

Something to

CROWABOUT

e-Magazine of the

Wagga Wagga Senior Citizens' Club Inc.

Incorporating

WAGGA WAGGA SENIOR CITIZENS' COMPUTER CLUB

(Member of ASCCA (Australian Seniors Computer Clubs Association))

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REMEMBER THE OLD DUNNY?



Members of Wagga Wagga Senior Citizens' Club Inc and Wagga Wagga Senior Citizens' Computer Club wish to thank Wagga Wagga City Council for its support .

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The Dunny SPECIAL Issue



Editor's Notes

Welcome to the first issue for 2013 - also called the 'great dunny issue'! Having found three items on the subject, I decided to go all out and make it the theme for this issue. Like it or not, the out-back toilet, or dunny as it is colloquially known, was a fact of life for most folk of our generation. Perhaps as children we chanted ... 'Dan, Dan, the dunny man, Washed his face in a dunny pan.' If the stories bring back memories, don't be shy and lets share them with others.

On a more modern note, let me share the following with you.

Despite the digital revolution, smarty pants phones and such, I reckon there is still a place for printed newspapers.

I was visiting my son the other night when I asked him if I could borrow a newspaper. He replied, 'This is the 21st century, I don't waste money on newspapers.

Here, you can borrow my iPad'.

So I did, and I can tell you this—that fly never knew what hit him!

Congratulations to the new committees for 2013

See you at the Club,

Barry

Wagga Wagga Senior Citizens' Club Inc.

Membership (\$5.00 per year) to over 50's

Weekly Programme of Activities

Day	Activity	Time	Cost
Mon.	Computer Club - offering one on one tuition.	9.30 am to 3.00 pm	\$3.00 Per hr.
1st Mon. Of Month	Public Meeting Day Guest Speaker	1.30 pm	\$2.00
2nd Mon. Of Month	Cards and Indoor Bowls	12.30 pm	\$2.00
3rd Mon. Of Month	Luncheon Day	12 noon	\$5.00
4th Mon. Of Month	Sing-along - Movie Alternating each month	1.30 pm	\$2.00
Thursday	Computer Club - offering one on one tuition.	9.30 am to 3.00 pm	\$3.00 Per hr.
Thursday	500 Cards	1.00 pm	\$2.00
Thursday	Line Dancing	10.30 am	\$2.00
Thursday	Craft	1.00-3.00 pm	\$2.00
Friday	Computer Club - offering one on one tuition.	9.30 am to 3.00 pm	\$3.00 per hr
Friday	Euchre	1.00 pm	\$2.00
Friday	Indoor Bowls	1.00-3.00 pm	\$2.00

Bi-Monthly Bus Trip: Normally 3rd Wednesday of month, destination decided at monthly meeting and bookings taken that day with payment.

Annual Bus Trip: Normally in October for 5 days.

Wagga Wagga Senior Citizens' Club Inc Committee 2013

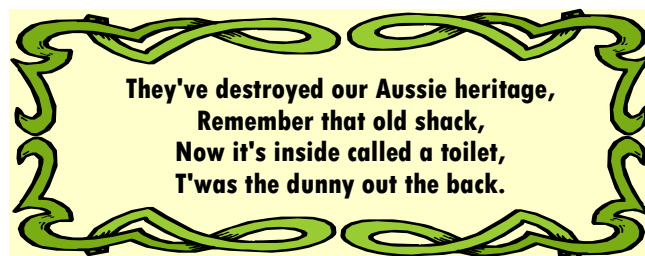
President	Jim Weeden	69252001
Vice President	Barry Williams	69253065
Treasurer	Jo Jovanovic	
Assistant Treasurer	Gwen Beazley	69310268
Secretary	Robyn Weeden	69252001
Assistant Secretary	Barbara Moorhead	

Additional Committee: Bev Morley, Velma Spears, Fay King, Marlene Bowen, Robyn McClure, Phyllis Ward, Dawn McDermott, Paddy Adams, Janet Kaine.

WAGGA WAGGA SENIOR CITIZENS' COMPUTER CLUB—COMMITTEE 2013

Chairperson	Judy Robertson	Ph: 69316125 jroberts@dragnet.com.au
Secretary	Barry Williams	Ph: 69253065 barrysonia@bigpond.com
Treasurer	Paddy Adams	Ph: 0427654575 vk2grq@ozemail.com.au

Additional Committee: Dawn McDermott, Velma Spears, Bev Morley, Enid Pendergast, Barbara Moorhead



Reminder

General Club Meeting is held on the **1st Monday** of Month.
Computer Club Committee meets on the **2nd Monday** of Month



Seniors in Focus

Craft group members show off just a few of the items they have been working on recently. (L)

-Whilst (Below) card players concentrate on their game of 500



Mary Conway (Above) is a life member and has been sorely missed at times with her musical accompaniment during Club functions due to ill health.

