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Your contributions will be most welcome until our deadline of 12th March 2009.

[www.rmfn-vic.com](http://www.rmfn-vic.com)



## President's Report

by Amber Moynihan, President, RMFN Victoria

Since last writing I have attended the National Rural Medical Family Network Conference in Sydney. Gina and I have been part of the organising team of the RDAV Conference which was held in Port Fairy. We have had our first Annual General Meeting since incorporation.

We welcome all new spouses to the network.

Wishing you all a Happy Christmas and Seasons Greeting. By the time we write again we will have celebrated Christmas, a couple of New Years and some other festivals along the way.

## GP Spouses tell their stories

### A year in British Columbia, Canada

Jennifer Murphy, Mildura

I wonder how many of you have ever fantasized about spending a year overseas. We did – for a long time before we made the big decision. The youngest of our children was due to complete his university degree in 2007 so we decided 2008 was going to be “our” year.

As is often the case, I was in my office working and Brian (my husband) had been reading the “*Australian Doctor*” in between seeing patients, when he came across an

advertisement by “*Health Match BC*” for Australian doctors to do locum work in British Columbia, Canada. He came into my office where we had the first of many excited discussions about the prospect of going to Canada for a working holiday.... as we always say, for him to work; me to holiday. That was in 2005.

Following that first discussion Brian made contact with “*Health Match BC*” by email and set in motion the long process of his application and approval. He was required to work in “an area of need” which we found only meant not in Vancouver. In July 2006 he drafted a letter to be sent to clinics throughout BC who were in need of a locum doctor. As we sifted through the many offers, we settled on about 6, which I



*Continued on page 4.*

## Border Division

The winter weather was very kind to us in June when the Network organised a family social event for our GPs, Bogong GP Registrars, Practice Staff and children at Oz.e.Wildlife at Ettamogah. Over 80 people attended to make the day a success with differing reactions from the children in wanting/not wanting to hand feed the kangaroos and wallabies, those who were quite comfortable with the snakes and lizards but everyone enjoyed the delightful picnic lunch and the opportunity to meet outside of the work environment.

Platypus Eckert managed to scare some little ones but generally the children were pleased to receive sweet treats from the plush platypus.

From the positive feedback, it seems as though we definitely need to run more of these events.



*Pictured above: Practice Nurse Coordinator, Jacki Eckert, dressed up in a platypus outfit to deliver the sweet treats to the children.*



## Congratulations

Ali Jensen is currently on maternity leave from the division with the birth of her third child. A daughter for Ali and husband Mick, a little sister for brothers Isaac and Ashwin - Leila Jade arrived on 16 September.

# Regional News

## Mallee Division

### Mildura Weekend

Although no official spouse and children's programme had been put in place, some of children went to Snake and Ladders on the Saturday afternoon, while the mothers went shopping. The children were supervised by Amber Moynihan. They had an awesome time on the very large slides, flying fox, and other equipment despite the mild dust storm.

The children joined their parents for dinner at Trentham Winery that evening.

Next day spouse and children went to Woodies Gem Cave. The spouses had morning tea while the children explored the Maze. Some of the spouses found presents among the gems.

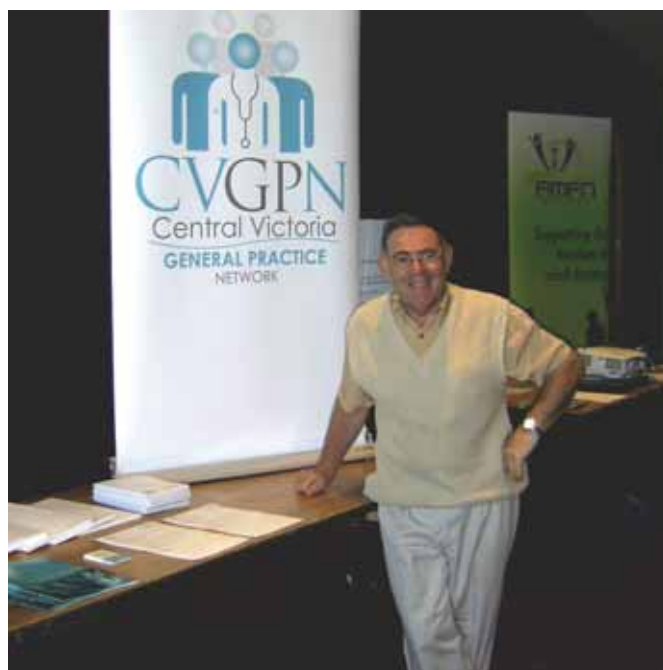
Farewell to Teresa O'Brien who has been with the Swan Hill Office for seven years.

