

AQA NEWS LINK

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

February 2003



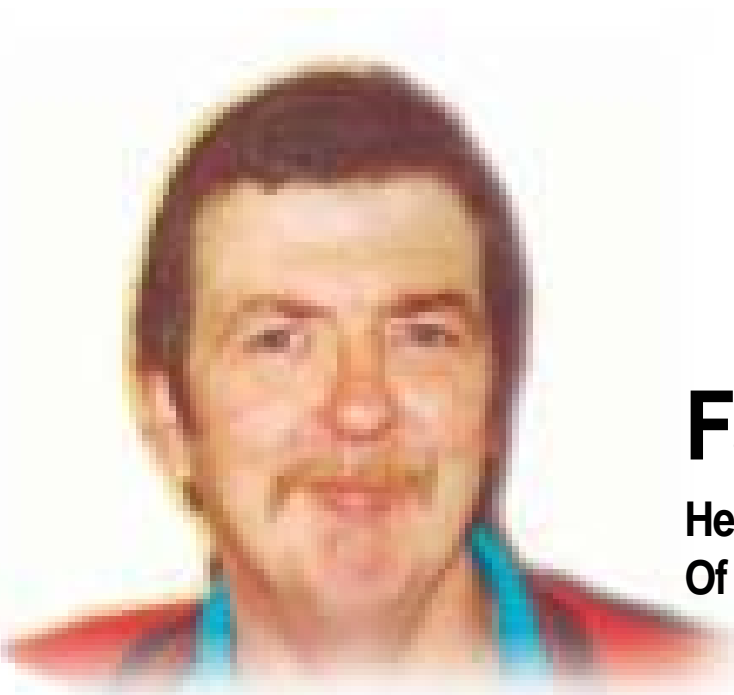
NSW Spinal Forum

Read articles from members who attended the forum



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Farewell Ian Brown

He'll Be Remembered By Generations
Of The SCI Community



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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

From the CEO

It is interesting to see that it is 10 years since the Disability Discrimination Act came into force. It would be even more interesting to hear how well (or not) it is working. If any member has any comments to make we would love to hear from you. You will notice an article in this issue by Randy Gibbons on this very topic.

Two articles in this issue from members regarding the NSW Spinal Forum are compelling reading. The hype around this forum centered on Christopher Reeve, however the bulk of the forum focused on extremely relevant and important issues for all people with SCI. They also provide some great web sites to look up on the forum.

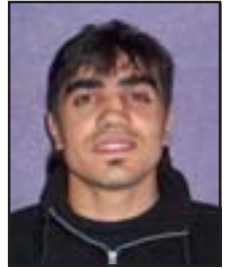
I would like to thank Raelene and Brad for sending in their very interesting and informative articles.



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

From the Editor

Welcome to a new year of News Link - hopefully, with your input, it will be as good, if not better than last year. Thanks must be said to all the members who write to us about solutions they have discovered or things they have done that may help other members in doing things, please keep it up, we, as well as other members appreciate it greatly.



Already big things have been happening this year like the NSW Premier's Forum on Spinal Cord Injury at which some of our members had attended. Read the separate articles from Raelene West and Brad Connelly on their experiences of the event on page 8 and 9.

If you believe that having a mobile phone will assist you in your safety, security and communication needs because of your disability, the article on page 13 is for you. The PDCA with the help of Telstra are giving away 200 mobile phones with \$50 credit to people who will need them the most. Read the article and if you are interested, act quickly because applications need to reach the PDCA by the 15th of March.

An exciting development that is happening with News Link, starting with the next issue, is member Simon Damevski taking over the position of Editor. Simon has a vast knowledge of desk-top publishing and internet website design and is going to be a valuable inclusion to the Information /Peer Support Department of AQA Victoria. So if you have any ideas for our newsletter or would like to contribute somehow, please give us a call, get on the phone and introduce yourself to him.

Finally, **News Link subscriptions are now due!** If you're not sure if your membership needs to be renewed, have a look on the label (with your name and address printed on it) at the top of the envelope of which News Link was delivered. **News Link Editor renewal date is also printed on this label.** If you're not sure, please email ianbennett@aqavic.org.au or phone us. If you're finding that it is a hassle sending \$5 for a year's membership, why not pay for 2 or more years?



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What's new in PEER SUPPORT

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

MASSAGE

An inquiry that we get from time to time in the AQA Information Department is "who can offer a massage service for people with a spinal injury". There are many very experienced masseurs around, but trying to find one who has experience working with Spinal Cord Injured (SCI) people is not that easy.

Getting a good confident massage by a professional who has experience working with people with SCI outside of the hospital system can be a hard matter to suss. When applying massage to SCI people who have had operations or damage to their back/neck, there may be a lack of confidence and danger if the person who is applying the massage has no experience.

AQA has had good feed back from SCI individuals who use masseur, Matthew Beechey, so we contacted Matthew and got him to write a little about himself;

Hello, my name is Matthew Beechey.

I am a Registered Nurse (div.1) who has worked in Royal Talbot's Spinal Unit for 2 years.

I lecture on massage of quadriplegics & paraplegics at Melbourne College of Natural Medicine.

I have 3.5 years experience as a massage therapist for quads and paras in their homes.

I want to help you to relieve muscle pain and aid working muscles to recover quickly, in order to speed up your rehabilitation and comfort.