Sally Verbeek (Below) enjoys her weekly computer lessons and craft work



Sandra Bickley and Gwen Beazley proudly display the creation they have corroborated with in the craft group

Seniors In Focus



Shenanigans at the last Sing-along meeting for the year when members dressed as nursery rhyme characters - challenging the audience to guess who they were supposed to be.



Bruce and David take time out for a chat and cuppa during the annual bus trip in 2012.

Club Christmas Party (2012) and Club president Jim Weeden looks on as Lady Mayoress Robyn Kendall cuts the cake.



Line Dancing

Wagga Senior Citizens' Club Line Dancers swing into step with the music on Thursday morning.



The Dunny Man

You rarely hear the term ‘nightsoil’ any more – the word that respectfully covered a whole range of colourful terms for human waste. We hope you’re not too squeamish about such matters.

Recently, after having read his book, ‘The Dunny Man’, I contacted the author, John Gardner. John was for some years a nightsoil contractor in the outer-suburban areas of Melbourne.

His recent book (first published in 2009) contains recollections from the 1940s when the dunny man was a common sight in most communities on their weekly early morning visits during their collection run. The National Library’s Trove website summarises the book as containing “the stories of the men who worked as the dunny man – a history of their lives and the history of the sanitary service they performed. In these days of luxury bathrooms with spas and bidets, it is hard to imagine that just 60 years ago, there was only the outside dunny, and the dunny man came along the back lane each night.”



John says of his own childhood: “I remember growing up as a kid – if we had other kids over to play, we’d tell them to watch out because of the spiders in the toilet. And when they finally had to go to the toilet, we used to poke a piece of grass through the missing trapdoor on the back and tickle their bums and they’d launch themselves out the front door like rockets!”

“If we saw the dunny man at home, ‘G’day’ is about all we said!”

“When I worked as a dunny man, if I caught someone in the toilet, I’d make a big joke of it. If you went to push a door open and it would push back at you, you’d know someone was in there. Women and men responded differently. If it was a woman, she’d say, ‘Who’s there?’ I’d always say, Ha, ha, caught ya! It’s the dunny man’, and make real light of it, and sit on the empty can and wait. As she came out, she’d say, ‘Oh, I was busting for a twinkle. I knew you were due but I just couldn’t wait.’

But if it was a man, he’d just push the door back at you and when he came out, 99.9% of the time he wouldn’t even look at you. The only thing I can put it down to is that when woman had their babies, they suffered all the lack of dignity under the sun, whereas a man would rather die of prostate cancer than go through the investigation process.

“For half the toilets we had to change the pan from inside the toilet and half from the back trapdoor,” John continued. “If you used the trapdoor, you wouldn’t know whether the toilet was occupied or not. I never saw a bum all the years I was a dunny man, but a lady told me after one of the Probus meetings I addressed, that she had been traumatised at the age of 14 because the dunny man had seen her bottom!”

John became a dunny man quite unintentionally.

“I was a builder – small time, never employed more than five people – and I did some work on a Chinese restaurant in Ferntree Gully,” he recalled. “At the grand opening the town clerk and a few from the council were there. I was complaining that you didn’t get good toilet service at a building site. Most house building sites in the mid 70’s never got a toilet and if they did, they rarely got a pan in it, and if you did get a pan, it was rarely serviced.”

“At the end of this restaurant opening, I said to the town clerk, ‘What’s with this dunny man? Why doesn’t he do the service? And he says to me, “If I wasn’t town clerk I’d put in a tender and do the job.” ‘Oh. I said, good money?’ ‘Oh yeah, good money’ (and it turned out it was) and he asked me if I was interested. We’d both had quite a lot to drink, and I said: ‘Oh yeah!’

The following Monday the tender papers turned up at John’s place, with the tender due in two months’ time. John thought, “Why not? Go for it!” He conceded he didn’t know much about it and had to price trucks and so on. ”But I managed to scrape through all that and wound up with the contract for the city of Knox and followed up with the Shire of Lilydale sometime later.”

After getting the contract, John understood why building sites were poorly serviced. According to John, councils rarely provided enough pans to service existing residences.

John remembers that it wasn’t a bad job. “People jumped to the wrong conclusion about stains on the dunny man’s shoulder. It was simply that all dunny pans were painted with bituminous paint that rubs off. Most days you wouldn’t smell bad at all!”

