



# Short Circuit



People with Multiple Sclerosis Victoria Inc.

[www.pwms-v.org.au](http://www.pwms-v.org.au)

Spring, 2009

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## **Editors Report AGM Monday 19 October 2009 11am – 2pm**



Now remember you only have until 31st September 2009 to have your Nominations Forms in, so remember to send them in.

You also have until 30 September 2009 to win the Bruce McCulloch Prize, which appeared in our earlier issue. **We would like more entries;** it is a very good prize and all we need is for you to tell us about your experience with MS.

In addition, do not forget about the second competition where you get to win vouchers of;

**1st Prize \$100 JB hi-fi gift Voucher**

**2nd Prize \$50 Myer gift Voucher**

**3rd Prize \$20 Sanity music Voucher**

**Put yourself on the email list and you will get the chance of winning one of three vouchers.**

This year we would like to see as many members as possible at the AGM that way you get to have your say in person on any issue you may have, so hope to see you there.

**Anthony Virgona**

## **Presidential Report Spring 2009**

Here's hoping you managed to keep your heads above water through all the Winter festivities. It was interesting recently to find a new publication in the library ('*Living with Progressive MS*') all about the condition, by a Doctor (Patricia Coyle) and a Specialised Nurse (June Halper). Main Message seems to be 'Keep hoping for the Best – while preparing for the Worst'.

And now for something a little more familiar. Readers of The Age in Melbourne and the SMH in Sydney will have noticed in their Colour Sections of 24<sup>th</sup> May 2009 a full-colour section devoted to MS Appeals. The story explains why PwMS focuses so Hard on the newly diagnosed. To quote from a piece written about Simone, a 37 yr old finance graduate: on being told she had MS: "Everything hit me at once. There was no way could I go to work at the time with these symptoms. What was going to happen with our finances? Thank Goodness we don't have kids. There were several times I burst into tears from a combination of the Fatigue and an overwhelming fear for the future."

In the piece written by John Blackwood of MSL, he shows how fortunate Simone and her employer were to find and develop the new ways to maximise and value this opportunity. Some of us have gained from such opportunities, and it remains on our list of targets for all PwMS. A little too close to home was the news that my carefully flagged expectation for Jason to join our Committee came unstuck through the mass of his commitments – and Membership must always be voluntary. His work with Young People in Nursing Homes and the Summer Foundation is already bringing results. Perhaps even more distressing news told me that Dawn Waugh has decided, after too much time in hospital, to relocate nearer her family in NSW. Dawn has given us several years of sterling service and we mark her untimely departure with much regret. She is one of the brave new wave taking on Tysabri, and we salute her.

Another salute is due for Lori Schneider, the American PwMS who climbed Everest on May 25<sup>th</sup> 2009. As I'm sure you already know, We can Do Anything – given time.... I still mourn the passing of my Travel Pass which expired about a year ago? But it seems that the whole of 2009. Luckily, I live in Hope..... Another reason for hope is that the Government is evidently moving towards a new system for setting Disabled Pensions and recognising those of us who work. It is likely to be based on a No-fault Insurance System, a little like the way Medicare is funded. More to come.

Something else I must bring to the attention of New Starters is the series of Free Courses run by the MS Society on the subject of Healthy Living and Exercise. Two final bits of good news. In the Press and other media of 15<sup>h</sup> June, it was reported that the long-running Aus/NZ Vitamin D and immune system study has yielded excellent results suggesting better ways we may, in future, be able to anticipate and prepare for any likelihood of MS. Great news for the future generations, maybe now for ours. And in the famous MS Walk/Run, the target of \$500,000 was exceeded by about \$60,000. Maybe we can aim even higher.

[Don't Forget your PwMS AGM on 18<sup>th</sup> October 2009.](#) We've arranged for Trish Mifsud to Give an outline of the activities of the Ambassadors. You CAN make a difference...

**David Sullivan**

## Entitlements Update June, 2009

### **1. DISABLED PERSONS' PARKING PERMIT**

Application form is available from your local council. Your local doctor will also need to fill in the form. CHECK EXPIRY DATE OF DISABLED PARKING PERMIT – fine \$100.00

CBD Mobility Map Melways 1A & 1F                      CBD DISABLED PARKING PERMIT

Application forms available from: In person:

The Front Desk, Town Hall, Swanston St, Melbourne.

