

"WATER OFF"

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



May 2020. Vol. 24 No.2
Inc/No: A16839F

A BRAVE NEW WORLD WE LIVE IN!

Editorial

"IN THE LINE OF DUTY"

Our thoughts and prayers are with the Victorian Police family at this very sad time. We especially honour the four police officers who died tragically in the line of duty while protecting our Victorian public. We, the Retired Firefighters Association incorporating both MFB and CFA retired members, appreciate the wonderful service, sacrifice and contribution the Victorian Police force continuously make to our community.

We pay tribute to the four officers who made the ultimate sacrifice serving their community. Those tragic circumstances of events on the Eastern Freeway, Kew on Wednesday evening, 22nd April 2020 will never be forgotten. Our hearts go out to the families and friends of these fallen officers. Our thoughts are also with the other emergency responders including our own MFB personnel together with Ambulance Victoria who attended together with others who attended this tragic scene.

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Image; Fire Services Museum Vic.

May General Meeting Cancelled

RFA BANK DETAILS PAYMENT.

From Firefighters Credit Co. Op.
TO Account: Retired Firefighters Association.
Account: No: 91469S1
In reference; put your name.
From another Bank:
BSB: 803-209.
Account: Retired Firefighters Association.
Account: No: 91469.
In reference; put your name.
**PLEASE MAKE CHEQUE'S PAYABLE
TO: RETIRED FIREFIGHTERS
ASSOCIATION.**

Allan Roberts
SECRETARY/TREASURER
Address all correspondence to:
Allan Roberts
Unit 158 Mernda Retirement Village
89 Galloway Drive
Mernda Vic 3754
Telephone: Mob: 0433 007 720
Email: rfavic1@gmail.com

Diary Dates 2020

May 20	Meeting Cancelled
August 19	General Meeting
November 18	Annual General Meeting

Non financial Members

Members be advised if your newsletter has an expiry date of 2/1/2019 that means you have not paid your subs since 2018 therefore if no remuneration is received by the 2/1/20 your name will be automatically removed from the mailing list. If, for whatever reason any member is unable to meet this request please do not hesitate to call the secretary, (confidentiality is assured).

OFFICE BEARERS

President: Alex Shepherd
Vice President: Sam Capes
Sec./Treasurer: Allan Roberts

General Committee:

Arthur (Sam) Capes
Mike McCumisky
Len Manning
Ian Geddes
Kevin Hede
Colin Harris

Auditor:

Mike Enticott

"Water Off"
Editorial Staff
Colin Harris
John Laverick

SICK LIST (* In Nursing Home)

John Brown*	Les Napper
Bob Brunning	Michael Phelan
Bob Cameron	Dick Prendergast
Stan Cameron	Trevor Reed
Harold Connell	Gary Spicer
Tom Driscoll	John Schintler
Jack Etherton*	Graeme Taylor
Ian Fowler	Bruce Thornton*
Eddie Gilbertson	Laurie Trewin
John Hancock*	Robert Weitering
John Hansford	Ray Wellard
Noel (Dutchy) Holland	John Williams
Bob Horgan	Tom Williamson*
John Lake	
Archie McLachlan	
Harry Mitchell	

We wish these members a speedy recovery

Note: If you know of any member who may be ill please notify a committee member.

MFB /CFA Valč

Stan Devlin
Peter Morris
Rudi Froeschle
Colin Busse
Michael Keefe
Bob Tottle

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

Don't forget the RFA website
www.rfav.com.au



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

What a year we are having! First fires and now this corona virus.

At this stage of my life, I don't like to look too far ahead but right now I'm looking forward to this year ending!

The media love a crisis and they only re-hash bad news over and over again and give the panic merchants more fodder to feed off.

I have to self-isolate when I go out I try to keep my distance from people, and it's just not me.

However, I know it's the right thing to do to keep everybody safe.

No footy, no golf. My bike riding group has gone into recession. How about your hobbies?

Tough times are always a challenge but they never last too long so we just got to laugh and look after each other until we beat this thing and we can get back together again.

Please keep safe look after yourselves and family. this will end hopefully sooner rather than later. If not, roll on 2021.

Alex Shepherd

SECRETARY / TREASURER'S REPORT. FOR MEETING 20th MAY 2020.

Please Stay Safe and Look After Each Other.

Please give your family and friends details on contacting the RFA so we may be able to help you or your family members with support if required.

Special thanks to John Laverick, for his ongoing help to Col Harris with Water Off.

Thanks to Colin Harris, Kristina Starnawski and Mark Carter for helping out with **Gone But Not Forgotten.**

As the CORONAVIRUS IS WITH US THE MFB HAVE KINDLY HAD THE PRINTER FOLD WATER OFF FOR US.

COULD YOU PLEASE HELP OTHER MEMBERS OR RING TO SEE IF THEY ARE OK.

PLEASE NOTE: WHEN PAYING BY CHEQUE MAKE OUT TO RETIRED FIREFIGHTERS ASSOCIATION.

BUNNINGS BBQ 'S HAVE BEEN CANCELLED:

EVERYONE PLEASE KEEP SAFE.

Secretary of the Retired Firefighters Association, Allan Roberts, on behalf of all members express our thanks and gratitude for the support that MFB Burnley staff collectively provided to the RFA members for their BBQ's following all our Meetings.

Allan Roberts Secretary.

TRESURER'S REPORT.

Donated to: Kids With Cancer Federation. From The Bunnings BBQ'S \$1,500.00

Closing Balance: 1st April 2020

Running account S1 = \$3,504.25.

Fix Term 6 Months L1 Account: = \$7,395.71.

Matures on 11th August 2020

Allan Roberts Treasurer.

Letter to Chief Commissioner Police from RFA Re Recent Tragic Police Deaths

Chief Commissioner.
Mr Graham Ashton. A.M.

