

Colinton Courier

Newsletter of the Colinton Rural Fire Brigade * No 128* July 2012



Let there be light – the new light tower

Committee 2011-2012:

Fire Captain: Graham Povey

Senior Deputy: Nick Goldie

Deputies: Bob Morison, Jeremy Mears, Barry Woolacott

President: Nick Goldie

Secretary: Sandra Lauer

Treasurer: Bob Morison **Training Officer:** Jeremy Mears

Equipment Officer: Michael Burton

Community Awareness: Nick Goldie

Fundraising: Sandra Lauer

Permits: Graham Povey

NSW RFSA Delegate: Jeremy Mears

Call out:

Nil



'Catastrophic' fires in Colorado:

Adapted from Jeremy P Meyer, the Denver Post, 27 June 2012

A three-day-old wildfire erupted with catastrophic fury Tuesday, ripping across the foothills neighborhoods of Colorado Springs, devouring an untold number of homes and sending tens of thousands fleeing to safety in what was shaping up as one of the biggest disasters in state history. "This is a firestorm of epic proportions," said Colorado Springs Fire Chief Richard Brown. The Waldo Canyon fire in El Paso County — which had been growing in the forested hills on the city's west side — blew into an inferno late in the afternoon, raging over a ridge toward densely populated neighborhoods.

By nightfall, roughly 32,000 people left their homes, chased out by the flames.

As the fire continued to grow, all of northwest Colorado Springs was ordered evacuated, including the Air Force Academy.

It is a scenario that firefighting officials have feared as the conditions continued to get worse over the past week.

Scorching temperatures have baked the Front Range for several days as thousands of firefighters on the ground and more than 100 planes and helicopters have been battling more than eight wildfires across the state.

Denver tied a record with its fifth straight day of temperatures of at least 100 degrees, and weather in the 90s is

expected to continue for several days even as officials hoped that seasonal subtropical moisture would eventually creep into the region and bring much-needed rain.

While Colorado Springs and Boulder took over the headlines, the High Park fire west of Fort Collins was measured at 87,250 acres with still 55 percent containment. That fire, the most destructive in state history, has torched at least 257 homes, nine more than previously thought. ❧

Learning and Development in Bathurst:

report from Nick Goldie

More than a hundred RFS instructors and Head Office L&D administrators met at Charles Sturt University in Bathurst over the weekend 29 June – 1 July. Most of the participants were RFS staff, with a few volunteers from each district. Cooma-Monaro was represented by L&D Officer Mick Holton, Vern Dunning (Cooma), Richard Davies (Bredbo), Tony de Luca (Anembo), Nick Goldie (Colinton). A very full program gave delegates a variety of choices, and the sessions were pitched at different sections of the audience – some highly bureaucratic Head Office (HO) material, awash with L&D LSO SAP CSA ASR acronyms. There were also some ‘hands-on’ presentations of interest to any volunteer.

Highlights (apart from the excellent and frequent food!) included Mick Holton’s ‘Hot House’ show, reminding us just what Colinton lost, and showing how the three-container hot house has evolved from earlier dramatic props and scenarios.

Perhaps improbably, a session called *Heutagogy and Action Learning in Vocational Training* had a hundred listeners on the edge of their seats, wanting more, as psychiatrist Stewart Hase gave a living example of how good teaching is a conversation, not a lecture.

A third highlight was a presentation by Phil Robeson, who has the daunting title of *RFS Manager of Operational Doctrine and Standards*. His thought-provoking message was anything but bureaucratic. There will be, he said, more very bad seasons in NSW in the future, with more ferocious fires. The community expects the brigades to be able to protect them, but in a ferocious fire, fire-fighting becomes futile, even dangerous, and the most significant factor in personal survival is timely and accurate warnings. Therefore, he argued, we need to develop a formal procedure, beyond defensive firefighting, which he called *Safeguarding Strategy*, where the primary aims are

- WARN: warning people
- MOVE: moving people
- PROTECT: protecting people

and the function of a big red truck will be to pump information as much as water. It is essential, said Phil Robeson, to insert an element of *Safeguarding Strategy* into the existing Basic, Village and Advanced Firefighter instruction courses. ❧

Hot House progress:

Observant members will have noticed that Colinton’s three sea containers, which were to have formed the basis of the training hot-house, have been removed, presumably to Bombala. We wish them well ... ❧

Don’t poison your dog:

adapted from Town and Country Magazine, 2 July

Dr Bruce Watt, LHPA vet, has a timely warning about dogs and poisons. At this time of year, he says, the most common forms of poisonings are from rat and mouse baits.

Then there are snail baits, and – in some areas – (da dum!) “hash cookie ingestion” where the worst damage is done “when they bake it with chocolate”.

Perhaps more common in the Colinton area is fox baiting, as 1080 is essential for pest control, especially foxes.

“It is vital that you keep your farm dogs muzzled when working or secure in the back of the ute or at their kennel while baiting is taking place” he says. 

Membership:

Membership: please pay by cash at training, or cheque to The Treasurer, Colinton Rural Fire Brigade, 88 Weemala Lane, Michelago NSW 2620.

Membership fees: \$15.00 for adults, \$5.00 for juniors. Donations are always welcome. Please provide a return address so a receipt can be mailed to you. 



Karl and Tony prepare a burn plan

Training:

The Colinton Brigade conducts training every month on the second Saturday, at two o'clock, at the Station at Colinton. Everyone is welcome. ***If possible, crews are asked to arrive at 1330 to check the trucks before training.***

The Junior brigade is in action, once a month on the second Thursday of the month. Contact Michael Burton (0407 003 392) for details. 

A message from the Captain:

Here are two facts worth thinking about: *(one)* we have around 150 houses in our brigade district, and probably twice as many sheds and out-buildings; and *(two)* we have just four fire trucks.

There will almost certainly be times when the brigade is simply unable to respond to every call, and when neighbouring brigades may be equally busy.



Essential numbers

Emergency 000

Fire:

***Cooma Monaro Fire Control
(24 hrs)
1 300 722 164
02-6455 0455***

Fire:

***Captain and Permit Officer:
Graham Povey
02-6454 4150
0419 406 908***



It is the responsibility of every householder to keep your property as safe as possible. At the very least, keep the grass mowed, if possible to about 50 meters from any building. (This means that if there is a fire, you'll be facing metre-high flames rather than three-metre high-flames!)

Remember that love-grass burns fast and fiercely, at all times of the year.

People who are elderly, infirm, or otherwise unable to do their own protective maintenance can call on the AIDER program through Cooma Fire Control (02-6455 0455).

<http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/aider> 

Let there be light:

The Colinton brigade has been successful in applying for a grant under the *NRMA Insurance 2012 Community Grants* program, for the provision of emergency lighting. The brigade has purchased an *Australian Light Tower*, an ingenious tower of white fabric containing a powerful light. A single tower can illuminate an area of 100m x 100m, running off mains power or a generator. The tower packs into a compact bundle which can be carried in the boot of a car.

The brigade is very grateful to the *NRMA Insurance 2012 Community Grants* program; to Gennady Lipkin of Austrec – who manufacture the tower - for his assistance and prompt response; and to Dave Keevers of the Stihl shop in Cooma, who supplied the generator. 



Items for **The Colinton Courier** to Nick Goldie at horehound@yless4u.com.au
02 6235 9190
by the first Saturday each month, or to any Committee member. For production assistance we are grateful to:



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The Colinton Courier is also available at www.michelagoregion.org.au

Views expressed in **The Colinton Courier** are not necessarily those of the editor, the Brigade, or the RFS.



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