Monday-Friday 7.30am-5pm

Permits: GPO Box 488G, Melbourne 3001.

Email: [permits@melbourne.vic.gov.au](mailto:permits@melbourne.vic.gov.au)

### **2. HALF PRICE TAXI CARD**

An annual subsidy cap of \$2,180 from 1st July 2009 for members, other than wheelchair users or members exempted from the cap due to certain medical or other criteria.

Contact Multi Purpose Taxi Program Tel: 9320 4360  
Country Callers: - 1800 638 802

80 Collins Street, Melbourne.  
Website: [www.taxi.vic.gov.au](http://www.taxi.vic.gov.au)

If you have a half price taxi card you do not pay the lifting fee. If you do not have a Multi Purpose Taxi Card then you will be charged the extra \$14.00 lifting fee on top of the taxi fare incurred.

### **3. INTERSTATE TAXI SUBSIDY VOUCHERS Tel: 9320 4360**

If you travel interstate (not overseas) you can phone the Victorian Taxi Directorate prior to your trip to obtain travel vouchers. Phone at least two weeks prior to travelling.

### **4. CAR INSURANCE – notify VIC ROADS 13 11 71**

Notify your insurance company if you are driving and have MS

If you don't and you have an accident they can refuse your claim.

### **5. SCOOTER INSURANCE**

RACV insures scooters/wheelchairs as WHEELCHAIR BREAKDOWN cost \$38.00 per year.

RACV will organize a maxi taxi to pick you and your scooter/wheelchair up and take you home and pay up to a maximum of \$80 to the driver. There is no charge to you. They will also come to your home and pump up tyres on wheelchairs and scooters.

### **6. AIRLINES**

You can take your wheelchair, walker and scooter at no extra cost if you are unable to walk. You must use your scooter at all the times otherwise an extra charge may apply. Notify the airline/travel agent that you will be bringing a wheelchair/scooter/walker.

I have travelled with Virgin airlines who I found quite helpful.

### **7. COMPANION CARD Phone 1800 650 611**

Request an application form be sent to you. The Companion Card entitles the holder to one concession ticket plus a free ticket of the same value for a Carer of your choice to accompany you.

### **8. EASE Ticket Service the arts access ticketing service (reduced price tickets)**

Address: 24 Eastern Road, South Melbourne Vic. 3205 Tel: (03) 9699 8497, TTY (03) 9699 7636, Fax (03) 9699 8868, Email: [ease@artsaccess.com.au](mailto:ease@artsaccess.com.au) Web: [www.artsaccess.com.au/attend](http://www.artsaccess.com.au/attend)

EASE MEMBERSHIP - \$30.00 Individuals, \$50.00 (Non organisational groups of 20 members or less) \$80.00 Organisations.

**9. CONTINENCE AIDS ASSISTANCE SCHEME (CAAS) Phone: 1300 366 455** - request an application form to be sent to you and a product list. You are entitled to \$489.95 per year pro rata in product only (not cash). You must use the total amount every year as it does not carry over to the next financial year. You receive \$489.95 from the 1st July each year. Eligibility for CAAS - Clients diagnosed with a neurological condition DO NOT need a DSP/PCC to qualify.

**NATIONAL CONTINENCE HELPLINE 1800 330 066**

[www.intouchdirect.com.au](http://www.intouchdirect.com.au)

**10. PHOTO IDENTIFICATION CARD – Nerve Centre Blackburn Phone: 9845 2700**

A normal passport photo can be used to fit the space on the application form, nothing larger. The Photo ID card can be used where a signature is required e.g. signing forms at the bank. If you don't have a driver's licence, this can be shown as your ID.

**11. SUMMER MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS CONCESSION**

Account holder must be DSP/HCC eligible. The Medical Cooling Concession provides a 17.5% discount off electricity costs over a six month period from 1 November to 30 April for concession card holders with Multiple Sclerosis and other qualifying medical conditions.