I can visit and massage you in the comfort of your own home and I am familiar with all types of slings and hoists if you require to be massaged in bed.

I can advise carers and family members on ways to ensure that your body is maintained in good alignment.

Kind Regards

Matthew Beechey, mobile ph 0414 454 437.
e-mail rrcorphealth@iprimus.com.au



Austin & Repatriation Medical Centre

Do you have problems getting an erection?

The Victorian Spinal Cord Service at the Austin and Repatriation Medical Centre is looking for volunteers to participate in a clinical trial examining the effect of a new oral treatment for erectile problems, in men who have had a spinal cord injury.

If you are interested in participating please contact Heather Amiconi on (03) 9496 5906.

All information will be kept strictly confidential

Vale From the Victorian Spinal Cord Service, Farewell Ian Brown

On February the 10th, 2003, Ian Brown, spinal technician, passed away after a long battle with cancer. He will be remembered by generations of the SCI community, having worked in the Spinal Unit since April, 1972. A memorial service was held on February 17th at the Warrandyte Football Club, which was attended by over 150 people including, thirty past and present staff members of the spinal unit.

Colleagues of Ian's through the ages, such as John Price, Annie Norrish (Stokell) & Anna Brown, paid tribute to Ian's easy going nature, his kindness towards patients and the loyalty he displayed over the 31 years of his employment. Astonishingly, Ian must have worked with literally hundreds of staff over

his years in the Spinal Unit.

Ian commenced in Ward 17 in 1972 and saw many changes occur in that time. Milestones such as nursing staff going out of uniform and into 'civilian clothes', the many renovations and facelifts to Ward 17, the move to Royal Talbot in 1993 and the introduction of the "No Lift" policy, which he probably found the most difficult. Many of you will recall how Ian preferred to 'scoop' patients up in his arms to transfer back to bed - he always said it was easier than looking for someone to lift with, or dragging the "too busy" Gasi away from his cuppa !!!! It was joked that Gasi & Ian were probably running their own Spinal Unit 'up there' (in heaven) or more to the point, Ian doing the work and

Gasi watching !!!

All the staff in Spinal rehab at Talbot will sadly miss Ian, his willingness to help, his 'sixth sense' about things and his easy going nature.

Rest in peace Ian.

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Information For Carers About Incontinence

A new booklet has been developed for carers that contains essential information as a support for carers of people who are incontinent.

The new booklet is more than just a booklet. It is also a handy reference. It is 83 pages long and covers many areas that you would not think of. The booklet is called "Help for people who care for someone with bladder or bowel problems", but a heading along the lines of "Carers and Incontinence for Dummies" would also be suitable.

According to the National Continence Foundation, over one million Australians live with incontinence, many of whom are supported by carers.

The handy booklet includes sections about the bladder, the bowel, first aid, disposable pads and re-useable products, reactions and feelings, medications, costs and helpful hints for home and for going out.

Carers are usually family members who provide support to children or adults who have a disability, mental illness or chronic



conditions or are of a frail age. Carers can be parents, partners, brothers, sisters, friends, children or neighbours. Carers may care for a few hours a week or all day, every day. Not all carers live with the person they care for.

Incontinence is a condition that is rarely discussed but can have a devastating effect on the quality of life of the sufferer. Many carers are struggling to cope with caring for someone with bladder or bowel problems. It is often the deciding factor in admitting a family member into a nursing home or continuing care at home. Many people do not want to know about all the technical details of incontinence - the cause and effect and treatments. They just want to know what to do about it and where to find the right equipment or who to call for help.

The booklet also comes with a fridge magnet with the continence helpline number and an 'urgent' card that carers use in toilet emergencies, helping those they care for, gain access to a toilet quickly and without fuss when in public.

Carers can call their Carer Resource Centre on 1800 242 636 or the National Continence Helpline on 1800 330 066 to have the booklet posted to them. AQA Victoria also has a few copies to give away.

Carer Resource Centres are part of the Carers Association in each state and territory and provide carers with referral to services, emotional support and practical information to support them in their caring role.

Nazim Erdem

The Spinal Outreach Risk Reduction Team (SPORRT).

Concern has been raised about the number of individuals with Spinal Cord injuries (SCI) that have been admitted into hospital for conditions such as pressure sores, UTI's etc. These types of conditions mostly don't need hospitalisation when managed properly at home with good care. But how are we meant to know how to manage all these type of SCI related problems?

Well a new group has formed from ARMC that is about prevention and education of all matters related to SCI health. The professionals that work in this team are all experienced with SCI people out in the community.

The **Spinal Outreach Risk Reduction Team (SPORRT)** is a community outreach team linked to the Victorian Spinal Cord Service. The team's goal is to assist people with SCI's to maintain their health



and well-being through encouraging early intervention to reduce the risk of complications and hospitalisation. The team includes a Spinal Nurse, Physiotherapist and Occupational Therapist. They are able to work with clients and their support networks.

This may include assessment in the home environment, referrals for new equipment, home modifications, and co-ordination of referrals to other services. Advice and education can be given on the care and management of the bladder, bowel and skin. The team also aims to raise awareness in the community about complications of spinal cord injuries, by working with community agencies.

The **Spinal Outreach Risk Reduction Team (SPORRT)** is a free service.