Teresa has been a staunch supporter of RMFN over this time. She has understood the importance and the necessity of supporting the spouses and children of rural doctors. Good Luck with your new venture in the world of rural finance.

## Division Workforce Officers

In recent months there have been some new faces amongst Workforce Officers in the rural divisions. RMFN welcomes:

- Angela Rodaughan,  
GP Association of Geelong
- Kathy Mullins (Mildura),  
Mallee Division of General Practice
- Jackie Forster (Swan Hill),  
Mallee Division of General Practice
- Sally May,  
Murray-Plains Division of General Practice
- David Stanley (Bendigo),  
Central Victoria General Practice Network
- Georgia Wencil  
Central Highlands GP Network
- Maureen Brady  
West Vic Division of GP



David Stanley (Bendigo), Central Victoria General Practice Network



Angela Rodaughan, GP Association of Geelong

*Kathy Mullins (Mildura) pictured left  
and Jackie Forster (Swan Hill), Mallee  
Division of General Practice*



# GP Spouses tell their stories

Continued from page 1.



researched on the internet. We were looking for a town that was not too big, with a population between 5000 and 20000 that had an active community.

After corresponding with these clinics for many months we settled on the beautiful town of Sechelt on the “Sunshine Coast” just 70 kilometres north of Vancouver. My husband was to practice in a family medical clinic where 8-10 doctors worked, many part time. One of the full time doctors was taking five months off then another doctor was taking a year’s sabbatical. We had agreed that we had no wish to be there for the winter months so planned to stay for spring, summer and autumn.

While I was researching BC, Brian had to provide the Canadian authorities with all the documentation required to practice there. This proved rather tedious and frustrating with the practice manager at the clinic in Sechelt not processing the documentation correctly and we almost changed our minds about going to that particular clinic. However, thankfully all was in order by the time we were due to leave home. He also was required to have a comprehensive medical examination in Adelaide.

On 23<sup>rd</sup> February we flew out of Sydney, bound for Vancouver, a direct 15 hour flight with Air Canada. Brian was required to spend a few days in Vancouver to complete the paperwork so that gave us time to explore and get to know the city.

About a month before we were due to go, I found an advertisement in the local “Coast Reporter” paper which I was accessing on line, for a 3 bedroom, fully furnished house. I phoned the agent who emailed us some photos and the doctor who Brian was relieving first, went to have a look at the house. All seemed fine so we signed a 9 month lease.

We arrived in Sechelt on a fairly cold Thursday afternoon and were taken by the agent to our new “home” where we were blown away by the picturesque views and the wonderful house. The house’s huge windows and deck overlooked the inlet to snow covered mountains and was surrounded by tall pines. We had our own little beach with kayaks for our use where ducks, geese, huge seagulls and bald headed eagles were a common sight.

The town, with a population of about 8000, was nestled between the ocean and the pretty Porpoise Bay inlet, surrounded by tree covered mountains. Everything was so green; such a contrast from what we had left behind in drought stricken Mildura.

My greatest discovery was the new aquatic centre that had a water aerobics class 6 mornings a week at 9am. I enjoyed the activity at home, so was very happy to join the classes most mornings. It was a wonderful start to the mornings and I was lucky to make many friends at the pool.

I felt quite the celebrity in Sechelt. Every time I opened my mouth to speak, the person would know I was Australian and would just want to chat. I was welcomed by people everywhere and invited into the homes of many people. I was the social secretary of the family, so while my husband was busy working I was organising our very busy social life. I was lucky to make wonderful friends and in particular 2 girlfriends whom I am sure will be friends for life.

During our time in Sechelt, we were happy to have many of our friends and family from home visit us. It gave us so much pleasure to be able to share our good fortune with people from home.

Apart from a hiccup with a new computer system in the clinic and frustration by the over use of narcotics in the area, Brian thoroughly enjoyed his work at the clinic. The doctors and staff were pleasant and helpful and he liked the patients. Part of his job included one shift a week in the emergency department of the local hospital. I wasn’t particularly impressed when it was an overnight shift but he only had one of those about once a month.

While we were so close to many of the places we deemed worth visiting we took time off to be tourists. In April we spent a long weekend at the mountains at Whistler where we joined a snow mobile trip and a zip trek across the valleys. In May we cruised to Alaska on the *Norwegian Sun* and in July drove inland for a camping weekend where we had the extremely exciting experience of white water rafting on the Thomson River. The Labour Day weekend in August saw us in New York for an exciting three days staying right in Times Square near Broadway and visiting



# GP Spouses tell their stories

all the places we have all read about. We took a week off in September to join our friends from home on a trip to the spectacular Rocky Mountains and in October, prior to flying home, we enjoyed a fun week in Puerto Vallarta on the west coast of Mexico.