**12. WINTER ENERGY CONCESSION** • Account holder must be DSP/HCC eligible.

The Winter Energy Concession provides a discount of 17.5% off mains electricity and mains gas on usage from 1 May to 31 October of each year.

Present your concession card when paying these bills or contact your electricity or gas retailer.

**13. MAIL REDIRECTION** – Australia Post provides a 50% reduction in the cost of redirecting all postal articles to a new mailing address for a maximum period of up to 12 months if you are the holder of a Pension Concession Card or Health Care Card.

**14. AIDS & EQUIPMENT - Yooralla, Independent Living Centre**

705 Geelong Road Brooklyn Tel: 9362 6111

Example - Aids & Equipment (A&E) will contribute \$1,000 towards an electric recliner. If you choose a recliner which costs more than \$1,000 you will pay the difference. You will need to speak to an Occupational Therapist (OT) at the MS Society or your local council. They will need to visit you and fill in the necessary paper work.

**15. MOBILITY ALLOWANCE** Approx. \$79.30 per fortnight.

To receive the Mobility Allowance the person must be working, training or volunteering a total of 32 hours over a 4 week period. (Volunteering must be for a Charitable Institution).

[ENTITLES YOU TO A HEALTH CARE CARD](#)

**16. CARERS ALLOWANCE** approx. (adult) rate \$105.10 per fortnight

The Carer must be 16 years and over. The person receiving Carers Allowance does not have to live with you. Check criteria with Centrelink. Not income or asset tested.

**17. CARERS PAYMENT**

Approx. single \$569.80; couple \$475.90 each per fortnight. The person receiving the Carers Payment does not have to live with you. It can be a relative, friend, neighbour, son or daughter aged 16 and over. The person can be younger depending on circumstances. Payment subject to an income & assets test. They can only work or study a maximum of 40 hours per week. Check with Centrelink.

**18. PENSIONER EDUCATION SUPPLEMENT (PES)** approx. \$62.40 pf.

To qualify you must be receiving the Carer Payment or Disability Support Pension and be studying full time. Payment subject to an income & assets test.

[WHEN MAKING A CLAIM](#) [PHONE: 13 27 17](#)

When making a claim the person claiming should phone Centrelink and state that they are going to make a claim and your payment will be back dated to this date. Request a reference number. You have 14 days to obtain forms and lodge your claim at any Centrelink office. If you are unable to lodge application on time, phone Centrelink and ask for an extension of time.

**19. EMERGENCY RESPITE SERVICE 1800 059 059** FREE after-hours emergency and crisis support to people with a disability, the frail aged and their carers.

**20. VITAL CALL** 1300 360 808 your personal Response System

**21. MEPACS** 1800 451 300 free call Email: [mepacs@phcn.vic.gov.au](mailto:mepacs@phcn.vic.gov.au)

Web: [www.mepacs.com.au](http://www.mepacs.com.au) Contact your local council or MS Society Occupational Therapists.

***Further Updates will follow in December Issue.***

### **Time to do a Sleep Study?**

Have you (or someone close to you) ever been concerned by a noisy snoring habit while sleeping? From a health point of view, you may have heard that such a habit may indicate something potentially dangerous called 'sleep apnea', so it certainly isn't an irrelevant factor – even aside from the annoyance your snore may be causing. Snoring occurs more in men than women, by irregular airflow in the throat. It can lead to a complete stop in breathing, which is why it can be dangerous. Recently, I decided to discover if my occasional noises might be of the less desirable kind. So I got a referral to a 'Sleep Specialist' at Monash, and on his advice spent a single night in hospital so that I could be fully assessed.