Contact can be made with the team by phone on (03) 9496 5351. There is a 24 hour answering machine that is checked twice daily, Mon-Fri, or you can get in contact by e-mail on sport@armc.org.au.

Peter Van Benthem

AQA Victoria Member Profile

Name: Hilary Ash

Age: 56

Disability & Level: C6-7 complete quad

Are you Married/Single? Divorced

Do you have children? An adult daughter

How did you acquire your disability?

Rolled the car in 1986

What is your living situation? Alone, with attendant care support. Oh, and the cat.

Your Survival Tip for others?

1. Everything works - it just takes time to figure out how.

2. Be nice to Joe Toscano - he's unique.

3. Cultivate friends to laugh with.

What has been your most embarrassing moment since you have been using a wheelchair for mobility? There was that day in the Austin... But since then? I was invited to that show on the tram a few years ago. We were the last to get on, and as my muscley date carried me to a seat, I charmed our fellow passengers with my loudest and fruitiest fart EVER. "Ah, that's better," was the best I could manage at the time. Your suggestions?



Your greatest achievement? Just finished a Master's thesis about being a group facilitator, but before that, having my radio-play about life as a patient of Thirteen-East performed and broadcast by the ABC.

What do you do with your time? Oh, nothing much. I'm either flat-out busy or reading novels. Whatever happened to moderation?

Why did you choose to live in Country/City? (Draw backs/Positives) I'm a Melbourne girl, born & bred. Out-of-town, I love to breathe and to see the night sky, but long-term I'd miss the buzz, culture and food of the city

Your best holiday spot and why? Brussels - the chocolate is to die for.

What food do you like best? See above.

If money was no object what would you buy/do? Travel - to spend time with people I love in faraway places. Such as Brussels.

Do you have an internet site you would recommend? Gooooogle gives me everything I need. Just wish I could find the list of tools to help me use it more efficiently. And, thanx to the random act of kindness and friendship of a Norwegian, I can put in a plug for my own webpage. www.hugen.no/hilary

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mike De Santo

NSW Premier's Forum on Spinal Cord Injury

I heard a lot about the forum the Premier of NSW was going to hold on Spinal Cord Injury at Sydney's Darling Harbour. The forum was well publicised on radio, TV, and newspapers especially because of the fact that Christopher Reeve was going to be a guest speaker.

I really wanted to go to Sydney, not only because the Forum was going to be held there, but because I have family there that I wanted to catch up with. I thought that if I did go to Sydney, I would get to see my parents and could stay with my sister and brother-in-law at Caringbah, which is all within striking distance of the airport and the convention centre at Darling Harbour. It didn't take much thinking about to decide, and soon we thought, "Let's go for it".

Heading up to Sydney seemed like a logistical nightmare being a C4 quad. My wife Pam, Albert our 4 year old son and myself, oh... and my carer (nearly forgot the carer, can't go anywhere without those carers!) decided that we would all go together.

We needed tickets for the forum, which fortunately I had booked online when I first heard about it (hoping we may get a chance to attend). We booked airline tickets with REX, Portland to Melbourne return and Melbourne to Sydney return, flying QANTAS – these tickets were organised and purchased online as well. We also had to make an "L" shaped slide board for maneuvering me into my seat on the very cosy "little" REX plane (hopefully avoiding any lifting in such a confined area with particularly limited head room for my "stooped" helpers!). We arranged for relatives and friends to assist us at Melbourne and Sydney – there is no way I can express my appreciation enough to my wife, family, relatives and friends for all their help.

Other things that we needed to organise was a hoist, commode and bed which we arranged by phone through L & R healthcare hire – at this stage, I couldn't help but thinking "What else did we need?" I knew that I would be needing transport and that accessible high roofed taxi's would be in high demand while the forum was on, luckily my sister was able to meet a driver who would be able to transport us when and where we needed to go while in Sydney – it worked out extremely well, especially those interstate taxi contribution vouchers which saved us \$80 over the 5 days.

Day one of the forum started at 9.00 am, we began by checking out the exhibits, which included many NSW disability organisations, assistive technology displays, many poster displays and exercise equipment – these displays were on show for the whole two days. We attended the opening session hosted by Colin James (the facilitator), had a tasty lunch and met many participants, after all, the emphasis was on making connections and this certainly occurred. I have never seen so many people in wheelchairs and so many ventilator dependent quads, this was certainly an enlightening

experience. After lunch, Bob Carr, the premier of NSW opened the forum – it's great to see this level of interest in spinal cord injuries. Christopher Reeve was next and spoke for close to one hour and then answered questions, he didn't falter once. I spent quite sometime ventilator dependent and can only begin to understand the strength required to carry out this feat, he is truly Superman in my eyes, certainly the amount of exercise he does is helping. The Speaker's Corner gave everyone the opportunity to ask questions one on one to scientists, doctors, rehab specialists, politicians and many other keynote speakers, once again many connections and ideas were being formed. That afternoon an interactive session was held discussing a shared vision for inclusiveness – the lived experience of

people with spinal cord injury and conditions, this included six speakers discussing care, employment, the built environment, support at home, education and parenting.

