

Colinton Courier

Newsletter of the Colinton Rural Fire Brigade * No 140* July 2013



Sandra (r.) with delegates to the RFSA conference in Mudgee

Committee 2013-2014:

Fire Captain: Graham Povey
Senior Deputy: Nick Goldie
Deputies: Bob Morison, Jeremy Mears, Michael Burton
President: Nick Goldie
Secretary: Sandra Lauer
Treasurer: Bob Morison
Training Officer: Jeremy Mears
Equipment Officer: Michael Burton
Community Awareness: Nick Goldie
Fundraising: Jacqui Williams
Permits: Graham Povey, Nick Goldie

NSW RFSA Delegate: Jeremy Mears

Call out:

Nil



Stay and defend, or go?

“Theory would predict that people might delay their decision as a means of avoiding responsibility for any negative outcomes resulting from their decision, such as their house burning down.”

As it turns out, this sort of indecision is not a factor. According to a program carried out by bushfire researchers from the Universities of WA, Tasmania and Murdoch (WA), the real reason why people delay making a decision about whether to stay and defend, or go to safety, is simply because it's such a difficult decision to make, and may depend on immediate circumstances anyway.

The delay itself increases the risk, and also means that whatever steps are taken may be less effective. The difficulty in making a decision itself creates “paralyzing indecision.”

What to do about this circular situation? The Bushfire CRC researchers suggest that local brigades play a vital role, by providing community education and helping households to develop better contingency plans.

Brigade members need to develop their own plans, and communicate these to their neighbors.

Finally, say the researchers, *“random fire drills across neighbourhoods could help households to practise and improve their*

plans. This is already undertaken in NSW.”

And, they note, it is a substantial and complex problem. Well, yes ...

Sandra in Mudgee:
from *Brigade Secretary Sandra*

“I recently attended the RFSA conference in Mudgee along with Bredbo Captain Ken (Sparky) and Deputy Scott plus Vern and Langdon from Cooma.

“The theme of the conference was *Recognise, Foster, Support, Achieve*. The conference provided a great opportunity to meet with other RFS volunteers from across NSW, as well as a chance to listen to a diverse range of speakers including: NSW RFS Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons, George Negus, Sam Bailey and Michael Eburn.

“Videos of some of the presentations are available at: <http://www.rfsa.org.au/rfsa-conference-2013>

“Thanks to the RFSA for sponsoring me to attend.”

(The Rural Fire Service Association – RFSA - represents the interests of volunteers and paid RFS staff.

See <http://www.rfsa.org.au/>

Lovegrass Workshop:

All landholders, fire-fighters, and other interested people are invited to a **Lovegrass workshop: management and fire-fighting techniques** To be held in Bredbo on Sunday 1 September by the Colinton and Bredbo brigades. Details in the August *Courier*.



Bredbo Captain Sparky “tries out” a new truck at Mudgee



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**



Blowing hot:

The Brigade is delighted to join NRMA in announcing the results of the 2013 *NRMA Community Grants Program*.

Colinton is fortunate in receiving a grant sufficient for the purchase of two backpack blowers, meaning that each of the Cat. Seven trucks can now be fitted with this modern fire-fighting tool. These blowers, like an over-size leaf blower, can create a bare earth perimeter around a fire or a hazard reduction burn in very quick time.

Our sincere thanks to NRMA.



Captain Graham, blowing hard

While volunteer brigades are basically equipped – trucks, pumps, hoses, sheds – by the Shire, they depend on fund-raising activities and donations for much of the essential smaller fire-fighting equipment such as blowers and radios.

Grants from corporate entities and government departments allow for larger

capital works such as buildings and even ancillary vehicles.

Two local landowners, whose property was recently the scene of a potentially serious fire, dealt with by the Brigade, have shown their gratitude by the remarkably generous donation of a new chainsaw.

The Brigade is indeed very grateful. The new chainsaw will take its natural place as part of the equipment on the new *Seven Charlie*.

As Captain Graham says: “At a major incident every extra skill and every extra fire-fighting aid can make a difference.”



Solar power:

Never believe anything that you see online – but this YouTube video is certainly interesting (and self explanatory) – a fully functioning solar powered chainsaw. (The owner also has a neat hexacopter – a camera carrying radio-controlled drone.)

Anyone who uses solar power knows that the weak link is power storage. Lead-acid batteries are 19th century technology, and their gee-whizz modern replacements are too expensive for most of us to afford. This should improve, as new technology becomes more common, and the key to the success of the solar chainsaw is a modern lithium ion battery pack.

See:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aXPgVStYgZE>



Signage:

Returning to the station at night, it's always been a little difficult spotting the entrance. Now, thanks to a fine metal sign (thank you, Barry) which previously adorned a Canberra school, now closed,

and some good work by the Polo Flat signwriter, the difficulty is resolved. ↪



The new sign – modelled by Eliška and Andrew

The Yarnell fire – 19 Arizona firefighters die:

Thanks to Sandra for drawing our attention to this article in High Country News, by John N. Maclean, the son of Norman Maclean, who wrote A River Runs Through It, also Young Men and Fire, an account of the Mann Gulch fire in which 13 “smoke-jumpers” died. John N. has written four books about major US fires. The HCN article argues forcefully for a re-think about fire suppression, home-building in fire-prone areas, and community expectations of fire crews.

John N. Maclean says: “We need to encourage firefighters to exercise more caution, even when homes are at stake. Let the fires that are riskiest for firefighters burn. And assure the firefighters that the nation will have their backs when the inevitable complaints pour in. We have entered a new world of wildland fire, and it’s going to get worse.

Again and again, we hear firefighters say, as they did after the Arizona deaths, “These are the most extreme fire conditions we’ve ever seen.” For those on the fire lines, climate change is a visible reality, not a Sunday morning talk-show debate by people who spend their time in air-conditioned homes and offices.”

See: <http://www.hcn.org/articles/stand-down-from-western-wildfires>) ↪

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: \$20.00 for adults, \$5.00 for juniors. Donations are always welcome. Please provide a return address so a receipt can be mailed to you. ↪

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*Items for **The Colinton Courier** to Nick Goldie at horehound@yless4u.com.au
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