The process is time-consuming because a complete network must be attached to the head in order for your condition to be accurately measured, but the only real discomfort you are likely to experience is in payment of the bill. My case was found not to be threatening, and the only action I could have picked up was a 'Throat Splint' at several thousand \$\$\$. For other people, some of whom I met at the Hospital, another option is a Head Mask worn at night to safeguard breathing. If you decide to get checked out, don't be too surprised to find quite a waiting period to join the 'Sleep Study', as more people are now getting checked out..... **David Sullivan**

### **Greener Homes** **The Loan that keeps on giving. Eco-makeovers just became much more affordable.**

The Federal Government's newest household retrofitting scheme-the Green Loans Program- began on July 1. "It's about trying to help people live more sustainably and also save a lot of money," said home energy assessor Keith Loveridge. "To be quite honest, I think it's fabulous." The scheme has two parts. In the first, 360,000 households will receive free home sustainability assessments. You can sign up through the Government's websites ([environment.gov.au/greenloans](http://environment.gov.au/greenloans) or [ecoassessment.com.au](http://ecoassessment.com.au) or call **HOTLINE: 1800 895 076**) or directly with an authorised assessor. Applicant must earn less than \$250,000 to qualify.

Then, an eco-assessor will locate the water and energy savings that can be made around your home, and produce a report detailing their findings. "Typically, heating and cooling consumes about 40 per cent of the home's energy; appliances, about 30 per cent; and water heating about 23 per cent," Mr. Loveridge said. "We're identifying which changes will have the biggest impact. For instance, if you've got an old washing machine that chugs away six hours a day, that'll be one of the biggest energy users in your house."

Once your home has been assessed, you'll be eligible to take up the scheme's second measure: a four year interest-free loan of up to \$10,000 to help pay for the measures recommended in the report. There will be funding to provide about 75,000 loans. It's a great deal, Mr. Loveridge said. Depending on your circumstances, "you can also pay for that loan just by the savings you make".

**Michael Green. The Age 5/7/2009**



### **FOR SALE**

**Mazda 121 metro 2001 flashe**

- modified for wheelchair access -automatic**
- Power steering -Air-Conditioning**
- seating capacity 5 plus wheelchair**

**Asking Price \$28,000 – Jessica Contact No: 0412030468**

## **My MS Story**

My name is Connie and I was diagnosed with MS in 1994, when I became vision impaired and was told I was legally blind. At the time I was working as an accountant, I studied a Bachelor of Business in Accounting at VUT. After I was diagnosed with my vision impairment I started to see a homeopath who gave me some herbal drops and I started on medication for MS. Soon after, my sight in my left eye started to improve and so did my mobility.

For my MS, I was on a trial for medication for 12 months and then after some improvements I started taking the medication long-term. I used to do the MS Read-a-thon and was in denial for 8 years. I stopped talking to my friends but when I saw my mum crying for me, I came out of denial. The MS Society also helped me.

I volunteered to do telephone peer support for others with MS and speaking with them made me realize others were worse off than me. As my vision and mobility improved I linked up with Impact, which is a support service for people with neurological disorders. Some of my favourite things to do are Broadway musicals, movies and going out for weekends with my support worker. She thinks I handle my situation with humour and honesty and I make her laugh. I smile and laugh because it doesn't cost anything and this helps coping with my strategies.

During the week I go to the MS Society at the Regent Centre where we get together and do creative activities such as making bracelets, painting vases and mosaic mirrors. Recently the Victorian Council of Social Service did a project to promote community work and my social worker and myself were involved. We told our story and our life size photos were up in the city for three weeks in May of this year. Then we received a photo and story for ourselves and I now have mine in a frame. This is my story.

[Connie Giompapa](#)

## **Computers for Concession Card Holders!**

Computers from \$100 with Windows XP Professional & 12 Months Warranty!

Lighthouse Stores - "making brighter futures"

3 LOCATIONS!!

Hoppers Crossing - 21/13b Elm Park Drive, 3029 Phone: 9748 0099

Laverton - 58 Woods Street, 3028 Phone: 9931 0889

Melton - 271 High Street, 3337 Phone: 9743 0033

**Anthony's Kitchen**



**'Zesty Lemon Fingers'**

### **INGREDIENTS:**

12 Scotch Finger biscuits. 1 1/2 tablespoons custard powder. 1 1/2 tablespoons corn flour. 1/2 cup fructose (fruit sugar). 1/2 cup lemon juice. 1 1/2 cups skim milk.

### **METHOD:**

Line a slice tray with baking paper. Arrange the biscuits on the base of the tray.

