a small baby, and look after her health. Hiring a wheelchair and

finding the courage to use it, was one of many physical and emotional hurdles along the way, a tough decision for such a self-sufficient and fun-loving person.

These days Anna has rediscovered her independence, she drives (a white convertible with modified hand controls), works part-time as a drama teacher and helps run a surf shop. She has a wicked sense of humour, and enjoys zipping into the disabled spot in her convertible and challenging the conventional wisdom and stereotypes of people with disabilities, who apparently should only be seen driving a sensible car!

Not an athletic person in her youth (in fact someone who actively avoided all sport and had an excuse for every occasion), Anna has become an accomplished solo sailor, competing in the national and world championships, as well as being the only woman to participate in the 2000 Paralympic sailing trials. She is also an ambassador and role model for people with disabilities, and through her public speaking and media activities raises awareness about MS in schools and amongst the general public. Her successes, enthusiasm, optimism and determination to enjoy life, continue to inspire others to achieve their best.

Anna’s book is a very personal and honest account of living with multiple sclerosis. She talks openly about the effect MS has on her life, and that of her family and close



friends. The difficulties and despair she felt initially and the incredible new highs she has found. After seeking to find a reason and answer the question “Why me?”, she came to the realisation “Why Not Me?” and decided to “live life to the max” from that point on. This change in attitude marked the beginning of many new adventures and was a turning point. That’s not to say life suddenly became easy, but she says she has learnt to get on with it, and found there is plenty to enjoy.

More information about Anna’s story can be read on e-bility.com at <http://www.e-bility.com/articles/whynotme.shtml> including an interview with Anna.

e-bility.com is an award winning destination web site that provides a central resource for disability related information, services and products. Established in 1998, the site has a focus on accessibility, and includes many articles of interest, as well as an extensive links directory, access travel spot, book reviews, exhibit hall, community notice board, brochure stand, and free opt-in email newsletter. Worth a visit!

Scienceworks Museum

'Get a Grasp of Science & Technology' at Scienceworks. Push it, pull it, spin it, bang it. Through hands-on exhibits, live demonstrations, tours, activities and shows, you'll find science has never been quite this much fun. You can have fun exploring the mysteries of science and technology. It's a great value day out for curious minds.

Encompassing the only digital planetarium in the Southern Hemisphere, the Melbourne Planetarium is really out of this world. A planetarium show will take you to the stars, the moon, the planets and beyond. The other option is to enjoy one of their site tours. The New Melbourne Planetarium uses the latest digital technology to recreate the night sky on a 15 metre domed ceiling. Imagine the night sky is around you - all around you.

Discover the historic Spotswood Pumping Station or some of the museum's treasure collection. Construction of the pumping station began in March 1894 as a key component of Melbourne's first centralised sewerage system. Spotswood Pumping Station ceased operation in 1965, although sewage still flows under the site. Explore the Historic Spotswood Pumping Station, which is open for guided or self-guided tours daily. See the large steam pumping engines powered by compressed air. The Spotswood Pumping Station and its contents are classified by the National Trust. The historic buildings are now a major feature of Scienceworks.

Scienceworks offers a wide range of facilities to ensure that your visit is both comfortable and enjoyable. They have a café or alternatively if you wish to bring your own lunch we have gas BBQs and a covered eating area for picnics which you are free to use. Enjoy the educational playgrounds including the Pirate Ship, Steam Train, and Science Adventure.

Wheelchair access is also provided throughout the site as well as disabled and unisex toilets. All of the interactive displays are at a suitable height for people in wheelchairs with the majority of exhibition space on the ground floor. There are flat paths across the grassed areas with ramps and lifts to access the other areas. In the Planetarium, there are 10 spaces allocated for wheelchairs.



Current & Upcoming Exhibitions

Body Odyssey. (Short-term exhibition)

August 2002 - 27 January 2003

A zany, scientific journey throughout the human body for the whole family. It's designed to help children and families understand the healthy choices they can make.

A-Z : 26 ways of looking (Long-term exhibition)

A-Z is an 'alphabetic' exhibition that highlights the diversity of objects and themes in Museum Victoria's History and Technology collections.

Stayin' Alive (Long-term exhibition)

Stayin' Alive explains how the human body and senses help us survive in the deep ocean, dry deserts, frozen Antarctica and outer space.

Nitty Gritty Super City (Long-term exhibition)

Built especially for 3-8 year olds, Nitty Gritty Super City is a kid's own city to explore. Filled with smells, sounds, and things to touch, it is a place that will involve children, parents and grandparents.