On behalf of The Retired Firefighters Association (Vic) Branch.
Could you please pass on to all POLICE MEMBERS and the families of the members who were in that terrible accident on the Eastern Freeway Kew.

The Committee and Members of the Retired Firefighters Association of Australia (Vic.) Branch. Offer their deepest sympathy in your recent Bereavement's.

Minutes of General Meeting, 19 February 2020, at MFB Burnley Complex

Alex Shepherd (President), Allan Roberts
(Secretary/Treasurer) Ian Geddes (Minutes)

Present: 20 members. Apologies: 3

Alex opened the meeting and introduced new member, Chris Baine. A lot of us had worked with Chris when he was CFA Senior Officer at Epping area and worked in Chanel 9 News Room. Chris fostered great co-operation, giving maximum exposure to the Brigade during his 39 years at Chanel 9, retiring in 2002.

A great thanks for the hugely successful UFU Picnic at Moonee Valley Racecourse, to the volunteer cooks, operational staff with the B.R.T. displays/rides, all appreciated by the 1,000 attendees.

Secretary Report:

Correspondence In:

Letters from Les Gray (Cobs) in regards to the recent passing in late 2019 of his wife Muriel. Moo was 90.

Several emails/bereavement cards have been sent.

Moved – Dave Pricor: Seconded – Ian Fowler

Carried

Business arising – nil

Treasurer Report:

as of 31 January 2020

General Acct - \$2,750.39

Term Deposit - \$7,332.90

MFB Running Club donation of \$5,000 to the RFA – Great.

RFA have donated \$1,500 to Kids with Cancer.

Moved – Matt Nardella: Seconded – Len Manning.

Carried

Almoners Report – Ian Fowler

Mention was made of 5 Western fellas.

Ian himself is going ok

Guest Speaker

Commander Frank Besanko

Frank has been O.I.C Dangerous Goods for some years. He joined the Brigade in 1973. Prior to Brigade he was an electrician at GMH Ford and Kodak (now all closed – coincidence??).

Started to tell us about Lithium Battery disposals, but, we got onto caravan holidays and Europe trip. In Frank's typical way he got us laughing and reminiscing. He told us of recent chemical incidents mostly in Western and Central.

And now back to Lithium Batteries (reminded me a bit of Abbott and Costello 'Who's on first?'), but we got there!

The Brigade Dangerous Goods EPA and Industry have set up storage facilities and protection measures.

President Alex presented Frank with a RFA Barbeque Apron. Frank loved it.

General Business

New Life Member badges to be purchased

Sam Copes – Operation Haybales is continuing with bales going to Gippsland

Len Manning – when RFA is considering donations some of the smaller organisations should also be considered

Moved –Mike McCumsiky: Seconded Len Manning. Carried

Meeting closed at 1145, with the BBQ/salads with some of the ladies and men from Burnley.

**Next Meeting – Wed 20 May, 2020 Burnley
(Meeting since Cancelled)**

QUEENSLAND REUNION CANCELLED

Well my dear friends it is time to advise you all that I am **cancelling the Luncheon on the 30th July, 2020** for obvious reasons.

I would have loved to see you of course and to have been able to keep the plans rolling as they were I would not have been acting responsibly as the health authorities have requested.

In addition have consulted with two medical practitioners and I am afraid both have agreed that due mainly to the fact of our ages and potentially worsening times ahead I made this decision.

So, let's look forward to 2021 'bash' on the Gold Coast – same place and same time.

For those who were not attending due to overseas trips keep safe (well that's if you go).

Look after yourselves and remember as 'old furies' you survived the Anthrax days in Victoria 2001.....

Cheers

Gail

PS: Should you still be travelling van's etc gives us a call and we may be able to have a BBQ – if I can get meat that is.

CFA's 75th Birthday

Prior to 1945, a Royal Commission into the 1939 Black Friday fires recommended a single firefighting authority for country Victoria, bringing together the Bush Fire Brigades and Country Fire Brigades.

CFA has grown to be one of the largest volunteer-based emergency services organisations in the world with more than 52,000 volunteers and 2800 career firefighters, community educators and support personnel. CFA operates from 1219 brigades in 21 districts and five regions across Victoria.

There are many brigades across Victoria that were operating for decades before CFA was formally established.

The first volunteer fire brigades in Victoria were established in Geelong, Sandhurst and Creswick.

Unfortunately, due to social distancing guidelines in response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, we will not be able to celebrate in person. However, CFA CEO and Chief Officer Steve Warrington said today is an opportunity to reflect on all that CFA is and has been.

"Let us look back over the years and celebrate the enormous efforts of our people," Mr Warrington said.



"This is a celebration for not only CFA members but also the community we serve.

"Our members should be proud to continue to serve their communities for this longstanding and valuable organisation.

"Today marks 75 official years of serving the community and protecting lives and property.

Happy birthday CFA."

CFA Board Chair Greg Smith AM said the incredible contributions made by brigades and CFA members to their communities over the past 75 years has helped CFA become an icon in many Victorian townships.

"When we think about the rich history of CFA, we think of the resilience, self-sacrifice and commitment shown by its members," Mr Smith said.

"With the advent of fire services reform approaching, it's clear that our commitment to volunteers into the future has never been stronger, which is good news for the Victorian communities we serve.

"This celebration should remind Victorians of the strong future ahead of CFA."

Courtesy- CFA Comm's Unit

Retired Firefighters Association (Victoria) 30 Year Milestone

Let's take a walk back in time to 1986/88 to when the UFU, MFB, CFA & State Government (Victoria), after very long and at times very testing negotiations, reached an agreement for changes to the superannuation and retirement entitlements for emergency service personnel.

These changes brought about a high number of members taking up the option to retire. It was soon realised the network of fellowship and mateship, which had been built up during their career, may be lost unless something was created to replace it. It was then the retirees hit on the idea to call a special meeting to investigate ways to overcome the problem.