For John, the worst thing about being a dunny man was the abundance of spiders in Ferntree Gully and Lilydale. “You’d walk under a tree and through the web of some very big spiders and sometimes a big huntsman would run around the pan in a never-ending circle and I’d drop the pan – fortunately with its lid on.”

Dogs were a problem, too. “Little dogs were the worst, little nippers. One place had



two of them; one at the front and one at the back, and one of them would get you. I warned one of the new blokes, and he said ‘I think I know how to fix that!’ and he dropped an empty pan on it. But next week the dog was still waiting for him.”

And there was the lady in Ferntree Gully who used to be naked every morning making her husband’s breakfast...”
“As far as any stigma attached to being a dunny man, I played up to it, except one time at a school reunion. I told everyone that I was a builder.”

John served as the vice president of the Boronia Liberal Party for a while. “I once chaired a meeting at Dorset Gardens Hotel for the Liberal Party. There were a couple of hundred people there to hear a guest speaker from Tasmania – Senator Peter Rae. We were sitting together, and he asked me what I did for a living. I said, ‘I’m the local dunny man’. And he said, ‘What do you really do?’ – and I said, ‘I’m the local sanitary contractor, I pick up people’s poop!’

John recalls that other people had more problems with his occupation than he did. “My accountant’s wife said to me once, ‘If you see me in the street, don’t acknowledge me!’ So one day I saw her walking in Dorset Road. I’m tooting her and she wouldn’t look at me, so eventually I stuck my head out the window and yelled. She finally gave me a little wave close to her chest.”

“My daughter used to go to college by bus along one of the roads I travelled in the truck, and she said ‘don’t even look at the bus!’”

John explained a little of the history of nightsoil disposal in his area.

“In those days we used to empty the cans in a large shed behind Channel 10. You’d drive into a loading bay with a load of 120 pans, take off the lids and put each pan on a conveyor belt, so that it’d get emptied and cleaned – with an occasional exception!”

“Before my time they used to empty the pans into a paddock. They’d just plough it into the ground, and when I was a kid I remember them using a place called ‘poop paddock’ near the corner of South Road and Warrigal Road.”

“Prior to that there was a place near the Clayton railway station where two Chinese brothers had a vegetable garden, and they used to open up the ground with a plough and the truck would come in and tip it into the furrows. They made their living growing vegetables until legislation stopped them using human waste as fertiliser.”

Along the way there were occasional funny moments, challenges and spills!

“Once the truck got stuck in a driveway, and had to be towed out.”

“An old dunny man told me that he was one of seven sons, and that four of them joined their father as dunny men.”

“Back in the time when most Nunawading families were one-car families, if the family breadwinner worked in the city, he’d ride the pushbike or take the bus to the station.”

“The old dunny man told me that one morning they were in the truck near Nunawading station. And as they went round a corner, one of the pans fell off. Before they’d had a chance to clean up the spillage, a man came around the corner on his pushbike, with his briefcase hanging off the handlebars, his suit trousers tucked into his socks, and no back mud-guard. He rode right through the middle of it, and earned a wet streak right up his back, and all my Dad said was, ‘I bet he won’t have much trouble getting a seat on the train!’ “

“There was also a street called ‘Lucky Street’ in Nunawading. The road was so bad a council employee used to meet the dunny man with a trailer and a Ferguson tractor. They would load all the pans for the street on the tractor and trailer to prevent the dunny man’s truck being bogged.”

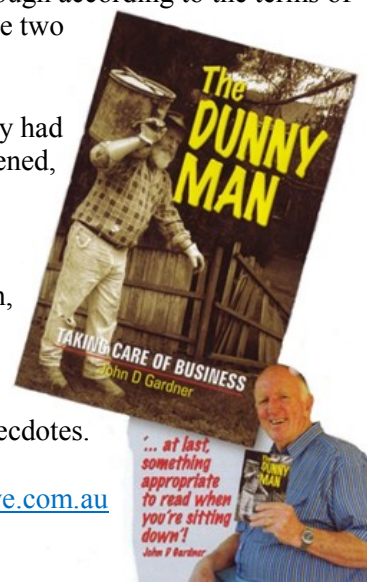
The worst spill John can recall having was near Kilsyth Primary School. “Four ‘fullies’ went off the side of the truck, all over Mt Dandenong Road. I braved the traffic, collected all the lids and all the pans – got them back on the truck and wondered what to do about cleaning up the mess! There was nothing I could do, even though according to the terms of the contract all spillages were to be cleaned up. Cars were spreading the mess towards the two lollypop ladies outside the school, and believe me; they had wind of what was coming!”