Sports Works (Long-term exhibition)

Stretch your mind and your muscles at Sports Works. You can run a race against an Olympic sprinter Cathy Freeman, row a boat against a friend, test your own fitness or see a slow-motion replay of your tennis or golf swing.

Museum Collections

Join a guided tour of the Scienceworks Collection Store. Go behind the scenes and see some of the objects that have been collected over the last 100 years, such as the Symphonion previously housed in the Coles Book Arcade and some vintage cars and appliances.

Continued next page...

What's new in PEER SUPPORT

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

WHAT'S UP IN PEER GROUP

G'day members, AQA Victoria is involved in running "Life Skills Day" together with the Royal Talbot staff. Life Skills Days are aimed at SCI (Spinal Cord Injured) individuals who are going through rehabilitation at the Royal Talbot after their SCI. It's great to see SCI people sharing their experiences and knowledge with new wheelies. So much is gained - even the smallest tip to newly SCI people is information/knowledge that the rehabilitating SCI people can't gain anywhere else. They are hungry for this information/knowledge.

This is not about sailing around the world or running a successful business after SCI, it's just about moving on and what to expect in life after SCI. If you have had an SCI, and did your rehabilitation at Austin's ex ward 17 or Royal Talbot, you would know the importance and value of having "experienced" SCI people sharing their life experiences with newly SCI people during the rehabilitation process. If you're interested in being involved in AQA's peer support program, contact the Information/Peer Support department and have a chat.

The "Life Skills Day" has become a great meeting day for SCI individuals who are living out in the

community. You can always learn something even if you have been in a wheelchair for a long time. You can get some good advice and see what's new. Giving a little time to some people who are going through SCI rehabilitation works both ways - it can be very rewarding, not just for those doing the rehab, but also to you.

On a different note, I would love to hear from some members who have got a special way of doing a task, special tool or a set up that helps them do things easier. Some little trick that would suit SCI person's in their environment. Let's call these environment innovations "E.I.". I would like to start a column in News Link about 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 will fit with E.I., let us know, otherwise it can be hard to let others know what's out there. ALL innovations are what WE want - so information can be shared and used by OTHERS.

It will only work if YOU, our members, show interest and give us your ideas. If we share information and knowledge, it can make life easier for us all.

...from previous page

Getting here

Scienceworks is located at 2 Booker Street Spotswood, 5km from the centre of Melbourne at the western end of the West Gate Bridge. (Melways reference number 56 B1.) Parking is available free of charge for cars and buses. Trains to Spotswood leave the city regularly on the Werribee line. Scienceworks is just a ten-minute walk/push from Spotswood station.



You can go to Scienceworks any day of the week, they're open daily from 10.00am to 4.30pm, except Good Friday and Christmas Day. Please note that there is an entry fee into Scienceworks and the Planetarium (\$7 for concession entry into Scienceworks & \$11.50 for Scienceworks and the Planetarium).

For further information call Scienceworks on 9392 4800 or 13 11 02 or check them out on the web; <http://scienceworks.museum.vic.gov.au>

Nazim Erdem

Rewards of Raising Awareness

Earlier this month, I had the pleasure of giving a talk to about 120, eight year old students at Mackellar Primary School in Delahey. Giving a talk to so many students is nerve racking, but doing it over four sessions of 40 students each made it easier.

You never know what to expect when talking to kids – especially at such a young age. You think to yourself “Will they pay attention”, “Will they ask silly questions”, “Will they genuinely take in your message or am I wasting my time”.

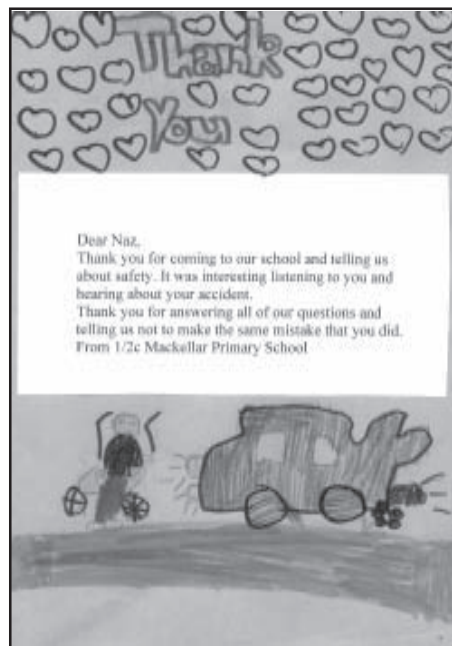
The good thing about kids is that they are curious and hungry for knowledge. They tend to ask questions and show interest in things that adults wouldn't think about asking or would feel embarrassed about asking.