The following day started with a talk by Bob Carr, then my Guru, Dr Wise Young who spoke about the promises of science. I have used Dr Wise Young's website for four years, so to hear him speak about current and future human clinical trials, the benefits of exercise and the urgency required to stop this cycle of paralysis was inspiring, I wish we had one hundred of him! Professor Perry

Bartlett spoke next highlighting the Australian perspective. After that, participants could choose 2 of 8 concurrent sessions; we chose 'Science in Action 1 and 2'. Tissue and transplant research speakers Professor Alan Mackay Sim and Dr Giles Plant, among others, spoke about the discovery that neural cells can regenerate in the nervous system including olfactory ensheathing cells and Schwann cells, and the move towards early human clinical trials. It was time for lunch and another go at the Speakers Corner. Stem cell science was next, speakers spoke about the biology and possibilities of adult and embryonic stem cells and ways of activating our own stem cells to repair nerve damage. A hypothetical session discussing care and cure with panel members including Dana Reeve, Dr Wise Young, Natasha Stott Despoja, Joanna Knott from the Australasian Spinal Research Trust, Dr John Yeo, Dougie Herd and hosted by Adam Spencer certainly highlighted many necessary shared aims.

Overall the forum confirmed many things for me personally, especially that people care, this was demonstrated so well by the effort required to organise such an innovative forum. Hopefully the Victorian Government will demonstrate an equivalent initiative. For more information visit, A.S.R.T www.spinetrust.com.au, Premiers Forum www.spinalforum.com/, Dr Wise Young forum www.carecure.atinfopop.com/4/OpenTopic.

Brad Connelly



Cure vs Care-NSW Spinal forum

For something different, instead of sitting next to a BBQ on Australia day 2003, I trekked up to Sydney for a 2 day spinal forum hosted by the NSW government. Although Christopher Reeve was the key note speaker, the forum consisted of 1000 people involved in talks, panels, discussion groups and workshops on various aspects of SCI life. On arrival, we were all designated to a table of approximately 10 people which would become our individual discussion group. Each table, it turned out, contained a cross section of people from all aspects of spinal life. People with SCI, doctors, both Australian and International, rehab nurses, physio's, OT's, attendant carers, world leading research scientists, parents, partners, and even the politicians, insurance companies and attendant care agency's had taken this rare opportunity to come and listen and learn from each other and discuss the many problems and issues they face each day living and working in the spinal sector.

The conference centre was a buzz of energy on the first morning with everybody keen to get into things. An introduction was given by premier Bob Carr who discussed the sharp learning curve they went through when, as politicians, they were forced to make a decision on whether cloning research would be allowed in Australia or not. He said that making a decision on whether to proceed with cloning research, which may potentially cure spinal cord injury, was difficult and had made him a lot more aware of what living with a SCI actually meant. Mr Carr then highlighted the importance of this research and in true politician style, emphasised the need to address this issue now. The fact that such a unique forum was used to do this however was remarkable.

Following Mr Carr was the man himself, the world's most well known quadriplegic - Christopher Reeve. What amazed me initially was literally how well he could speak with his trachea in. Although fairly softly spoken, I'm guessing he's been at didgeridoo lessons or something as his speech was very fluent and even. His first impression of Australian people was funny-everything for us is either 'a worry' or 'a bit of a worry'. The main reason for Christopher Reeve's visit was to promote funding for

stem cell research which may help find a cure for SCI, however he spoke of many of his own experiences of living with a SCI. His talk made it clear that having a spinal cord injury in any country is 'a worry'. He shared his experiences of surviving his initial accident, dealing with nurses and attendant carers constantly in his life, people's different perceptions of him and the ongoing medical issues he has endured. External to that, he spoke about how he has maintained his relationship with his wife, his experiences in dealing with insurance companies, his current rehab, medical trials and his ongoing efforts at finding a cure for SCI. He said one of the biggest frustrations in working towards a cure has been pushing through the political system. His efforts to get legislation passed to allow research into "therapeutic" cloning are and have been heroic and you can only admire the extraordinary effort he has made in this area. The transcript of the talk, as well as other talks/speeches, is available at <http://www.spinalforum.com/> and is well worth a look. Christopher Reeve was not only an amazing and inspirational person, but was down to earth, humorous and has an incredible knowledge of all things spinal.

After being awed by Christopher Reeve and re-grouping for our group discussions, we heard from a mother of a 5yr old boy who is paralysed with transverse myelitis. She spoke of her heartache of seeing her son go through the trauma of the disease, and then of her efforts to now try and provide him with as many experiences as the average 5 yr old would have. She now campaigns continually to push for funding to help find some sort of cure which would help improve the quality of her son's life. By the end of her talk, most of the forum were nearly in tears (including the speaker herself) and as we re-grouped for our discussion panels, the emotional impact from what we had just heard made it difficult for most to even talk.

By day 2, maybe because of the emotion, there was a lot of positive energy around the place with people keen to share their experiences and voice the problems and difficulties they have each faced. Next up was an informative talk given by two of the world's leading scientists as to the current stage of research. Different types of research

currently being conducted such as nose cell research, stem cell research, the differences between adult stem cell research and embryonic stem cell research were all explained. The scientists also discussed the difficulties they were having in trying to attract funding to these areas, but with cloning research now being so cutting edge, it is beginning to attract some attention and hence funding. Dr Wise Young then spoke about the time span of finding some sort of cure being ultimately dependent on the amount of funding they receive. In addition to the cloning research, a good summary on the current medical procedures on early trauma of SCI was explained. On a personal note, Dr Young said his motivation for continuing with the spinal research was seeing not only the individual, but the parents and/or partners of the individual also go through the life changing trauma that is a SCI. Somewhat despairingly, he said he didn't want to have to tell Christopher Reeves that he had to go through what he's going through for another 10 years because they couldn't find the money. Now there's a guy I'd like to buy a drink for.