John drove around in his truck until he found some council workers. “I asked them if they had a radio in their truck. They said ‘Yes’. ‘Oh you beauty!’ I said, and told them what happened, and that I wanted the Shire of Lillydale’s water tanker to come and clean up the mess. When they stopped laughing they did it. They thought it was hilarious.”

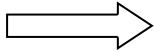
When the movie *Kenny* was being made, the lead actor spent a couple of hours with John, learning about carrying pans.

My thanks to John for allowing excerpts from his book to be used. “The Dunny Man – Taking Care of Business” by John D Gardner is packed with humorous and historical anecdotes.

Copies may be purchased (\$12.00 incl. postage) by contacting John at johndgardner@live.com.au



Feeling Unappreciated??

The next time you feel that nobody loves you, no one cares, or that no one ever notices you, think of this man: 

Or consider these . . .

In a hospital's Intensive Care Unit, patients always died in the same bed, on Sunday morning, at about 11:00 am, regardless of their medical condition. This puzzled the doctors and some even thought it had something to do with the super natural. No one could solve the mystery as to why the deaths occurred around 11:00 am Sunday, so a worldwide team of experts was assembled to investigate the cause of the incidents. The next Sunday morning, a few minutes before 11:00 am all of the doctors and nurses

nervously waited outside the ward to see for themselves what the terrible phenomenon was all about. Some were holding wooden crosses, prayer books, and other holy objects to ward off the evil spirits. Just when the clock struck 11:00am, Rufus Alphonso Johnson, the part-time Sunday sweeper, entered the ward and unplugged the life support system so he could use the vacuum cleaner.

Still Having a Bad Day?

The average cost of rehabilitating a seal after the Exxon Valdez Oil spill in Alaska was \$80,000.00. At a special ceremony, two of the most expensively saved animals were being released back into the wild amid cheers and applause from onlookers.

A minute later, in full view, a killer whale ate them both.

Still think you are having a Bad Day?

A woman came home to find her husband in the kitchen shaking frantically, almost in a dancing frenzy, with some kind of wire running from his waist to an area near the electric kettle. Intending to jolt him away from the deadly current, she whacked him with a handy wood cutting board, breaking his arm in two places.

Up to that moment, he had been happily listening to his Walkman.

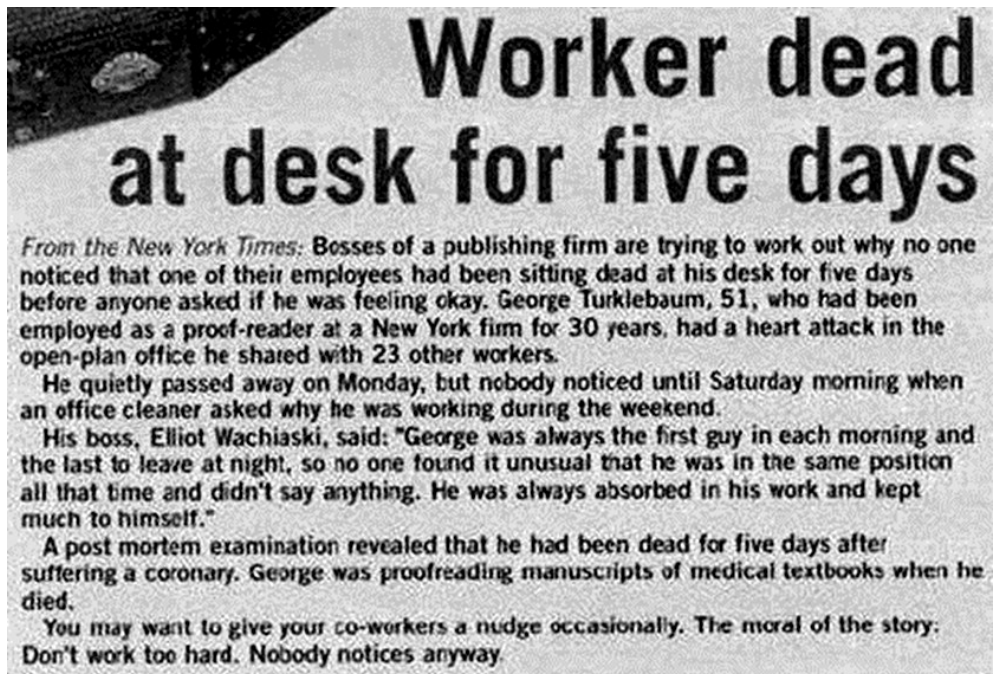
Two animal rights defenders were protesting the cruelty of sending pigs to a slaughterhouse in Bonn, Germany. Suddenly, all two thousand pigs broke loose and escaped through a broken fence, stampeding madly. The two helpless protesters were trampled to death.