In addition to all those trips we visited Vancouver Island and Vancouver many times. A trip to Vancouver entailed a half hour drive to catch a ferry, 40 minutes on an enormous ferry carrying over 300 cars and huge vehicles across Horseshoe Bay, then another half hour drive to the centre of Vancouver. It was a beautiful trip, one I often think about since returning home.

Sechelt was the home of many artisans so there were many galleries, markets and festivals. We particularly enjoyed the wonderful writers' festival which attracted over 30 writers including Michael Ondaatje, and a full house of 400 to each one.

In addition to the Writers' Festival, there were two Jazz festivals, a Fibre Arts Festival showcasing the amazing talent of the people in BC, a Vintage Car Festival and a fun procession on Canada day. I also frequented the weekly farmers' market during the summer months, which not only included fresh fruit and vegetables grown locally but many artisans showing and selling their wares. These included potters, glass blowers, writers, jewellery makers, sculptors who worked with wood and sandstone, photographers and artists. It was a great place to buy the week's veggies and gifts and to chat to the locals.

I enjoyed weekly treks on the many great hiking trails in the area with a group calling themselves the Ramblers, a group of friendly, interesting women. The mountains and forests with the pretty rippling streams and waterfalls, moss covered trees and scurrying squirrels with interesting chats along the way all made for



unforgettable pleasure. Brian and I often walked in the beautiful Kinnikinik Park, close to our house, and places like Skookumchuk Narrows, Smugglers' Cove and Cliff Gilker Trails were among my favourite hiking paths.

The wildlife in the area was quite prolific. We saw racoons, coyote, many squirrels and deer and a couple of bears. There was also an abundance of bald headed eagles, especially in the spring. A sighting of any of these always brought on much excitement.

Brian continued his very active sporting life over there, playing squash and running. He was thrilled to run his personal best marathon time of 3 hours 11 minutes at the Vancouver marathon and a slightly slower time in the Victoria marathon on Vancouver Island.

There were many excellent restaurants, some with nightly entertainment which we thoroughly enjoyed. Some of the best ones were further up the coast with magnificent views of the sea and mountains. Life doesn't come much better than sitting out on a deck with good friends, an excellent meal, a great bottle of wine, a fantastic female jazz singer in the background a sparkling view over the water and a brilliant sun setting behind magnificent mountains. How I treasure those memories.

Our 9 months stint in Canada was the experience of a lifetime. One I wouldn't hesitate to recommend to anyone. It was very sad leaving our wonderful new friends, our lovely house on the inlet and the trees, mountains, water and rain, but we are happy to be home in Mildura and feel our lives have been enriched considerably by the experience.

If anyone is interested in hearing more about our working experience in BC you could email us at:

[brianjennymurphy@gmail.com](mailto:brianjennymurphy@gmail.com).



### Spouse Program

Friday morning a group of spouses gathered in the foyer of Victoria Hotel ready to start the days tour. Carmel from Codrington Wind Farm Tours was our driver and host for the day.

First we had a tour of the town taking in the east beach which we learnt was safe for swimming and surfing. Then moved on to the wharf where we saw the cray and abalone fishing boats. We also learnt that it was a busy commercial port in 1800 until boats became too big for the harbour. A lot of the buildings were built with the idea that the town would grow to be a large centre but it was superseded by Portland. They have majesty of bygone era.

We now leave Port Fairy and head to Codrington Wind Farm. We are able to drive on to the property of Carmel's family. We learnt the following information about



the farm: there is a total of 34 towers; the first set of 14 towers was completed in 2001; the second 20 completed in 2005. The land owners are paid an annual fee by Pacific Hydro for allowing them to be situated on their property. It is estimated that 71,000 tonnes of green house gas is saved per year, and that about 10,000 homes are supplied annually. We have our morning tea at the base of one of the 70 metre towers. There is hardly any noise except that of the sea. Carmel and her family have been farming the land for 5 generations and continue to do so with sheep and cattle.



The next stopping place was the Portland Maritime Museum. Here we saw the life boat that rescued the 19 survivors of the wreck of the SS Admella in August 1859. There are many other wrecks stories told in the museum and artefacts

retrieved from the ocean bed are on display. There is a letter written by passengers and crew of the ships, some are very sad as they tell of the deaths that occurred aboard the ships on their journey out here.