Full of information, we re-grouped for a discussion session and then each headed off to the number of workshops that were on offer. The first workshop I attended consisted of a panel of speakers from a number of agencies combined with people with SCI. Together, they both discussed the difficulties and issues that arise in setting up an attendant care program once you leave rehab. Problems with finding compatible and reliable staff, timetabling, lack of training for attendant carers and just how difficult it was in dealing with the fact that carers were now a part of your life were discussed. All this is usually faced while being in the middle of your own readjustment in returning to the community. On the flip side, the agencies talked about the different rates at which people settle back into the community and how it is often difficult to match staff and gauge what extra support services might be required by the clients. They also discussed that lack of funding was making the process of establishing a good working relationship with the client more difficult.

Continued next page...

THE DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION ACT TEN YEARS ON: Achievements and Challenges

March the 1st of this year marks ten years since the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) came into force.

The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission plan to celebrate this occasion in each State and Territory with the launch of a publication which will outline achievements over the past ten years.

The launches will be followed by an afternoon forum, which will focus on achievements in the area of public transport and look at areas of limited success such as employment. They will also provide participants with an opportunity to put forward their ideas on ways to use discrimination law over the next few years.

Forum details are:

Hobart: 13 March Corus Hotel

Melbourne: 14 March Coburg Town Hall & Moreland Civic Centre

Perth: 19 March Venue to be advised

Adelaide: 20 March Disability Information and Resource Centre

Darwin: 25 March Northern Territory University

Canberra: 28 March Venue to be advised

If you are interested or require further information, please contact Halimah Simpson on Ph: (02) 9284 9857, 1300 369 711, TTY 1800 620 241 or email at halimahsimpson@humanrights.gov.au. The venues are wheelchair accessible, a hearing loop and sign language interpreter will be available.

Details of venues not yet confirmed will be available on the Commission's website as soon as possible http://www.humanrights.gov.au/disability_rights/index.html.

...from previous page

The second workshop was a panel of both international and Australian doctors who gave a presentation on aging with a SCI. The presentations gave general tips for ongoing maintenance and well being for someone living with a SCI. Topics included skin preservation, maintaining respiratory health, spirituality, undergoing regular medical check-ups, diet, bowel and renal health and maintaining a good support network of people around you in the community. A number of studies on the reasons for hospital readmissions for people with SCI were also looked at. Not surprisingly, the highest percentages of long term spinal readmissions were due to skin breakdowns. Even more reason to follow those medical tips for long term health management.

The forum finished off with a hypothetical panel run by Adam Spencer where a number of different hypothetical scenarios to do with spinal life were raised. Hypotheticals such as "if you were prime minister, how would you find the millions of dollars that Dr Young has said is needed to find a cure for SCI?", with the question being directed to Natasha Stott Despoja. Although entertaining, the hypotheticals raised were a good brain stretch as to where and how the spinal area could go and be improved. One of the best speakers was a quietly spoken Scotsman (!) who hypothesised about how he would love to find a cure and get up and walk tomorrow, however more realistically, his greatest hope was that a trained, well paid and reliable attendant carer would actually show up at his door the next morning, to help and assist him in getting up, dressed, and out the door, so he can live his life independently. Truly inspiring stuff.

Overall, the forum was a fantastic opportunity to increase everybody's knowledge and awareness of the challenges and difficulties the spinal sector faces. It highlighted how difficult living with a SCI is not only for the individual, but for the families, partners and support staff around those with a SCI. The wish to create positive change for all involved was the main vibe felt after the forum. Hopefully with the amount of knowledge and personal experiences shared by all at the forum this can be achieved.

Raelene West

Celebrity Shirts For Spinal Cord Injury



The Australasian Spinal Research Trust is holding a fundraiser for Spinal Cord Research on Saturday May 31st 2003 at a dinner function at the Atrium, the Grandstand 2nd 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

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 and you can email me on madge@alphalink.com.au to register a bid for any of the items.

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.

I have kept this pretty quiet over the past few months but for those of you who are unaware, I recently purchased a high-rise apartment in a new development in the Mornington Peninsula as an investment property. It is available to be rented for weekends etc.

I will handle the initial bookings while I search for an appropriate Real Estate Agent to manage the property. Weekends will be approximately \$120 (mates rates) for 2 nights, and \$400 for the week. Book early because the **location and its amazing views** are incredible. Some of you may be arranging holiday's soon, I thought I would give you the first opportunity! Let me know if you're interested (03) 9489 0777. Naz.

PS: Accessibility may be a problem for some. There is a picture on page 15.

What Do You Do All Day?