STILL having a Bad Day?

Inexperienced Iraqi terrorist Khay Rahnajet didn't pay enough postage on a letter bomb. It came back with 'Return to Sender' stamped on it. Forgetting it was the bomb; he opened it, and was blown to bits.


God is good!

There now, Feeling Better?



*** Adult Truths ***

How many times is it appropriate to say "What?" before you just nod and smile because you still didn't hear or understand a word they said?

Continuing our "Dunny" theme is this modern slant on 'dunnies' which appeared recently in the Herald Sun (Dec.5, 2012) at right. 

LES&MAY by Larry Lewis
LAFFING WITH (AND AT) OLDER AMERICANS www.lesandmay.com



Log on to a dunny deal

UNITED STATES

BLAME social media the next time it feels like forever for your turn to use the toilet.

According to a study released on Monday, 32 per cent of people in the United States aged 18 to 24 say they use social networking in the bathroom.

The same report, by marketing research firms Nielsen and NM Incite, also found 51 per cent of US adults between 25 and 34 use social networking in the office — more than any other age group. AFF

Johnny and the Dunny

By Barry G Williams

Our neighbour's farmhouse stood about half a kilometre from our place. At this time during the early nineteen fifties it was occupied by the G... family.

Those were the years when, following the turmoil in Europe caused by the Second World War, Australia was inundated by an influx of migrants from war ravaged countries. One such family of migrants were the G...s, consisting of Mr and Mrs G..., and their two sons. These were six year old Johnny and his much older step-brother Herbert.

I was about eleven at this time. As Johnny did not have a real good command of the English language I was enlisted by his mum to help him integrate at school. Her idea was that I could keep him out of trouble. Keeping Johnny out of trouble would have been a full time job for anyone, but I was particularly inept at the task. It was a bit like putting the fox in charge of the hen house.

As Johnny was a new chum to this country of ours we felt it our duty to warn him of the dangerous wildlife lurking in the countryside, ready to lash out in a vicious, unprovoked and deadly attack at every opportunity.

"We've got brown snakes here mate, six feet long and thick as your arm", I told him during one of his visits. "They're all around in the long grass and if you tread on one you'll be dead in ten minutes". It was the middle of winter, so I didn't think there was much chance of encountering a "Joe Blake" at the moment, but surely there was such a thing as too much information at one time!

Naturally there were no pathways between our two homes, only large paddocks, which if not being grazed by livestock, could sometimes be covered in long grass. Just like now. My younger brother Max and I watched with interest as Johnny set off home. Climbing through the house yard fence into the paddock beyond, he glanced around. Here the grass grew half way up to his knees. As he moved off once more his gait seemed to change dramatically.

Stepping very high with his knees rising to waist level at every step, he continued to glance nervously about. With a quick wink to Max, I picked up a small stone lying nearby and hurled it with all the strength I could muster into the grass a couple of yards to the left of Johnny's pathway. At the same time I gave a yell. "Look out Johnny, there's something there".

With a high pitched scream rising from his throat our young new chum threw all caution to the wind and took off like a rocket. From our view point his feet never seemed to touch the ground as he flew over the remaining distance to his front door and safety.

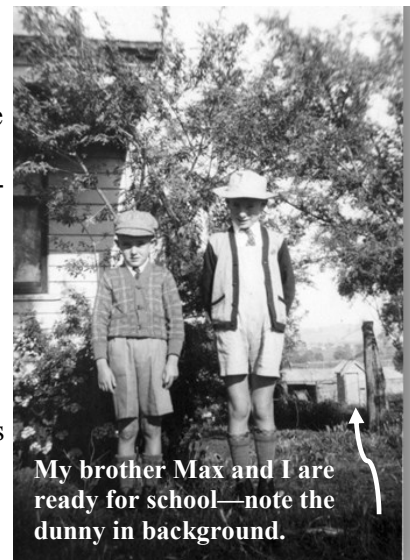
"Huh, snakes, they're nothing compared to Red Back Spiders", I said to Johnny a few days later. "Because they are so much smaller than a snake they can hide almost anywhere which makes them twice as deadly. One bite and you're a gon-er". An -any around here", Johnny stammered nervously, turning a paler shade of grey. "Saw one only the other day in the dunny over there," I said, pointing to our old outside toilet.