Before each group came into the class for the talk, I could see and hear them pushing each other, laughing amongst each other, and yelling in the corridor – kids being kids and generally having fun.

As they made their way into the class room, they all said hi, hello, and asked if I was the person that was going to give a talk to them about safety and disability. Some other comments made as they were entering the room were, “Cool chair”, and “can I have a go later?”. These comments just show that kids

at a young age really don't see the disability or the effects of it.

When they took their places, legs crossed, in front of me, I told them how people can end up in wheelchairs through different types of accidents. As I was feeding them all of this information, I was surprised at how much notice they were taking. All eyes and ears were



a thank you card they sent to me later

concentrated on me and what I had to say. When question time came around, a multitude of hands went up.

I was asked genuine questions like, “Do I want to walk again”, “Can I walk again”, “How do I have a bath”, “Do I have a girlfriend” (they are thinking at that age), “How do I get dressed”, and “Would I dive

into shallow water again”. They were so hungry for information that they were queuing up to ask questions after the sessions had finished – even during their ‘Play Recess’.

At the end of the talk, the students thanked me and made a little presentation of a box of chocolates and an envelope. After the kids had left, the teacher told me that they had all got together and decided to collect some money to give to AQA Victoria and in the envelope were the proceeds of this effort – a cheque for \$72. This really topped things off for me and made my body tingle with excitement. I wasn't expecting that, especially from 8 year old primary school kids. (When the teacher called me at AQA to organise the talk, she asked me what the fee would be. I told her that we didn't have a fee but if the school wanted to make a donation to the association, they could. I think the kids stepped in after hearing about this.)

It is so important that kids get the opportunity to meet people that have disabilities. That way, as they grow older, they are aware and are not afraid of people with disabilities. Acceptance and access will not be the issue in the future that it is today. So, if kids come up to you anywhere, don't ignore them, at the least say hello and give them a smile.

Nazim Erdem

Computer Logic

A language teacher was explaining to her class that in French, nouns, unlike their English counterparts, are grammatically designated as masculine or feminine.

For example, "House" in French, is feminine-"la maison", "Pencil" in French, is masculine-"le crayon".

One puzzled student asked, "What gender is a computer?". The teacher did not know, and the word was not in her French dictionary. So for fun she split the class into two groups appropriately enough, by gender, and asked them to decide whether "computer" should be a masculine or a feminine noun. Both groups were required to give four reasons for their recommendation.

The men's group decided that computer should definitely be of the feminine gender ('la computer'), because:

1. No one but their creator understands their internal logic;
2. The native language they use to communicate with other computers is incomprehensible to everyone else;
3. Even the smallest mistakes are stored in long term memory for possible later review; and
4. As soon as you make a commitment to one, you find yourself spending half your paycheck on accessories for it.

The women's group, however, concluded that computers should be masculine ("le computer") because:

1. In order to do anything with them, you have to turn them on;
2. They have a lot of data but still can't think for themselves;
3. They are supposed to help you solve problems, but half the time they ARE the problem; and
4. As soon as you commit to one, you realise that if you had waited a little longer, you could have gotten a better model.

THE WOMEN WON

Genie Joke

A woman was walking along the beach when she stumbled upon a Genie's lamp. She picked it up and rubbed it, and lo-and-behold a Genie appeared. The amazed woman asked if she got three wishes.

The Genie said, "Nope...due to inflation, constant downsizing, low wages in third-world countries, and fierce global competition, I can only grant you one wish. So...what'll it be?"

The woman didn't hesitate. She said, "I want peace in the Middle East. See this map? I want these countries to stop fighting with each other."

The Genie looked at the map and exclaimed, "Gadzooks, lady! These countries have been at war for thousands of years. I'm good, but not THAT good! I don't think it can be done. Make another wish."

The woman thought for a minute and said, "Well, I've never been able to find the right man. You know, one that's considerate and fun, likes to cook and helps with the housecleaning, is good in bed and gets along with my family, doesn't watch sports all the time, and is faithful. That's what I wish for... a good mate."

The Genie let out a long sigh and said, "Let me see that map again!"

John Van Aken

If Noah lived in Australia ...

And the Lord spoke to Noah and said, "In one year, I am going to make it rain and cover the whole earth with water until all flesh is destroyed. But I want you to save the righteous people and two of every kind of living thing on the earth. Therefore, I am commanding you to build an Ark." In a flash of lightning, God delivered the

specifications for an Ark. In fear and trembling, Noah took the plans and agreed to build the Ark. "Remember" said the Lord, "You must complete the Ark and bring everything aboard in one year."