One afternoon a man came home from work to find total mayhem in his house. His three children were outside, still in their pajamas, playing in the mud, with empty food boxes and wrappers strewn all around the front yard. The door of his wife's car was open, as was the front door to the house. Proceeding into the entry, he found an even bigger mess. A lamp had been knocked over, and the throw rug was wadded against one wall. In the front room the TV was loudly blaring a cartoon channel, and the family room was strewn with toys and various items of clothing. In the kitchen, dishes filled the sink, breakfast food was spilled on the counter, dog food was spilled on the floor, a broken glass lay under the table, and a small pile of sand was spread by the back door.

He quickly headed up the stairs, stepping over toys and more piles of clothes, looking for his wife. He was worried she may be ill, or that something serious had happened. He found her lounging in the bedroom, still curled in the bed in her pajamas, reading a novel. She looked up at him, smiled, and asked how his day went. He looked at her bewildered and asked, "What happened here today?"

She again smiled and answered, "You know every day when you come home from work and you ask me what in the world did I do today?" "Yes" was his incredulous reply. She answered, "Well, today I didn't do it."

Real Scenarios

These are from a book called Disorder in the American Courts, and are things people actually said in court, word for word, taken down and now published by court reporters - who had the torment of staying calm while these exchanges were actually taking place.

Q: Are you sexually active?

A: No, I just lie there.

Q: What is your date of birth?

A: July 15th.

Q: What year?

A: Every year.

Q: What gear were you in at the moment of the impact?

A: Gucci sweats and Reeboks.

Q: This myasthenia gravis, does it affect your memory at all?

A: Yes.

Q: And in what ways does it affect your memory?

A: I forget.

Q: You forget. Can you give us an example of something that you've forgotten?

Q: How old is your son, the one living with you?

A: Thirty-eight or thirty-five, I can't remember which.

Q: How long has he lived with you?

A: Forty-five years.

Q: What was the first thing your husband said to you when he woke up that morning?

A: He said, "Where am I, Cathy?"

Q: And why did that upset you?

A: My name is Susan.

Q: Do you know if your daughter has ever been involved in voodoo or the occult?

A: We both do.

Q: Voodoo?

A: We do.

Q: You do?

A: Yes, voodoo.

Q: Now doctor, isn't it true that when a person dies in his sleep, he doesn't know about it until the next morning?

Q: The youngest son, the twenty-year-old, how old is he?

Q: Were you present when your picture was taken?

Q: So the date of conception (of the baby) was August 8th?

A: Yes.

Q: And what were you doing at that time?

Q: She had three children, right?

A: Yes.

Q: How many were boys?

A: None.

Q: Were there any girls?

Q: How was your first marriage terminated?

A: By death.

Q: And by whose death was it terminated?

Q: Can you describe the individual?

A: He was about medium height and had a beard.

Q: Was this a male, or a female?

Q: Is your appearance here this morning pursuant to a deposition notice which I sent to your attorney?

A: No, this is how I dress when I go to work.

Q: Doctor, how many autopsies have you performed on dead people?

A: All my autopsies are performed on dead people.

Q: ALL your responses MUST be oral, OK? What school did you go to?

A: Oral.

Q: Do you recall the time that you examined the body?

A: The autopsy started around 8:30 p.m.

Q: And Mr. Dennington was dead at the time?

A: No, he was sitting on the table wondering why I was doing an autopsy.

Q: Are you qualified to give a urine sample?

Q: Doctor, before you performed the autopsy, did you check for a pulse?

A: No.

Q: Did you check for blood pressure?

A: No.

Q: Did you check for breathing?

A: No.

Q: So, then it is possible that the patient was alive when you began the autopsy?

A: No.

Q: How can you be so sure, Doctor?

A: Because his brain was sitting on my desk in a jar.

Q: But could the patient have still been alive, nevertheless?

A: Yes, it is possible that he could have been alive and practicing law somewhere.



Thanks to everyone that sent in jokes for this issue!

Stuck in a disabled lift at Federation Square

On my first visit to Federation Square recently, I had an episode in a disabled person's lift which I thought I would communicate to members so that they might be wary if they need to use that particular type of lift in the future.

I was at Federation Square to meet with relatives from interstate for lunch and have a quick look around. Having found my relatives, we decided to visit the Ian Potter Centre and the National Gallery of Victoria (NGV) for a bit of culture. On entering the centre, which we approached from the main plaza that rises from Swanston Street, I found that escalators barred me from going to the galleries in my electric wheelchair.

No problem I thought, a new building must have a lift for the disabled to the lower floor. This was found to the right of the escalators, but it was not the normal lift I had been used to in shopping centers or hotels, it was a purpose built disabled lift that I hadn't had a lot of experience with, so I thought to myself "No problem... a lift's a lift", so I'd give it a go. I was not alone, so the first problem, which I usually have of trying the maneuver my electric chair whilst pulling on an

outward opening, spring loaded door wasn't a hassle as my brother in law opened it for me.

Because I drove my chair straight in, there wasn't enough room for an attendant because of wheelchair handles, bags hanging on the back, etc. This lift was SMALL. On the side wall above the lift buttons was a typed page put up with sticky tape, warning passengers that the lift would stop if anything touched the door while the lift was in motion. No problem, my toes were hard up against the wall furthest from the door, so I pressed the down button and I started going down. Accidentally, I touched the control box of my chair, which was still on, and the chair moved backwards, which caused the lift to come to a jerky stop. Taking notice of the warning sign, I moved my chair forward and pressed the down button again, I went a few centimeters then stopped again. I guessed that a part of my chair or baggage was touching the door to my rear but I was unable to see what was touching. I used an emergency call button and was told by the person at the other end that something must be pressing against the door.