The meeting decided to form a committee to investigate and report back to all who had attended, the options available for consideration (the committee consisted of retired UFU executives & members). Their investigations included help from the UFU legal advisors, who showed the best option was a non-discriminatory & apolitical incorporated Social Club (friendly gathering). This would allow all who had been gainfully employed by Fire Services, for no matter how long a unionist/non-unionist, would be eligible to be a member.

The committee reported back to the members the findings from the UFU legal representative including the

above recommendations. The vote taken was passed unanimously. Here we are just over thirty years later and the RFA social club with the help of the UFU, MFB & CFA is still going strong. There is no doubt we owe a great deal of thanks to the foundation members for their foresight.

Factually when you start to go through the names of the foundation members you quickly realise there was not only many hundreds of years of firefighting skills retiring but also icons of the UFU i.e. Bill Webber, Erne Tamme, Bill Mitchell, Frank Churchill to mention just a few.

Sadly we must say many of the foundation members have gone on to a higher place, however, we should rejoice in the knowledge their foresight has given us a social club where we are able to come together and relive bye-gone days and promote the future with fund raising days for worthy causes.

Allan Roberts
Secretary/ Treasurer
Retired Firefighters Association of Australia (VIC Branch)

Who Remembers Harry Floyd (48 Stn)



Harry and Jeanne enjoying happier times.

I remember S.O. Harry Floyd from 48 Station (North Melbourne) in the early 1970's. Harry was on D shift and I was on C shift. Harry ran a tight shift with a few names some of you out there in retirement world may remember. Jim Ashford, Neville Colbert, Garry Martin, Paul Scott,

Wayne Simpson and an older Englishman by the name of Bernie Breakespeare. (I heard he had one of the best record collections in Melbourne at that time). I've remembered five of them and forgotten the others.

Harry worked from 1966 to 1982 at 23 different stations during his career with the MFB. Harry had a deteriorating spinal injury, which meant that he could no longer continue as a firefighter. After leaving the MFB, Harry was approached by John Berry and encouraged to come along to the RFA meetings with his wife Jeanne. Harry and Jeanne became avid supporters of the RFA family.

In 2016, Jeanne died from breast cancer after a long battle in her journey with cancer.

Here is a parcel of personal information which Harry has given permission to be published in our magazine. The whole article has been selectively reduced, however, here's a snapshot!

Harry's family including Jeanne, his 4 daughters and

their extended families as well as a wider network of family and friends have been raising money for the Diamond valley relay for life over the past 10 years.

Harry's family are part of the team "Bloody Jack" that was created by a good friend of the family – Louise when she herself contracted cancer ("Jack the Dancer") in her late thirties; now 10 years in remission.

The Bloody Jack Team get together for this annual event and sell lanyards to collect beads that help in the count of laps walked for their fundraiser. They raise around \$3,000 to \$5000 each year.

Diamond Valley Relay for Life has raised over \$1,200,000 in the time it has been running.

Teams commit to walking, rolling or running around a track to signify that cancer never rests, so neither do we.

Harry and family are extremely proud and humbled by the generosity of people from all walks of life and will continue into the future to be part of the quest to find a cure for cancer.

As mentioned earlier, Harry's wife Jeanne died in 2016. Jeanne's mother died from pancreatic cancer, Harry's brother died from stomach cancer and his sister died from breast cancer.



Harry cuts the ribbon to start the annual "Diamond Valley Relay for Life" on behalf of the "Bloody Jack team."

I'm not sure if we can start our own relay team one day and be part of "Relay for Life" to raise money for research in cancer, however, with our future BBQ's the RFA can contribute.

Thanks Harry for sharing your story with your fellow RFA readers and keep up the good work you and your family do for raising funds for cancer research!

Col Harris

"A Fortunate Life" vs "A Wasted Life"

I once read a book called a "Fortunate Life" by A.B. Facey. What an amazing man he was. An almost doomed life of unbearable suffering and hardship. He made it through the trials and tribulations. A man determined to survive and keep going to the end – and he did!

On the other hand, a friend of mine who retired some

20 years ago after being in the work force for 36 years prior to retiring, has just wasted those last "20 years" (in retirement).

Sounds unbelievable, well it's correct. In my uneducated eyes, this person has totally wasted the best part of their retirement and life's autumn years by being obstinate, being married to a very difficult partner, not well read and not having an adventurous or generous spirit even though money really wasn't an issue after retirement.

This person did have many difficult years being married to an alcoholic, an abusive person who was

always right. I'll give him this, he was a very intelligent man, however, in the emotional intelligence area he was very much dumb and was a bully to boot. A man who potentially had the world at his feet and blew it! A man who had hard times in his younger years, however, due to his alcoholism couldn't continue the studies as a young man.

He took the easy path, took the easy job that took him to the pubs and the beery mates during lunch breaks and after work. He was a man who didn't have the balls to stand up to his addiction or seek help and take up the responsibilities of a man with a wife and children. Yes, some of us like a drink, however, he must have had the alcohol disease or gene which took him past a couple of beers and into boozing mode until he was drunk and then home he came. An immature wife, young children he took his abuse out on the innocent.

The wife, let's call her Helen, was down-trodden, lacked confidence, however managed to keep her family together through the hard times and the bad times. Once he, (the bastard husband) allowed his wife out to work to help sustain his drinking habits – he was happy about that! Helen found a job at a local factory and started to earn some money.

The children at this time, were going to primary school and one had just started secondary school. There they were living in the leafy suburbs, but living under a dark, dark cloud. The constant in the children's lives were the evening meal, the Sunday drives, the football on Saturday that he (the bastard) attended on his own, the constant washing and ironing and the returning drunk on most Saturday evenings. However much worse especially if the Tigers had lost the all-important football match!

The years passed, he lost his job at a well-known company, found a mundane job doing photographic stuff, lost that job and ended up behind the counter at an electrical company selling equipment. Now I'll give the bastard a positive comment here, he was a good worker and worked hard.