Exactly one year later, fierce storm clouds covered the earth and all the seas of the earth went into a tumult.

The Lord saw Noah was sitting in his front yard weeping. "Noah," He shouted. "Where is the Ark?". "Lord, please forgive me!" cried Noah, "I did my best, but there were big problems. First, I had to get a permit for construction and your plans did not comply with the codes. I had to hire an engineering firm and redraw the plans. Then I got into a fight with the Occupational Health & Safety Commission over whether or not the Ark needed a fire sprinkler system and flotation devices.

Then my neighbour objected, claiming I was violating zoning ordinances by building the Ark in my front yard, so I had to lodge a Rezoning Application with the City Council & it is now with the Land & Environment Court.

I had problems getting enough wood for the Ark, because there was a ban on cutting trees to protect the Kookaburra.

I finally convinced the Department of Conservation & Land Management that I needed the wood to save the kookaburras.

However, National Parks & Wildlife won't let me catch any kookaburras, so no kookaburras.

The carpenters formed a union and went out on strike. I had to negotiate a settlement with the Department of Industrial Relations before anyone would pick up a saw or a hammer. Now, I have 16 carpenters on the Ark, but still no kookaburras.

When I started rounding up the other animals, I got sued by the RSPCA. They objected to me only taking two of each kind aboard. Just when I got the suit dismissed, the EPA notified me that I could not complete the Ark without filing an environmental impact statement on "Your" proposed flood. They didn't take very kindly to the idea that they had no jurisdiction over the conduct of the Creator of the universe.

Then the Dept of Land and Water Conservation demanded a map of the proposed new flood plain. I sent them a complete set of UBDs & Gregory's. Right now, I am trying to resolve a complaint filed with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission that I am practicing discrimination by not taking godless, unbelieving people aboard!

The Australian Tax Office has seized my assets, claiming that I'm building the Ark in preparation to flee the country to avoid paying taxes. I also have to wait for the registration of my ABN for the GST. I just got a notice from the Waterways Authority that I owe them some kind of User tax and failed to register the Ark as a "recreational water craft." I also need a Boat Drivers License but they are debating about how to classify the craft. I am getting continual visits from Greenpeace, the RSPCA, Work Cover, the Sheriff's Office & numerous other government departments.

Finally, the Australian Council for Civil Liberties got the courts to issue an injunction against further construction of the Ark, saying that since God is flooding the earth, it is a religious event and therefore unconstitutional. I really don't think I can finish the Ark for another 5 or 6 years!" Noah wailed.

The sky began to clear, the sun began to shine and the seas began to calm. A rainbow arched across the sky. Noah looked up hopefully. "You mean you are not going to destroy the earth Lord?" "No," said the Lord sadly. "I don't have to, bureaucracy already has."

John Van Aken



YOU ASKED A QUESTION???

A reader recently asked, "If I want to go on a holiday and I have to fly to get there, do the airlines offer a concession rate?". Unfortunately none of the airlines, domestic or international, offer a concession rate airfare.

But what may benefit readers is the 'QANTAS Carer Concession Card'. Producing the card when purchasing your tickets (for yourself and you carer), means that you will save 50% off each airfare. But be aware that the card is only valid on QANTAS domestic flights.

QANTAS Carer Concession Card



Do you, or are you planning to fly domestically within Australia? Did you know that carers who fly with the person they care for on any domestic QANTAS flight are eligible for a 'QANTAS Carer Concession Card', which entitles them to a discount?

The QANTAS Carer Concession Card is issued to people with a disability and high level support needs who require the full time assistance of a carer while they are on the plane.

The person is eligible if they need to have one on one support when seated on the plane for tasks such as feeding, transferring to the bathroom, communicating with the flight staff, etc.

A person would not be eligible if they only need assistance boarding the plane, or when they arrive at their destination.

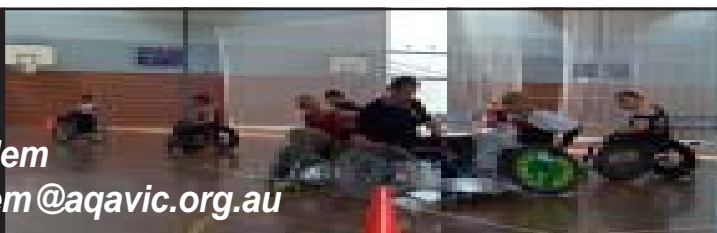
Cardholders receive a 50% discount on the standard full price domestic air travel, in addition to 50% off their carers fare. Please note that the Carer Concession Card does not apply to already discounted fares or 21 days in advance fares.

