

ASBESTOS NEWS

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DID YOU KNOW?

- 1929 A Life Insurance company in the US finds that half the men working at Johns Manville & Raybestos asbestos plants for more than 3 years develop lung disease.
- 1st century AD: Roman historian Pliny notes that slaves wearing asbestos cloth sicken & die. He describes the use of respirators made from animal bladders.

A SERVICE TO REMEMBER

The memorial and celebratory service at St. Aidans Anglican Church, Newborough was the first ever service dedicated to asbestos sufferers and their families in the Valley and one which will be long remembered by all who participated. The Reverend Stephen Morrissy presided over the service which bought together St. Aidan's and GARDS members in a deeply moving and emotional tribute to the spirit of Valley people.

The service opened with a song so appropriately sung by Michelle Fitzgerald.

Cheryl Wragg read from Jeremiah 20: 10-13.

Vicki Hamilton paid tribute to the many workers who came from all over the world to make the Valley and indeed Victoria what it is today

and to praise them for their strength, dignity and courage in the face of adversity. She urged the congregation to remember with pride those workers and their family members who lost their lives as a result of the environment in which they worked and lived in. These workers and their families have contributed more than most.

Lyle Seear spoke from the heart about the caring way in which GARDS moves within the community extending the hand of friendship and comfort. He gave memorable instances of his experiences and the work of others and linked this back to the story of the good Samaritan.

The congregation made mention that they would like to see this remembrance

and celebration service in other churches across the Valley and conducted as an annual event on the church calendar.

A big thank you also to the Magdalene Centre and the Anglican Parish for its donation to GARDS which will be used to buy books for the GARDS library.



WE WILL REMEMBER

A TRIBUTE TO TWO GREAT GARDS MEMBERS

This month has been a very sad month with the passing of Mr. Les Barton and Mr. Arnold Needham.

Both of these men have been very active in GARDS and they will be missed greatly.

Mr. Barton was a very kind and generous soul and Arnie Needham who has been a long term GARDS member has contributed enormously to the success of GARDS. We will remember them always with fond memories.

Our deepest sympathy goes out to these two truly wonderful families in their time of sorrow. Included in this newsletter is an excerpt of John Daley's essay on Arnold his grandfather.

LEGAL LINE BY GAYE TREVAN

Wally Reid, aged 56, who was part of the SEC lung function screening program, was told in April 2000 that he need not come back because he had consistently demonstrated 95% lung capacity.

In November 2001 Wally, who had always been exceptionally fit and active, couldn't catch his breath. To appease his wife, he went to a local doctor. That started a roller coaster of medical appointments and tests, which ultimately lead to his diagnosis with mesothelioma.

Wally had had heavy exposure to asbestos during his employment with the SEC from 1962 until 1993, having spent most of his time at Hazelwood Power Station.

A claim was issued on behalf of Wally out of the Supreme Court of Victoria against the State of Victoria who took over the liabilities of the former SECV. The Court ordered that the case proceed expeditiously, and it was given priority over other matters. Wally Reid alleged that the SECV had been negligent in having exposed him to asbestos when it was known to be dangerous, and that the exposure was the cause of his mesothelioma. He

claimed compensation for:

- Pain and suffering and loss of enjoyment of life;
- Past and future lost income due to his incapacity for work;
- Medical and associated expenses;
- The cost of nursing care that he would need in the future.

In the days leading up to the trial of Wally's action, the State of Victoria admitted liability. The effect of that admission was that it was no longer necessary to prove Wally's asbestos exposure while working in the power stations had caused his mesothelioma, or that the former SECV could have done more to have protected him. It is the first time that the former SECV have admitted liability in a claim arising from asbestos disease.

Wally Reid's case was settled out of court for a confidential, yet significant sum.

The tragedy of Wally Reid's illness, and the devastating effect it has had on his life cannot be overstated. However, he is to be congratulated for his cour-

age and for standing by his principles. Wally hopes that his stand will assist and encourage others to pursue their entitlements.



Gaye Trevan is a GARDS member and volunteer. She is a Legal Executive with Maurice Blackburn Cashman solicitors. If you need information or advice call Gaye on 9605 2729 or contact GARDS Inc. ph. 51 281218

COUNSELLING COURSE



Our counselling course began on the 21st of June and we are now half way through. We have 9 participants in the course and thanks to Dr. Harvey Miller we are learning and consolidating a lot of our experience into a very effective manner in which to help care for our members. Course participants come from a range of back-

grounds and include full time professionals in community services as well as volunteers who care for the sick and elderly. All feel that the course is helping them in their work. Dr Harvey and GARDS are willing to organize a future course if anyone else is interested: we need at least 8-9 people.

NEWS IN BRIEF

You may have noticed we've changed the newsletter's name following feed back that people were unsure what the newsletter was about. Apologies to GARDS members that David Fargyeter was unable to attend as previously advertised. David will attend later in the year.

A TRIBUTE TO ARNOLD NEEDHAM BY JOHN DALEY

Arnold Needham my Pop was born in 1936 and adopted in that same year. His adopted parents died before he was a teenager so it forced him to work full time in his very early teens. He tried out for South Melbourne Football club (now known as the Sydney Swans) in the Bobby Skilton days in the VFL, but after breaking both his ankles in the same game he obviously could not play at that elite level even after that squad requested him to play on. He believed his ability was not good enough for the high level required in VFL so he dropped back to a country team, which he played for 20 years. Most games he was ranked best on ground. He also had another love of hunting and fishing. Every weekend after football he would take his family up into the mountains around Mt. Erica to go deer hunting which helped out the crisis of not having food on the table. He never shot an animal he hunted unless he needed it to feed the family of six and they didn't waste one bit, even the left overs went to his hunting dogs so not anything was wasted.