Retirement came along and to sustain the booze, a children's crossing job became the daily ritual which meant that they could never go away on holidays due to the daily, weekly, annual crossing duties. This was a great out for him, because now he didn't have to spend money on holidays when the school children were using his local school crossing 5 days a week. And of course, you might say, well why did he not have holidays when the school kids were on holidays? The answer was, "well it's just too expensive!"

So, let's move forward 20 years to the present day and Helen is now in a nursing home and a great one at that. I wouldn't mind spending my last few years in this environment where you didn't have to ask for anything, the breakfast just turns up, the morning tea is always on time, the delicious lunch ready to gulp down, followed by afternoon "High Tea" and then it's time for dinner. Wow, what a massive eating day for the lucky residents. And, guess what! The residents can have a glass of wine with lunch and dinner.

I remember the days when I worked for the MFB Community Safety Dep't on my days off shift-work. I visited many nursing homes throughout Melbourne and the surrounding suburbs giving fire safety talks and fire

extinguisher training to the staff.

These places were depressing, smelly (urine) and filled with people lying in the fetal position basically waiting to die. Sounds horrible, is horrible and you wouldn't want to wish this on any living soul. These places existed and no one seemed to care. Where were the government bodies checking up on these places? Today, there does seem to be a vast improvement in these aged care facilities and thank goodness there is!

Continuing with the story however, Helen had retired, had a few dollars to travel. She did do one overseas trip with her husband, then the crossing duties took over and that was the last of the holidays. Time was now spent, reading all the junky women's magazines, doing the washing and ironing for two people, getting away from Mr. Bastard by wasting money buying crap that they didn't need, whining about this and that and generally giving nice people, family and friends a hard time because she was unhappy. Big bad Jack ruled the roost and she was the poor mother hen who copped the crap.

He used to be a good cook, but in his later years, the meat became tougher, burnt and unpalatable and usually dumped in the bin after a mouthful. He became ill and spent time in a nursing home, as he could no longer walk, his nursing home bed became his life, where he watched the TV and had a few family and friends visit. We watched him die and we were saddened only for a short time. The funeral came and went and there were very few tears. He had wasted his life, a life with so much potential. What a waste, Mr Grumpy!

I started off by stating that it was she who wasted her retirement, however in fact it was a shared wasted retirement. I look at most of the "firies" of all ranks who retire these days who have a wonderful and fulfilling retirement. They have great travel plans which they carry out, do voluntary work, keep fit and have fellowship with their kind, in various organisations including our wonderful **Retired Firefighters Association** and **Retired Members Division**.

Being retired doesn't mean stopping work totally, it just means leaving the old life for a new life of less stress, not responding to the bells at all hours of the day and night, it means catching up with work mates and generally taking it easy and hoping for good health for the next 15-20 plus years.

I often wonder if Helen ever reflected on the last 20 years when she could have had a happy retirement, did some travel, re-acquainted herself with colleagues, made some new friends and spent her autumn years enjoying life.

Sadly, with whatever time she had left on this earth, her time was spent in a nursing home, which I believe, seen by her as a living hell, because she had lost control over her destiny and had to rely on others to feed, bath and dress her – "WHAT A WASTED LIFE"!

She died one year ago.

"So fellow retirees, be happy! Enjoy the rest of the time we have!"

Colin Harris - Editor

Natures WMD

from "The Australian Magazine"

**Bernard Salt is the author of the following:
NATURE'S WMD**

Apart from the coming of the coronavirus, can you name any other event in human history of the planet that has universally changed life, or threatened life, either instantly or within say, three months? You could argue that the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki over three days in 1945 changed the course of history by killing thousands and triggering an ongoing threat to human existence - for the past 75 years the very idea of the apocalypse has been framed in terms of an all-out nuclear war.

The Spanish flu epidemic (originated in China), and the far deadlier bubonic plague were slowed by the limited transportation technologies of the time. The effects of drought, war, hurricane and tsunami are horrible but nevertheless localized; they don't threaten the whole of humanity at a single point in time.

Intellectual curiosity has enabled humankind to dominate the planet. We have taken our species out of Africa to all parts of the world including Antarctica, thus ensuring its survival over thousands of years. (Is Antarctica the only continent unaffected by the coronavirus? If so, maybe it would be cheaper to establish a permanent settlement in Antarctica than on Mars to ensure the survival of the species).

The devastation caused by geological events such as volcanic eruptions and earthquakes is also localized. The pose no existential threat to human life. The meteorite that killed the dinosaurs changed the course

of earthly life in an instant but the chances of that happening in our lifetimes are slim.

It is only at this time in history that a virus has been able to weaponise a new technology such as air travel and deliver death on a global scale within months. Deadly viruses are a far more likely threat to human existence. And if it's not the coronavirus, who knows what lethal microbe awaits us in the years ahead? We're at an inflection point in history, like Hiroshima; the pandemic exposes the fragility of human existence and demands a powerful and coordinated response.

We are now focused on the sick, on survival on retaining social cohesion, on delivering productive output. But soon global attention will turn to establishing how this happened, and which country's health system, capacity for civil compliance and political responses proved most effective in managing the outbreak. And then will come the reckoning. How does the rest of the world ensure future outbreaks are reported earlier? "Assurances" won't cut it with nations reeling from thousands of deaths and economic devastation. It's a bit like the reports of weapons of mass destruction that triggered the Iraq War: other nations will want verifiable proof that a viral outbreak has been contained and isn't a global threat.

The prospect of a nuclear apocalypse frightened Baby Boomer kids in the 1950's and 60's and Gen Xers in the 80's. Recent apocalyptic thinking has centred on climate catastrophe. Now climate is relegated down a notch on the threat-o-meter as we collectively gear up to protect ourselves from the prospect of a viral apocalypse.