I eventually got to the lower floor after a couple of more attempts and alighted to my frantic sister who had pulled waiters from neighboring restaurants to help. We were told by one waiter that I was not the first person to get stuck in this particular lift which was probably why the paper instructions warning of the perils was attached inside.

I did try the lift again but this time I backed in so that I could see if anything was touching the door. Also, you could see light through the door when you reached the level you wanted which helped as you had to push the door open to get out.

In conclusion, hopefully if new building design codes are established, an extra few centimeters might be able to be added to these disabled persons lifts to take into account some of the newer larger electric wheelchairs.

Randy Gibbons

Who said 10 years is a long time?



This month (February '03) was the 10th year Natasha Bradley has been at AQA. She started as a fairly shy & quiet girl working 1 day a week, as a relieving Secretary and part time student computer programmer back in 1993. She is now the Manager of AQA Copies Plus. It doesn't seem like 10 years but time gets right away and before you know it "BANG" time's gone. Natasha has worked very hard at her job. She keeps us in Copies Plus fairly

busy and is still looking for more customers for us.

Congratulations Tash I bet you never thought you'd make 10. It's been terrific working with you all this time, I'm sure you'll get close to 20 years if I don't send you nuts before.

CONGRATULATIONS

Mark Waterman



Editors Note:

Another staff member who has had their 10th year anniversary recently at AQA Victoria is Jason Hunt. Jason started at AQA as a driver and did some desktop publishing for us in our early days. He continues to do driving

for us as well as pick up and deliveries for Copies Plus. He has been great in the office when one of us wheelies needs a hand with anything. Congratulations Jason or Al as I affectionately call him (that can in his hand isn't coke).

FREE MOBILE PHONES - NEED THE SECURITY OF A MOBILE PHONE BECAUSE OF YOUR PHYSICAL DISABILITY?

Here's an offer to celebrate International Day of Disabled Persons. The Physical Disability Council of Australia is pleased to announce a project to distribute two hundred pre-paid mobile phones to people with physical disabilities who need, rather than want, a mobile phone for safety, security and communication reasons.

The project is to be wholly administered by the Physical Disability Council Of Australia (PDCA). There is a set criteria that people will need to respond to in order for their application to be considered under the project. A panel made up of physical disability sector representatives will make the final decisions and no discussions will be entered into beyond these decisions.

The mobile phone being offered is a Sagem RC920 pre-paid mobile with \$50 worth of included call credits. The Sagem RC 920 mobile phone has a built in hands free speaker, vibrating ringer, and is small and lightweight in design. Successful recipients will need to connect their phone to a communic8 pre-

paid plan provided by Telstra. Once the initial \$50 credit has been used, recipients will be responsible for any charges they incur in using the phone. The phones have been programmed to operate on the Telstra MobileNet Digital Network and recipients will be responsible for any charges they may incur if they decide to leave Telstra and go to another telecommunications provider.

The successful recipients will be asked to sign an agreement which will outline the expectations and obligations related to the project. Full details and instructions will be included in the package as well as other literature relevant to the project.

PDCA acknowledges the support of Telstra for this project.

Application forms can be obtained by contacting AQA on (03) 9489 0777 or email info@aqavic.org.au. You can also get the forms from PCDA directly on (07) 3267 1057 or email pcda@ozemail.com.au.

Completed forms need to reach PCDA by the 15th of March by;

Email pcda@ozemail.com.au
Post PCDA, P.O. Box 77,
 Northgate, Queensland, 4013
Fax (07) 3267 1733

Note: If returning forms by email or fax, a typed signature is acceptable.



The SAGEM (similar to RC920) MC 920 is nice and clever: small and light 117 g and less than 12 cm tall, its curved design is perfectly suited to the hand, interchangeable coloured fronts, dual band, 5 days

of stand-by time, hands-free speaker phone, vibrating device, 40 ringing tones...

Nazim Erdem

From Telstra

New Phone Package From Telstra

Telstra has released another package for low income customers. It is suitable for people who make very few calls, and want the telephone service for incoming calls, security, etc.

Basically the package offers a \$2 reduction per month on line rental (reduced from \$21.90 to \$19.90). This is offset by a \$0.02 in local call costs increase (increased from 22c/call to 24c/call). There are also slightly higher per minute charges on STD calls, but all are 'capped' at \$3.

Under this package, the savings are based on the customer making fewer than 3 local calls per day on

average. Switching to this plan would have to be carefully considered.

This package adds to the plethora of packages which Telstra now offers. The full details can be checked out at <http://www.telstra.com.au/telstraoptions/plans.htm>

Telstra is currently monitoring customers take up of Homeline Budget and where there is significant call increases, to discuss their calling plan with them. This will also happen with the new calling plan. Telstra Front of house staff (13 2200) will also help customers do this.

Taking advantage of these advisory services may be one way of sorting out what is the most cost-efficient Telstra Service for you.

Wheelchair Rugby

Nazim Erdem
nazimerdem@aqavic.org.au



Season 2003, New Teams, New Rules

The 2003 season of the local competition of wheelchair rugby has commenced with new teams, players and rules.