In my Pop's mid-twenties working in the Latrobe Valley supporting his wife and four children. He worked many hours and many years lagging on

the asbestos. Lagging is slapping wet asbestos on to piping which is used for insulation. Other things he did with asbestos was to blow the asbestos fibres that are extremely dangerous on to the ceiling of the power plant to control the temperature hot/cold for the employees.

My Pop believed that the worst thing he ever did with his life was to work with asbestos and now he believes that his children and grandchildren will have to remove the deadly asbestos from the community. He said that this will leave people in the next sixty or seventy years time with shortened lives just like my grandfather is doing now.

The last few years my Pop and Nana have worked many hours helping setting up the Gippsland Asbestos Related Diseases Support Network (GARDS INC) which in the next few months will be setting up a similar organization for the people of Melbourne. This organization 'GARDS' is formed by just ordinary people, which my Nana and Pop are spokespersons for. Both of my grandparents have recently spoke on the Four Corners show it was a one hour special on my grandparents, Channel 10 News, A Current

Affair, other newspapers have picked up on the work that GARDS people have been doing for the community in and around the affected areas.

Now a days asbestos is still found in or around our homes and lives. It is used in building materials like old sheds, fencing, bungalows even housing. Friction products like brake pads are used in all cars in Australia. Organisations like GARDS have tried to make people aware of this. Even though they are taking the asbestos slowly out of these products there still has to be caution taken as the old materials still in place could contain asbestos.

I know my Nana, my Mum and I have given as much time of our lives possible caring for my Pop even if it was to only tell him stories of our achievements. I like hearing Pops stories because it makes him look forward to the next day in his life.

ARNOLD NEEDHAM

1936—2002

GARDS NEWS ROUND-UP

We had a wonderful Support group meeting this month. Partnership Planning came along to talk about financial matters & everyone seemed to have lots of questions for them to answer. Thanks go to Chris Thatcher and Charles Witts for their great presentation. Don't forget this months Advocacy meeting guest pre-

sender will be Dr Tony LaMontagne.

At our next Advocacy and Support group meetings we will also have to decide whether the Asbestos News goes to a quarterly or every second month newsletter or does it stay the same as is? Don't forget that your stories and news items will be most welcome in our publication. Please

send them to Vicki Hamilton either by email—gards@datafast.net.au or post to GARDS PO BOX 111, MOE 3825



READ ALL ABOUT IT

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GUARDING THE COMMUNITY

G.A.R.D.S. INC.

GIPPSLAND ASBESTOS RELATED DISEASES SUPPORT INC.

GARDS Inc. SUPPORT

Provides support & information to asbestos sufferers, their families & carers. This includes home visits by GARDS volunteers, a telephone advice service, & drop-in service at GARDS office. GARDS Inc. support also conducts a monthly meeting (1.30pm-3.30pm on the last Tuesday of the month) where guest presenters are invited to provide information about regional support services, and other areas of interest & assistance. The meetings also provide a gathering place for experiences. GARDS Support is open to anyone whose lives have been effected by asbestos & their families.

GARDS Inc. ADVOCACY

Is the organizational, activities & advocating arm of GARDS Inc. GARDS Advocacy meetings are 7.30pm-9.30pm on the third Tuesday evening of the month providing a focal point for information sharing, problem identification & campaign development. People interested in becoming active in GARDS Inc. ADVOCACY & have voting rights are required to take out GARDS membership & annual. GARDS Inc. ADVOCACY is focused on improving health support services & compensation arrangements to asbestos sufferers, & their families, ensuring asbestos-related issues are kept in the public eye, & ridding our environment of asbestos.

ABOUT G.A.R.D.S. INC.

EXECUTIVE

PRESIDENT:

Lyle Seear Ph. 51671376

VICE PRESIDENT:

Trevor Callow Ph. 51342208

SECRETARY:

Cheryl Wragg Ph. 51273790

ASSISTANT SECRETARY/ TREASURER:

Vicki Hamilton Ph. 51278219

EXECUTIVE MEMBERS:

Dorothy Roberts Ph. 51274174

Fay Needham Ph. 51272038

GARDS MEMBERSHIP FEE:

\$4.95

GARDS ANNUAL FEE:

\$11.00 (EMPLOYED)

\$2.75 (PENSION/CONC.)

THE GARDS OFFICE IS OPEN

MONDAY: 9.30AM-2.30PM

TUESDAY: 1.00PM-3.00PM

WEDNESDAY: BY APPOINTMENT

THURSDAY: 12 NOON-3.00PM

Call in for a chat and cuppa

GARDS SUPPORT MEETINGS:

Last Tuesday of the month, 1.30pm-3.30pm

GARDS ADVOCACY MEETINGS:

3rd Tuesday evening of the month, 7.30pm-9.30pm

UP AND COMING EVENTS

GARDS SUPPORT:

July: To be announced

August: LATROBE VALLEY FUNERAL SERVICES—John Leckey

September: Dr Harvey Miller—Family Therapist

GARDS ADVOCACY:

July: Dr Tony LaMontagne

August: To be announced