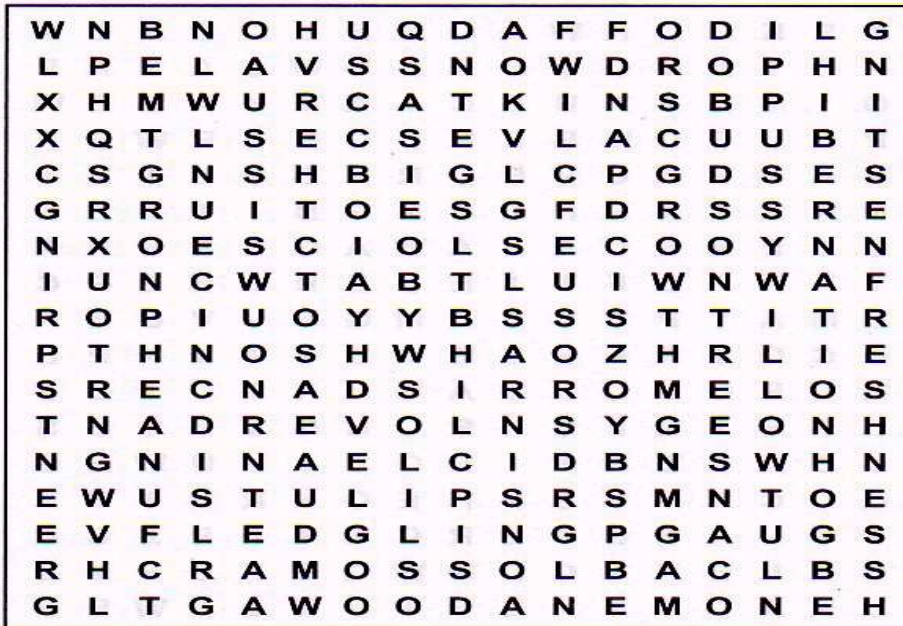
In a medium saucepan, place the custard powder and fructose. Slowly stir in the lemon juice and skim milk. Mix well.

Stir over low heat until the mixture boils and thickens. Spread the mixture over the biscuit base. Decorate with grated lemon rind. Cool.

SENT IN BY: [Kim Warren](#)

# Springtime

To remind you of this glorious season.



APRIL SHOWERS  
BLOSSOM  
BLUEBELLS  
BUDS ON TREES  
BUNNY RABBITS  
CALVES  
CATKINS  
CLEANING  
CROCUS  
DAFFODIL

EGGS  
FLEDGLING  
FRESHNESS  
GREEN  
GROWTH  
GUSTY WINDS  
HIBERNATION  
HYACINTH  
LAMBS  
MARCH

MORRIS DANCERS  
NARCISSUS  
NESTING  
NEW SHOOTS  
PUSSY WILLOW  
SNOWDROP  
SPRING  
TULIPS  
VERDANT  
WOOD ANEMONE

## How to disable a STOLEN mobile phone?

To check your Mobile phone's serial number, key in the following digits on your phone:

**\* # 0 6 #**

**A 15 digit code will appear on the screen. This number is unique to your handset. Write it down and keep it somewhere safe. When your phone gets stolen, you can phone your service provider and give them this code. They will then be able to block your handset so even if the thief changes the SIM card, your phone will be totally useless.**

You probably won't get your phone back, but at least you know that whoever stole it can't use/sell it either.

If everybody does this, there would be no point in people stealing mobile phones.

**People with Multiple Sclerosis Victoria Inc**

**ABN: 73 104 198 752**

**Absentee Voting Form for AGM 2009 19/10/09**

Positions.

Nominations.

President: .....

David Sullivan

Vice President: .....

Anthony Virgona

Secretary: .....

Nigel Caswell

Treasurer: .....

Michelle Raymond

Ordinary Committee Member (3) Positions:

.....

Allen Maher

.....

.....

PwMS Members Name.....

Address.....

P.C.....

(Return to: - The Secretary PwMS-V Inc by 14/10/2009)

Nigel Caswell 4 King Street, Sandringham 3191

PwMS-V Inc (ABN 73 104 198 752) publishes Short Circuit.

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