Spanish Flu in Melbourne

In 1918-19 the 'Spanish' influenza pandemic swept the world. It arrived in Victoria in late January 1919.

From February to September 1919 the Exhibition Building in Melbourne was transformed into a hospital as **the city's hospitals were unable to accommodate all the patients.**

The banqueting room and committee rooms were divided into cubicles to accommodate nursing staff, while other nurses slept in a nearby school or on the veranda behind the western annexe.

The patients occupied the exhibition halls: female patients between the concert platform and the dome, male patients in the great space beyond. The basement housed a morgue, and outside the area under the grandstand became a laundry.



Above; The men's section in the Great Hall of Melbourne's Exhibition Building

The hospital was capable of accommodating 1500 people and by mid-August 1919 it had treated 4046 cases, 392 of whom had died.

Source; Museums Victoria Collection

STAYING ALIVE

Source:

Patricia Cameron-Hill
Cameron-Hill and Yates Seminars

Messages for ‘olders’ to better manage the current crisis.

We ‘Olders’ are considered to be the most vulnerable to Coronavirus. This puts us in a unique position to be a good example to young people who may be anxious about themselves and us. We have a chance to help them cultivate positive attitudes, positive emotions and helpful behaviours.

None of us want to die, but we know that our lives are given to us with no guarantee of physical safety and we have to accept that. This reality can be easier to accept with the experience and wisdom that comes with age.

It may be helpful to understand that the real problem we have to manage during this crisis is fear. Fear comes with anxiety, and if we can manage that, then we can make better decisions and take steps to not only survive Coronavirus, but to learn and grow from the experience.

Some people may not recognise their own anxiety and behave irrationally (panic buying) or destructively without realising that anxiety is driving their behaviour. Those who are aware can be at a loss to know what to do about it.

There is something we can do...

Francis Macnab (psychotherapist & former minister of St Michael’s) uses a helpful analogy. He says that being anxious is, “Like dogs running loose in the backyard, running in all directions and out of control”. When faced with anxiety we must “Tie up the dogs and stay steady.”

It’s not always easy to do this, but it is a helpful image to keep in mind as we look for ways to stay steady: For example, using the breath to relax, accessing calming influences, limiting our exposure to bad news, enjoying music, dancing and walking.

We can have faith in ourselves to draw on our inner strengths. We have lived long enough to know about chaos and unwanted events and for the most part, our ability to get past them. It is the meaning we choose to give to a crisis situation that will determine our feelings and our response. We know we cannot always control what happens, but we can control the way we see things. This is achieved by using the power of our mind to override the biological reaction of fear, panic and anxiety.

We can be reminded of the importance of a sense of humour and laughter. Laughter helps us to put aside a threatening future and live in the present. When we live in the present we may be aware of our stressful circumstances, but we also know our capacity as human beings to handle them.

We are equal to the challenge of this crisis. We have what it takes to stay steady, keep our dignity and be confident – to be our best selves.

Believe in you.

How we feel about ourselves affects everything we do. This is something we’ve seen time and again in the decades of our seminar work involving people from all walks of life. No matter what problems they’ve had to deal with or behaviours they wanted to change, their ability to do so would mostly come down to their ‘self-esteem’ or feelings of ‘self-worth’.

Most of us are quick to point out our faults and limitations, but when it’s a question of strengths, or what we’re good at, we’re not so sure. Yet having an appreciation of ourselves (positive self-esteem) can fortify us in uncertain and difficult times. We know that whatever challenges or disappointments are before us, we have the ability to cope.

There are many reasons for low self-esteem, but the good news is that it can be recovered or improved. One way to do this is to clear away unreasonable thoughts that may be judgmental or inaccurate which can make us feel dissatisfied with ourselves. We can’t always control what happens around us, or the way other people treat us, but we have complete control over the thoughts we choose to think.

Another way to build self-esteem is to be more aware of our strengths that we often take for granted. If we think back over the past weeks, we’ll see how we’ve drawn on many of these to adjust to pandemic life – strengths such as discipline, courage, tolerance, flexibility, kindness, gratitude, creativity and generosity.

We have also had to rely on our talents and skills to perform various roles in very different circumstances. These may include being a paid or unpaid worker, cook, organiser, cleaner, home teacher, carer, singer, handyperson, musician, artist, dog walker, laughter, walker, and so on.

This is a good time to acknowledge our strengths and boost our self-esteem which can lay the foundations for the confidence we’ll need for the task ahead. Here are some simple tips to help you do this:

1. Ask yourself “What have been my three best achievements since the pandemic?”
2. Accept compliments with a ‘thank you’ even if you don’t agree with them.
3. Give compliments to other people.
4. Avoid putting yourself down. “I’m too old for this.” “Why am I so stupid?” “I’ll never get back from this.”
5. When someone criticises you... Just remember “What other people think of you is none of your business!”
6. Avoid comparing yourself with others: Each of us has different strengths and weaknesses.
7. When you make a mistake, try separating it from yourself. “That was a dumb thing to do but I’m not dumb.”
8. Avoid ‘catastrophizing’. This means taking something which is uncomfortable and making it unbearable or terrible, with words such as: “It’s awful.” “Things will never be the same again.” Say instead: “Okay, I don’t like this but I can handle it.” “Now that this has happened, how can I live my best life?”
9. Learn to say “No” to unreasonable requests.
10. Be prepared to laugh at yourself. We all do silly things at times.

The Tooley Street Fire – London 1861

The Tooley Street fire is often referred to as the greatest fire since the great Fire of London. But what happened and why?

Where did it begin?

The fire began on the afternoon of Saturday, 22nd June 1861 at cotton Wharf, where many warehouses were situated. The buildings were filled with a huge array of goods, including jute, hemp, cotton, spices, tea and coffee. The London Fire Engine Establishment (LFEE) were quick to get to the scene. By 1800 hours 14 fire engines including a steam fire engine and a floating engine were all fighting the blaze. It's thought the fire started by spontaneous combustion and it caused quite a commotion.