This classic example of early twentieth century architecture, in common with most buildings of its kind, was situated a good fifty metres from the house. Measuring roughly one metre by two metres the small weatherboard building had one door in front with a small louvered opening at the rear for ventilation. Under this opening, butting up against the rear wall was the toilet seat. This consisted of a wide board running the width of the building with a hole cut in the middle of it. The front of this seating arrangement was covered in, with a trapdoor at the back of the building giving access to the "can" or toilet pan which had to be emptied regularly. One other necessary "dunny" accessory was a six inch nail driven into the side wall and upon which were spiked several torn squares of newspaper. On a hot summer's day aromas emanating from this structure meant any visit was a somewhat hurried affair.

It was on one such summer's day that Johnny and his mother paid us a visit. As fate would have it, "nature called" and Johnny decided he had to "go".

Perhaps it was thoughts of dreaded Red Back Spiders lurking below that caused Johnny to squat instead of sit. Whatever the reason the result was the same. The conversation we were having with his mother was suddenly interrupted by muffled shouts coming from the dunny. Running to the door Mrs G... flung it open. A minute later she emerged dragging a very dishevelled and pungent offspring outside. It soon became apparent that he had slipped through the hole into the can below. Now his skinny legs glistened in the sunlight with an obnoxious brown stain. With howls of protest from Johnny and angry yells from his mother the miscreant was hauled by the ear to the nearest water tank.

From a safe distance upwind we watched as Mrs G... splashed water on her son's legs and scrubbed furiously with a borrowed brush in an effort to remove the horrible scum before revulsion overtook her. Even at our distance my stomach felt a little uneasy, I was thankful the clean-up duty did not include me. At last the clean-up was completed. After profuse apologies from Mrs G... a thoroughly chastened Johnny was led home.



My brother Max and I are ready for school—note the dunny in background.

Computer Hints & Tips



Hypertext Transfer Protocol.

Normally when you type a web address in your web browser you send a HTTP Short for HyperText Transfer Protocol, the underlying protocol used by the World Wide Web.

HTTP defines how messages are formatted and transmitted, and what actions Web servers and browsers should take in response to various commands.

The web browser automatically places HTTP into the address for you. You only have to type www. (and the address).

If the web address is a bank you will receive a different HTTP. This one will have an address https://www. (address). So what's the difference between http and https?

The 'S' stands for "Secure". If you visit a web site or web page, and look at the address in the web browser, it will likely begin with the following: http:// . This means that the website is talking to your browser using the regular 'unsecured' language. If you fill out a form on the website, someone might see the information you send to that site.

This is why you never ever enter your credit card number in an http website! But if the web address begins with https://... that basically means your computer is talking to the website in a secure code that no one can eavesdrop on.

If a website ever asks you to enter your credit card information, you should automatically look to see if the web address begins with https://.

Shutting Down Windows

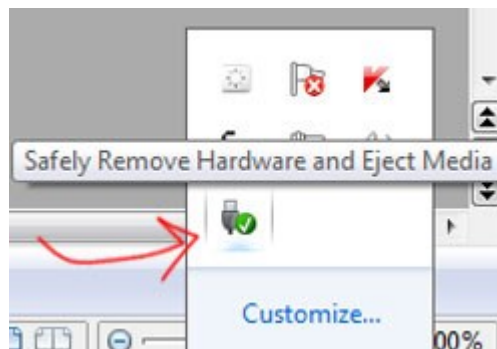
Shutting down Windows properly before turning off the power to your computer is important. Not doing so can result in data loss and corruption as files are left only partially written to disk.

Windows often keeps things in memory (RAM) that you really want to have written to disk, and shutting down Windows gives it the opportunity to flush all that information out to the hard drive. In addition, if you happen to turn off the power while Windows is writing something to the disk you run the risk of corrupting files; in the simplest case you may never notice. In the worst case your system might become unbootable.

Safely Remove Hardware

If you work a lot with different USB devices, you probably use the "safely remove hardware" icon quite a bit. Even though USB devices are labelled as "Plug & Play"—that is, they're ready to go upon being plugged in—you shouldn't just unplug them. A USB port has current running through it, so the power jolt caused by unplugging a "hot" connection can corrupt data on a storage device, camera, or mp3 player.

In other words, don't just yank your USB device out, use the Safely Remove Hardware icon, instead. It shows up down near the clock on your task bar.



In **Windows Vista and 7** it looks like this:

So, next time you're ready to remove your USB device from your system, just click the icon and select to



"Eject" the device. Here's an example:



Windows will let you know when it's safe to proceed.

It only takes a second and could save potential headaches later!



The Crows Joke Page

A farmer stopped by the local mechanics shop to have his truck fixed. They couldn't do it while he waited, so he said he didn't live far and would just walk home.