For the first time in Victoria, the Abled Bodied (AB) players are allowed to score. During the previous years, each team was allowed to have an AB player so as to make the teams stronger and the game faster but they were not allowed to score at all. - the reasoning behind this was that the players didn't want the AB's dominating the game and the only ones scoring.

This did lead the local competition to become stronger and faster but a problem that arose from this was when the Victorian state team went away to play against the other state teams, our ball handlers (our more able players) were inexperienced because they weren't use to playing in their "true" roles.

But after playing the first two games with the new rules, we noticed that the AB's weren't dominating the game, we had to use our other options.

Hopefully this new move will make our teams more experienced and let the players play their genuine roles.

I'd also like to take this opportunity and welcome the new players to the game including Shane and Sean.

If you are interested in playing, watching, or volunteering your time with wheelchair rugby, we would love to see you at the

Whitehorse Aquatic and Leisure Centre, corner of Elgar and Canterbury Rd's Box Hill. Games start at 7pm every Friday night. We are always on the lookout for volunteers and new players.

For further information, please contact myself on (03)9489 0777, Email nazimerdem@aqavic.org.au or Wheelchair Sports Victoria on (03)9473 0133.

Last January, I went away to the United States with the Australian Development Rugby team. We went there without some of our other team members like Bryce Alman, Brad Dubberly (who was playing for one of the U.S. teams, Phoenix Heat), and Steve Curley – and it showed.

Other international teams that joined us in the U.S were Great Britain, Germany, Belgium and Canada. The competition was very tough, not only with the international teams, but also with the U.S. state teams competing.

The first of the two tournaments was the "11th Annual Coloplast International" played in Tampa, Florida. Out of the 12 teams competing, our development team finished 10th. Phoenix Heat, the team Brad Dubberly was playing for finished first.

The second tournament we played was the "2003 Demolition Derby" played in Birmingham, Alabama. In this tournament, where there was again 12 teams participating, we finished 6th. The team training we had in between the two tournaments really made a difference in our side's improvement. Lakeshore Demolition took out this tournament with Brad Dubberly's Phoenix Heat finishing second.

Nazim Erdem

Summer Electricity Concessions for Quadriplegia sufferers

The Victorian State Government provides a comprehensive range of concessions that are designed to assist low-income individuals with the affordability of essential services. Concessions are provided on utility bills such as electricity, gas, water, and municipal rates, as well as on public transport and various health services.

State Concessions are only available to low-income people who hold an eligible Commonwealth Government concession card eg 'Pensioner Concession Card', 'Centrelink Health Care Card'.

The Summer Multiple Sclerosis Concessions is an electricity concession that is specifically targeted at concession cardholders who suffer from Multiple Sclerosis or another similar medical condition. For the purposes of this concession, quadriplegia is considered to be a similar condition. (The concession is known as the Multiple Sclerosis concession as it was the MS Society of Victoria who lobbied the State Government to introduce this concession).

The concession is designed to assist sufferers with the high costs of their summer electricity bill that is a result of the increased need to use electrical cooling in the summer period in order to regulate their body temperature.

The concession is a 17.5% reduction off the electricity bill that is issued between mid-February to mid-May of each year.

Concession cardholders who suffer from quadriplegia can apply for the concession by completing the Summer Multiple Sclerosis Concession application form, including the section that must be completed by a medical practitioner, and returning the completed form to the Concessions Unit, Department of Human Services.

If you would like an application form or further information, please contact the Concession Unit of the Department of Human Services on (03) 9616 7067 or email odete.rodrigues@dhs.vic.gov.au. You can also contact AQA on (03) 9489 0777 if you require the forms.

Information About Disability Employment Assistance Reforms

Did you know that the Department of Family and Community Services has a range of information products for consumers about the disability employment assistance reforms?

These were originally provided to accompany information sessions held for consumers, their families, friends and carers across Australia. If you would like more information about the reforms, the following documents are available by calling FaCS on 1300 653 227;

- An overview booklet titled 'Changes for People with Disabilities'
- Fact sheets are also available on;
 - o Quality Assurance
 - o Care Based Funding
 - o Award Based Wages or a fair day's pay for a fair day's work
 - o The Business Services Review
 - o Better assessment and referral for people with disabilities

These fact sheets are also available in easy English and audio format from FaCS website at www.facs.gov.au/dsr

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Must have computer skills, training will be provided.

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



See page 10 for details...

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CLASSIFIEDS

For Sale

Voltswagon Transporter

1999 model, 63,000 km's, Braun L918 hoist (fitted October 2002) in rear, 2.5 ltr petrol engine, 5 speed, air conditioning, fittings for wheelchair and seat for carer, spare passenger seat, RWC

PRICE: \$30,000 ono

PHONE: Sue (03)5382 2138 (AH) Horsham

TOYOTA HIACE COMMUTER BUS

1989 model, Seats 6 + wheelchair, Mobile Tec hoist, with locking points & straps, 12 month reg, 88,000 kms, Dual heating & A/C, 5 speed, Excellent Condition inside & out, RWC

PRICE: \$13,900 ono

PHONE: Jeni 9874 2101 (AH)

• 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

• 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: \$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. Will supply 3 months warranty

PRICE: \$3,000 negotiable

PHONE: Sue 9878 2947



For Sale

• 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

• 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

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

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