Arthur Munby, Diary 22 June 1861:

Every inch of room on London Bridge was crowded with thousands of excited faces.

The fire spread fast...

By late evening the fire stretched from London Bridge to Custom House....the closely packed wharves were loaded with flammable goods. The fire spread quickly through the warehouses as the iron fire doors, which separated many of the storage rooms had been left open. It is believed if they had been closed, as recommended by James Braidwood the Superintendent of the LFEE, the fire may have burnt out, avoiding disaster.

The River Thames was at low tide

Another reason it has been suggested the fire was able to burn so fiercely because firefighters were unable to get a supply of water for nearly an hour – the Thames was at low tide making it even more difficult to fight the fire. By late evening the fire stretched from London Bridge to Custom house. It was so hot, firefighters could not get close enough to squirt the necessary amount of water onto the blaze to subdue the flames. The fire proved an attraction for many people, drawing a crowd of more than 30,000 spectators from all over the city.

Londoners flocked to the area

Vendors of ginger beer, fruit and other cheap refreshments recorded a roaring trade. And the pubs remained open throughout the night – even though this was forbidden in an Act of Parliament.

A fallen hero

Braidwood was noticing firefighters tackling the blaze were becoming tired and ordered every firefighter receive a nip of brandy. While he was assisting one of his firefighters, the front section of a warehouse collapsed on top of him, killing him instantly. It was 3 days before firefighters were able to recover Braidwood's body due to the intensity of the flames.



*Tooley Street Fire, End of Day Two (c)
Steven C. Dickson, Creative Commons*

How did it end?

Engines from all over the country arrived to help the LFEE, including private works brigades. It took 2 weeks to extinguish the fire and cost an estimated 2 million pounds – mainly due to the contents of the warehouses. That would be about \$330,000,000 in today's money. The cost for the pumpers, the people helping to pump water from the manual fire engines amounted to 1,100 pounds – around \$180,000 in today's money.

A hero celebrated

James Braidwood was buried at Abney Park Cemetery on 29th June 1861. He was buried alongside his stepson, who was also a firefighter and had been killed in a fire five years prior. The funeral procession

was a mile and a half long and shops were closed with crowds lining the route. As a mark of respect, every church in the city rang its bells. The buttons and epaulets from his tunic were removed and were distributed to the firefighters of the LFEE – they are part of the museum's collection today.

What changed afterwards?

Insurance companies raised premiums and insisted on better storage of products in warehouses. However, in 1862, the insurance companies wrote to the then Home Secretary stating they could no longer be responsible for the fire safety of London, as they had often put out fires without charge. They felt it was something that should become a public authority. The LFEE had been efficient but it was much too small for a growing city such as London.



*Engraving of James
Braidwood, 1861 (c)
Steven C. Dickson, Creative
Commons*

FROM THE PAST!

In the early days of "Water Off" we ran stories of some of the characters we had in the job. We had numerous correspondents who would write in and tell us of some of the exploits of these so called "characters". Many of these stories were humorous, if not illegal to say the least, but, nevertheless, they made the job interesting.

It's unfortunate that we no longer hear about these "characters", do they still exist, or is it because we are no longer interested?

Just to jog the memory of some of our older members, here are a couple of "Characters" who had an airing in a couple of our 1998/99 issues off "Water Off".

The first is a character known as "Daffy Duck".

DAFFY'S DOUBLE TROUBLE!

The trouble with stories is you hear them second hand and have to believe the teller. One such story concerns a character we'll call "Daffy Duck". Now where Daffy's parents lived they were told by the M.M.B.W. to connect to the sewerage. All the quotes were high so Daffy and his brother decided to do the job themselves. Daffy being good mechanically hired a backhoe. So the job started, Daffy operating the backhoe.



Things started OK but then something went wrong and he knocked part of the side fence down. The brother abused him and told him to get off as he would do a better job. He Did! He rammed it right through the back of the house.

I don't know what happened after that, if someone does I'd like to know about it.

SAGA OF "DAFFY DUCK" #127

Daffy arrived at 41 Stn with a trailer full of stable manure for the station vegie garden. He had his approximately 3 month old baby with him. Passing the little one to one of the firemen (the little mite weighed the same as a sack of spuds) Daffy armed with bib and brace overalls and a shovel, quite vigorously unloaded the trailer.

After about 20 min. he completed the job. Covered in sweat and horse shit, he took the baby (who now weighed about two bags of spuds) from the fireman, fished around the back pocket of his overalls and found a baby bottle of cold milk and stuck it into the mouth of the baby for his morning feed. So much for the baby manuals.....

SAGA OF "DAFFY DUCK" #221

Daffy arrived at 41 station one hot day and noticed his back tyre was going flat. After stripping his shirt and also stripping the hose carriage of it's tyre repair gear, he removed the tube and out popped a claw hammer from inside the tyre. Daffy's eyes popped a little wider than they usually were and said in a slow and dribbly manner, "Geez, I've been looking for that hammer for twelve months".

SAGA OF "DAFFY DUCK" #382

Jack S..... and Ken B..... applied a lot of interest in the station garden. Always good vegies and well watered. After much digging and weeding a lot of large rocks were removed. These rocks were always in the way so they opened the boot of Daffy's car and put them in. We think Daffy must have a lovely rock garden.

Ed's Note

Our fire services had many of these unique characters and we would like to hear about them. I'm sure we haven't heard the last of "Daffy Duck".

Character #2

LET'S GO RABBITING!

Early in the 1960's whilst stationed at No50 Station, one of the enjoyments of life was to go rabbiting and head of expertise in this department was Charley Blythe.

So Jack Cooper and myself agreed to go with Charley and our 3 sons & heirs in Jack's brand new Ford Zephyr, (just a few miles on the clock). We arrived at our destination and proceeded to work some burrows.