On the way home he stopped at the hardware store and bought a bucket and a gallon of paint. He then stopped by the feed store and picked up a couple of chickens and a goose.



However, struggling outside the store he now had a problem - how to carry his entire purchases home.



While he was scratching his head he was approached by a little old lady who told him she was lost. She asked, 'Can you tell me how to get to 1603 Mockingbird Lane?' The farmer said, 'Well, as a matter of fact, my farm is very close to that house, I would walk you there but I can't carry this lot.'

The old lady suggested, 'Why don't you put the can of paint in the bucket. Carry the bucket in one hand, put a chicken under each arm and carry the goose in your other hand?'

'Why thank you very much,' he said and proceeded to walk the old girl home.

On the way he says 'Let's take my short cut and go down this alley. We'll be there in no time.'

The little old lady looked him over cautiously then said, 'I am a lonely widow without a husband to defend me.. How do I know that when we get in the alley you won't hold me up against the wall, pull up my skirt, and have your way with me?'

The farmer said, 'Holy smokes lady! I'm carrying a bucket, a gallon of paint, two chickens, and a goose. How in the world could I possibly hold you up against the wall and do that?'

The old lady replied, 'Set the goose down, cover him with the bucket, put the paint on top of the bucket, and I'll hold the chickens.'



The Family

The family wheeled Grandma out on the lawn, in her wheelchair, where the activities for her 100th birthday were taking place.

Grandma couldn't speak very well, but she would write notes when she needed to communicate.

After a short time out on the lawn, Grandma started leaning off to the right, so some family members grabbed her, straightened her up, and stuffed pillows on her right..

A short time later, she started leaning off to her left, so again the family grabbed her and stuffed pillows on her left.

Soon she started leaning forward, so the family members again grabbed her and then tied a pillowcase around her waist to hold her up.

A nephew who arrived late came up to Grandma and said, 'Hi, Grandma, you're looking good! How are they treating you?'

Grandma took out her little notepad and slowly wrote a note to the nephew.....Bastards won't let me fart.'



The Love Story of Ralph & Edna

Just because someone doesn't love you the way you want them to, doesn't mean they don't love you with all they have. Ralph and Edna were both patients in a mental hospital. One day while they were walking past the hospital swimming pool. Ralph suddenly jumped into the deep end.

He sank to the bottom of the pool and stayed there. Edna promptly jumped in to save him. She swam to the bottom and pulled him out. When the Head Nurse Director became aware of Edna's heroic act she immediately ordered her to be discharged from the hospital, as she now considered her to be mentally stable.

When she went to tell Edna the news she said, 'Edna, I have good news and bad news. The good news is you're being discharged, since you were able to rationally respond to a crisis by jumping in and saving the life of the person you love. I have concluded that your act displays sound mindedness. The bad news is, Ralph hung himself in the bathroom with his bathrobe belt right after you saved him. I am so sorry, but he's dead.' Edna replied, 'He didn't hang himself, I put him there to dry. How soon can I go home?'



THE NIGHT THE LAVATORY BURNT DOWN

By Heather McAlister



The marriage of one of my mother's younger sisters took place at Young on 1st February, 1939. Following their honeymoon of a couple of weeks, they were due to return to pack up all the bride's belongings before setting off for their new home together at Greenethorpe.

My grandmother had been hurrying around the day they were due home doing the cleaning and cooking extra food in readiness for their return.

One of the things which people who lived in the country did was to put the ashes from the fuel stove down the outside lavatory. This was usually done several hours after the fire had gone out so that there would be no live coals among the ashes. The reason for doing this was to kill the smell from the lavatory and to stop the flies from gathering at the bottom of the pit. However, my grandmother who was in rather a hurry had not waited long enough for the ashes to cool.

The newlyweds had returned home around teatime. My mother and two of her children were also staying on the farm with her parents. Tea was served and afterwards everyone sat around and talked about the wedding and the honeymoon before retiring for the night.

During the night the new bride and groom who were sleeping out on one of the verandahs because of the hot weather, made their way down to the outside lavatory. What a surprise they got. It had been burnt to the ground. The hot ash and coals had ignited the paper and woodwork lining the pit under the flooring.

They returned to their bed, but could not stop laughing. Their laughter woke my mother. When her sister knew she too was awake, she came to my mother's bedroom window and told her what had happened. They all had a good laugh and then returned to their beds and slept until morning.