The QANTAS Carer Concession Card is a photo ID card and is valid for 3 years. There is a \$27.50 (including GST) administration fee.

For further information or to get your hands on a form, give AQA Victoria (9489 0777) or NICAN a call (1800 806 769.)

Wheelchair Rugby

Nazim Erdem
nazimerdem@aqavic.org.au



The inaugural 'National Wheelchair Rugby League' has been concluded with a new champion. For the last two years, South Australia have been too good for the other states, and held the title of 'Australian Wheelchair Rugby Champions'.

Things were different this year because each State was allowed to have an 'import player' on their team. Every State except South Australia decided to take advantage of this new rule.

The final standing for the 'League' is; 1st – New South Wales, 2nd – Queensland, 3rd – South Australia, 4th – Victoria, 5th – Western Australia.

The local league competition is nearly at an end for this year. The finals are going to be played towards the end of November. The finalists are not known yet because the competition is so tight. If you would like to see the games, please give us a call on (03)9489 0777 for the dates. We'd love to see you there!

PS: Congratulations to Bryce Alman and Nazim Erdem for being selected for the Australian team heading to 'Athens 2004'. But before, then, they will be heading to New Zealand and the US this November and January respectively, to compete at tournaments.

PAIN & SPINAL CORD INJURY

Many Spinal Cord Injured (SCI) individuals suffer with pain. There are so many different types of pain and lots of reason for pain. Pain makes a big difference to the Quality Of Life (QOL) for people with SCI. If you're one of these people that suffer, you need to manage your pain and make changes to better your QOL.

Treat pain like a problem you need solve.

- Define the problem as clearly as possible.
- Talk to your doctor, Physio, carers and whoever can help.
- Make a list of as many different solutions as possible.
- Try out your solutions one at a time.
- Don't stop until you get results.

Use your best solution first and give it a good chance to work.

There are two main types of pain, muscular pain and nerve pain.

Muscular pain tends to be felt more above your lesion and occurs more in shoulders, elbows, wrists and those joints that aren't designed for wheelchair activities. Muscular pain can result from too much wear and tear or even under use – also, wear and tear may increase the older you get. You may need to break up those strenuous activities that cause pain, eg do the activity in 2 or 3 goes instead of all at once. Or you may need to

exercise and get stronger. Massage is great to release muscular pain. The key is finding a balance to reduce muscular pain.

With nerve pain, you will feel it more on and below your lesion and is sharp, shooting, burning and pins & needle's type of pain. No one can give the exact reason for this type of pain but it would have a lot to do with the mixed messages to the brain because of the damaged spinal cord. Medication is the most common way to tackle this type of pain. The level and type of pain depends on the type of medication you need. This is an area that you must work close with your doctor and be prepared to try and give different medications a good change to work. Medication can work differently from person to person. There are medical specialists that deal with pain management for SCI individuals and have fantastic results. Another option is to TRY and ignore the pain or just try and deal with it.

People who suffer with pain let the pain stop them from doing their favourite activities and stay at home. DON'T let pain effect your QOL. You may just have to change the way you tackle things because when you continue to do the things you like, it makes you happy – NOTHING should get in the way of this. If you think about your pain too much, it will take over you and rule you. Think happy, be happy, think pain, be pain.

Peter Van Benthem

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CLASSIFIEDS

For Sale

• Single King Size Bed

Electric High and Low, adjustable head and feet, on castors, built-in 12 point massager, excellent condition

PRICE: \$3,200

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

• Electric Wheelchair

Shoprider, 4 years old, good condition, charger

PRICE: \$1800 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

For Sale

• Gazelle Motorised Wheelchair

4 yrs Old, very good condition

PRICE: \$5,000 neg.

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: \$1500 neg.

PHONE: Kim 9748 7776

• Toyota Hiace/Commuter

1999 model, 60,000 km's, Tieman hoist, dual air conditioning, 5 speed manual, 2.4 fuel injected motor, can take 2 wheelchairs + 5 adults inc.

driver, excellent condition, RWC + Registration,

PRICE: \$30,500

PHONE: Peter 9489 0777

• Flocon Hoist

Attaches to roof of car to transfer person in and out of car, manual, good condition

PRICE: \$100 ono

PHONE: Joy Casson (03)5027 4399 Dareton (near Mildura)

WANTED

• A hoist and or sling (with neck support) wanted for a C4/5 quad. **PHONE:** 5526 7181 Brad

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Got anything to sell?

Advertise here and get rid of things that are lying around!