The young boys wandered off and were skylarking a little bit away from us while Charley was trying to hear the ferrets working. Charley lifted his head away from the hole and said his piece. He had just put his head back over the hole when Cooper, being grumpy as usual, planted his foot on Charley's backside jamming his head in the hole, (bring on the shovel to dig him out).

Later the same day, the ferret stuck us up on the way back to the car for lunch, so Charley left Jack and myself in charge of ferret retrieving and took the three boys back to the car to boil the billy on the primus. When Jack and I returned, Charley had lit the primus in the back of Jack's new car, our two boys had eaten all our lunch and Charley and his son were calmly eating cold sabs and toast.

We arrived home with a few pair of rabbits but Charley was banned with the primus on our next trip.



R.F.A. President – Alex Shepherd Reg 2607 “His Story”

I first grew up in Windsor (Union Street) down the road from the Windsor Fire Station. I went to the pictures across the road from the station and remember a turn out from there.

The Shepherds' then moved in 1954/55 to Reservoir in the newly opened Housing Commission area built by Jennings. I left school at 14 and went into the shoe trade. This was a good job for lots of people with limited schooling like mine. The shoe trade in those years was booming with many shoe factories - some large and many just small family concerns. At one shoe factory I worked with Kevin Watson and Alby Bambrough who left and went on and joined the Brigade. I stayed on for a few more years going from factory to factory as the Federal Government in their wisdom cut tariffs on shoes imported into Australia and destroyed the shoe trade.

At this time I had a wife and young daughter to support and it was getting hard to find enough work and when I saw an advertisement for the Metropolitan Fire Brigade I thought about Kevin and Alby a few years ago, so I applied and my MFB journey begins.

I joined the brigade in November 1970 in Recruit Course No.2 and trained at Richmond Fire Station and coming into such a job change it was a bit overwhelming at first, but I remember with great fondness the friends I made and we were certainly a mixed lot shearers, police, builders, labourers, salesmen and returned servicemen. A great bunch and good friends.

I won't name anyone here, however a few went on to bigger things in the Brigade and one even went on to become the Chief Fire Officer.

After recruits I went to Eastern Hill on C platoon and after a few months I was transferred to Carlton – No.3 on C and 7 years there. On all platoons there was some great firefighters and personalities. It was a great station to be at. I thought of course my shift was the best and we had many great times together and it was in those years very busy with calls and fires and we were very tight as a platoon.

Things were changing in the brigade and I was able to do the Senior Firefighters exam before the 10 years. I was promoted to Senior Firefighter. After a time, I then did the Station Officer 2 exam failed and did it again and passed. I then went to the North Fitzroy Station where I spent little time there as I went on a lot of standbys and was often rostered elsewhere. It didn't hurt me though, but I was saddened when North Fitzroy Station was closed due it wasn't needed. I went on to becoming a Station Officer Grade 1. Went to West Melbourne (No.2) for a few years, then went into Western District at Footscray (No.47).

The experience at Footscray was a real eye opener for me. The number of calls and the difference in them was outstanding! I had never been to a large grass fire before and that in itself was really mind boggling and again I met some really great firefighters and people who will



always be my friends. We had some great times. We had cricket and footy games between all shifts and many golf days, some local and also up to the Murray. After one game of footy we were told by a DO from another shift that we were NOT to have another game as there was a couple of serious injuries.

The time I had in Western was fantastic and I loved every minute of my time there, however, it was now time to move to Northern District. Placarding of factories for dangerous goods was starting to gain ground in the brigade and manifests were able to be obtained on entering premises on a fire call or attending an actual fire. No 2 and North Melbourne (No.48) got a call to United Transport in Footscray Road. On arrival I was handed the manifest to the premises and went to the scene of the fire where we found the fire involved 4x44 gallon drums which was impinging on the overhead fire service which in turn burst and sent the fire spreading to other drums. I then threw the manifest away and said we won't be needing that for a while as we were going to be very busy. The fire went on for a couple of days. Then I was glad to go to Northern for a rest (ha! ha!). (No rest in Northern District in the summertime with the many grass fires).

I went to the old Preston Station (No.12) in High Street Preston, relieved at Brunswick (No.4) then when Thomastown Fire Station (No.7) opened, I went there. Again, I had many experiences and met many great firefighters and people who will always be friends and remembered with great affection and good memories.

One call I can remember was in a metal recycling factory and when we turned out for it we could see it from the station. So we called it on the way there and when we got on scene it was through the roof so I called the big gear on and in the meantime wondered what the black stuff was running down the gutter, it turned out to be liquid gold and silver. It turned out there was a problem with the fire alarm system and we got the call by exchange telephone and after some time FIA gave me a tape of the security system which showed the fire starting in a small smelting urn and then spreading to the factory proper.

I went back to No.4 Stn and again had some great times there and met some great people on all shifts. The MFB was great for me as I was able to meet great people and had some wonderful experiences which people on the outside would never have been able to experience. I have been to five World Police and Firefighter Games and met more great people and many have remained friends to this day.

Throughout this article I have mentioned that I have met many great Firefighters and people and all have given me wonderful times and some great memories I didn't want to mention anyone in particular because I didn't want to leave anybody out. When I retired I joined the Retired Firefighters Association and I reckon that I have never left the brigade as the fires and the all of the good times get bigger and better!

I have been asked to relate a couple of war stories! The opening of Thomastown comes to mind as somehow there was payback. The opening had all the services there, the Ambos and the Firies participated in a mock car accident involving a cut out and I was the patient in the car after giving the ambos a hard time. A good friend of mine suggested to the ambos that it was a good time for payback! The ambos then inserted a catheter into my hand and preceded to give me a drip which shut me up very quickly!