After they rose from their beds, they went to the kitchen where the fire was being lit in readiness to cook the breakfast and boil the kettle. My aunt, who always liked a bit of fun and a good laugh, told her father what had happened during the night. He, thinking she was only joking, made his way to the edge of the verandah and looked in the direction of where the lavatory should be standing. It was not a joke; the building was gone and some smoke was still rising from where it once proudly stood.

My grandfather rushed back to the kitchen and exploded in rage, saying that everyone would have to go to the shelter paddock and hide behind the trees as he was not going to build a new lavatory.

Breakfast was eaten in silence. My grandfather then took his hat from its peg in the laundry and left to attend to the animals. The rest of the family still thought this was a very funny happening, but knew that they really had a problem. They all left the house and went into the garden to talk about how they could solve the problem.

Then came the bright idea that they would set up a temporary convenience in the brooder shed where the chickens were usually hatched and reared. This was soon done and used by the family until my grandfather relented and eventually built a new one down between the pepper trees near the old site.





The Cheese of My Childhood

I remember the cheese of my childhood,
and the bread that we cut with a knife,
When the children helped with the housework,
and the men went to work not the wife.

The cheese never needed an ice chest,
and the bread was so crusty and hot,
The children were seldom unhappy
and the wife was content with her lot.

I remember the milk from the billy,
with the yummy cream on the top,
Our dinner came hot from the oven,
and not from the fridge in the shop.

The kids were a lot more contented,
they didn't need money for kicks,
Just a game with our mates in the paddock,
and sometimes the Saturday flicks.

I remember the shop on the corner,
where a pen'orth of lollies was sold
Do you think I'm a bit too nostalgic,
or is it....I'm just getting old?

I remember when the loo was the dunny,
and the pan man came in the night,
It wasn't the least bit funny
going out the back with no light.

The interesting items we perused,
from the newspapers cut into squares,
And hung on a peg in the outhouse,
it took little to keep us amused.

The clothes were boiled in the copper,
with plenty of rich foamy suds
But the ironing seemed never ending
as Mum pressed everyone's duds

I remember the slap on my backside,
and the taste of soap if I swore
Anorexia and diets weren't heard of
and we hadn't much choice what we wore.

Do you think that bruised our ego?
or our initiative was destroyed
We ate what was put on the table
and I think life was better enjoyed.

Anonymous



The Last Word on Dunnies. When we moved from the farm mentioned in the story on page 8, our new home was in a heritage area (and still is 50 years later) and although there was an inside toilet there was still an old brick dunny in the back yard. This has long gone, but, our next door neighbours still have theirs which is now used as a garden shed and pictured at left. The word dunny appears to come from the French word Dunegan meaning privy – Dunnakin. Dunny or dunny can is Australian slang for toilet, either the room or the specific fixture, especially an outhouse or other outdoor toilets. It is often used to



specify a distinction between a flushing toilet and a non-flushing toilet (e.g., a long drop or thunderbox). A dunny is essentially a toilet out the back of a house or public building, never inside. In the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century, most Australian houses had the lavatory strategically placed at the rear of their house, and usually in the garden. It was usually a pit or can toilet and, understandably smelly, which, obviously, was a good reason to build it separate from the house. The outhouse building gained a reputation as being identifiably Australian - Paul Hogan, the Australian comedian, was once described as being as 'Australian as a slab off a dunny door.' Dunnies came in all shapes and sizes and are now considered an important part of our architectural heritage. Songs have been sung about them (The Redback on the Toilet Seat/Slim Newton.), poems and songs composed, and books have documented their unique designs. Dunnies were seen as frail buildings that could be blown apart (by a fart or high wind) however, when toilets started to be built with brick the term 'built like a brick shit house' referred to a particular solid structure.

Toilet paper is referred to as dunny paper. However, in the early days, most paper was actually torn up sheets of newspaper. Toilet paper is called 'bum fodder' and relates to any publication only worthy as an 'arse wiper'.

Dunnies were notorious for attracting blowflies that were referred to as Dunny budgies because of their large size and sound.

The man who collected the sanitary cans (or pans) was referred to as the Dunnyman or, sarcastically, the 'pilgrim of the night' because of his early morning shift. His vehicle was called a 'dunny cart'.

The word dunny is not used much these days, however the word has entered our vocabulary and here are a couple of examples:

It stuck out like a dunny in a desert, (very obvious)

All alone like a country dunny. (very lonely)

Carry the can – do the dirty work.

Dunnies also lent themselves to cartoons and practical jokes. Many kids has scared the bejesus out of casual visitors to the dunny by planting 'double bungers' (a loud explosive fire cracker now banned) alongside its walls, or, worse still, thrown one into the space.

It's probably a good thing the loo moved into the interior of the house.