The other one which I was very proud of, was when I was doing the Station Officers 1 exam. The Brigade started the Communications Course at the same time. I would ring up the Comm Centre and say I would be

booking out for road drill and not book out over the airwaves. They knew what I was up to! Raid a station and give them a real wetting down. I got away with it quite a few times but as always, somebody gave me up and I got a drubbing as well.

These days, I still go Orienteering, I fish a bit and took up fly-fishing before I left the brigade but still like to drown a worm, some bike riding and the hobby I really like is one that keeps the brain and body ticking over is Geocaching - look it up! It's great fun!

THANKS EVERYBODY GOOD LUCK AND BEST WISHES AND KEEP WELL.

The Bear (Alex Shepherd)

CFA's New Heavy Tanker in Production

The next build of heavy tankers is about to roll off the production line.

Eighteen new trucks are currently being built and will be completed by the middle of this year, and a further 25 have been ordered for next year. Project Manager Peter Hill explained that these new vehicles build on the previous production of more than 80. We have incorporated several new features based on considerable constructive and positive feedback including from the most recent summer.

The truck is now fitted with a full automatic Allison transmission that will further enhance on-road and off-road capability.

"we are also extending the trialling of new heat exchangers for pump engine cooling," Peter said. "A couple of years ago we first fitted one on the Ferntree Gully Fire Brigade vehicle. We found that it improved pumping performance and is noticeably quieter because we have removed the need for the noisy radiator cooling fan."

This is an entirely new and innovative concept for CFA and other fire agencies are watching this development closely.

The first six off the production line will be put through more extensive field trials over the next fire season under the watchful eyes of our district mechanical officers (DMOs).

But it doesn't stop there. Many more smaller improvements have been incorporated into the truck such as locker stowage layouts and DMO access and servicing.

The main features of this vehicle are:

- 15T Iveco Eurocargo 4x4 crew cab chassis with Allison automatic
- 4,000-litre water tank
- 1,200 litres/minute water pump
- Class A foam capability



- Full stowage inventory
- 0-450 litres/minute front-mounted monitor with joystick control inside the cabin.

"Our drive is to continually improve, and a number of new and exciting ideas are being considered for the next generation build," Peter said.

**Courtesy:
CFA News**



FIRE RESCUE RINGS

As well as the Fire Rescue rings we now have sets of Tie Bars, Ear Rings and Cuff Links.

These are available in different combination sets or can be purchased as a single item.

They are available from the Secretary and will be on display at the next meeting.

If you would like to place an order now, give Allan Roberts a call.

**Telephone: Mob: 0433 007 720
Home: 9216 1658**

MEMBERS INTERESTED IN RECEIVING THEIR "WATER OFF" VIA EMAIL.

To those members with easy access to email and would like to have their copy sent by this system, please send your email address to John Laverick. "Water Off" will be sent out in a PDF format.

John's address - - retfire@bigpond.net.au

Before you send your email, click on 'tools' at top and click on 'request receipt'. This will reply to you and verify both email addresses are working correctly.

It's been a very interesting few weeks with Covid-19 (coronavirus) and all the implications which go with it.

No family visits to see the new and first granddaughter, dodging people in the supermarket, avoiding people on the street when out for a walk, no popping into our neighbors home across the road to have a sneaky beer, no golf (oops I hate golf!), no surfing (can't surf!), only 2 people allowed in our local chemist shop to get the heart tablets, roads are deserted, petrol's cheap (diesel isn't – and I have a diesel car), people are sick and people are dying. **Doom and Gloom!**

We, the RFA President and Secretary together with the committee, wish all of our RFA Members all the best during this very difficult time. If any of our members are in trouble or just need someone to talk to at this difficult time, please contact our Secretary Allan Roberts and he will assist with your inquiry and where possible one of our members or committee or Peer Support Representative will contact you or the family & assist where and when we can.

I must also mention our MFB and CFA Operational personnel out there on the ground responding to all emergency situations as they do, that they also take care and take the necessary precautions to ensure their own health and that of their families when out there protecting life and property over Melbourne, the suburbs and country Victoria.

When we publish our next issue of "Water Off", the MFB will be no longer! They will be part of Fire Rescue Victoria. A new chapter for those in the current MFB and CFA professionals.

Peer support is available to Retired Firefighters and Associated Members

**Fairlie Morgan — Employee Assistance
Coordinator — fmorgan@mfb.vic.gov.au
0407 665 174**

**Chloe Henderson — Peer Coordinator
0417 538 289**

**Scott Darcy – Peer Coordinator –
sdarcy@mfb.vic.gov.au – 0429 771 849**

**John Howe — Retirees
9729 0984**

**Copy deadline for Water Off Magazine
for next edition is July 17 2020.**



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- Laundry, outdoor line, indoor drying racks & *separate toilet*.
- Outdoor warm dog shower, fully fenced safe garden.
- Shopping: - including new Kingston Village Square, Woollies Market Place and Coles Supermarket. Post office, banks, medical centres, shops, cafes & restaurants.
- **Meals:** Ocean Grove Hotel, OG Golf Club and OG Bowls Club.

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Download the VicEmergency app

The new VicEmergency app was launched recently and will replace FireReady this summer. The VicEmergency app is now available to download from the App Store or Google Play and Victorians are encouraged to download it ahead of the summer season.

The VicEmergency website has also been upgraded and a new emergency hotline released. The Vic Emergency app and website will provide warning and incident notifications about floods, storms, fires, earthquakes tsunami, beach closures, shark sightings and more.

Volunteers Required

**The Fire Services Museum needs
 past fire service members to assist
 on an occasional basis at the
 Museum**

Please contact
Mike McCumisky on: 9662 2907

UFU RETIRED MEMBERS ANNUAL CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON

Place, Date and Time yet to be announced

A reminder:

If you have accepted the invitation to the luncheon and through illness, or some other circumstance, find you are unable to attend, please notify the Union Office A.S.A.P.

PRINT POST No. 100002647

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