In keeping with the whale hunting of the past there is a replica of the 2 ton great white shark that was caught in the early 80s.

All aboard again and off to Cape Nelson Lighthouse. Here we had a beautiful lunch at Isabella's. We did not have time for a tour of the light house due to much talking and laughing dur-



ing lunch. In fact one spouse so impressed with the wrecks said they would get their scuba diving ticket to investigate them further. The light house dates back to 1884.

The lighting equipment has undergone a few changes, and the original equipment was replaced first in 1907, by a incandescent vaporised kerosene mantle. 1934

was the next upgrade, a generator plant provided power for the new electric operation. 1977 a major haul was done when the dome was replaced and in 1987 it was connected to the mains power.

Arriving at Shaw River Buffalo Farm, we saw what looked like ponies. We learnt that these are Icelandic horses. They have not been bred with Arabian horses so are pure for the last 1000 years. They are different to the normal horse as they have 5 gaits as opposed to the standard 4 gait. The extra gait is called a tolt; this is the speed of a trot but in the style of a walk. It is said to be able to drink while tolt. The horses are 12 to 14 hands and they are proving to be popular with the older rider.



Robert and his brother started importing exotic animals many years ago; they were the first to import llama and alpacas. The buffalo they import are from around Naples, Italy. They are different to the water buffalo that are found in the Northern Territory. They milk the buffalo and then make different sorts of cheeses and yogurt at the factory on the property. We were able to taste the various cheeses with our cup of tea, and we learnt that, based on research that is going on, buffalo milk has beta casein protein 2.

Saturday provided the opportunity to become more familiar with our digital cameras. The interaction and enthusiasm of the group was such that the 4-hr course ran to 5-hrs. Advice was given on the best method of downloading photographs from the camera whilst protect-



ing against loss of all those wonderful irreplaceable

## 16<sup>th</sup> November 2008

'happy snaps'; a free downloadable software program which not only provides the usual editing functions but also automatically categories in date order and replaces the need to have software for each camera that families may own. Probably one of the most valuable pieces of information, particularly for those who may be wanting to send photos to family and friends overseas, was the fact that this free software program automatically reduces the size of the image whereby taking up less time and space for those receiving the emailed image/s.

Following the Saturday night Gala Dinner, Sunday was a relaxing morning with a yoga session before lunch and a final goodbye.



### Children's program

This was a full-blown program with the children entertained throughout the weekend, whilst in the care of a local registered child carer.

Warrnambool was the location for Friday's visit to Flagstaff Hill Maritime Museum and on Saturday morning to the Indoor Adventure Playground and Ten Pin Bowling. Due to bad weather on Saturday evening the river boat cruise, which had replaced the fishing from the jetty, was cancelled but all seemed happy to settle down and watch videos and play games after dinner.

On Sunday a few brave souls entered the water at East Beach for a one hour surfing lesson. They were actually warmer in the water than those of us who stood watching and shivering on the beach. For first-time surfers they all did extremely well.

Out of the water and warmly dressed the children then headed off to participate in art and craft with Kathryn. Have you ever seen cakes and pizzas made with foam, bits of paper and some glue? It is amazing how realistic these young 'chefs' made it all look!



#### Comments from some of the children:

*"I loved the flying fox but the surfing was awesome." - Rafael 11yrs*

*"I liked surfing." - Lochiel 8yrs*

*"I thought the adventure playground was the best part because there was a massive flying fox there and if you fell you could get badly hurt."*

*- Adib Rahman 11yrs*

*"I thought that Port Fairy the most funniest place to go. The flying fox was great. You could say it was the best place in the world, well? Next to Swan Hill."*

*- Unknown*

Children's activities photographed by Sheryl Reed, Childcarer.

# National RMFN – Annual Workshop and AGM

The Victorian team of Gina Lambe CEO, Michelle Bensley committee member and Amber Moynihan President attended the national meeting in Sydney. The meeting was invigorating with some new faces and some old ones in the mix from the other States.

Unfortunately Tasmania was not able to attend due to budget constraints. Northern Territory has still no RMFN representative. Queensland has a new project officer Scott Mackay. With Scott being male he added a different dimension to the meet as the rest of us were of the female gender.

All the States run the same core programmes: meet and greet, bursaries, newsletter and programme for spouse and children at conferences.

One issue that was discussed at length was education in more remote areas, especially secondary education. The options of boarding, correspondence with support from the school of the air, hiring a governess for a group of children were some options.

*Amber Moynihan  
President National RMFN*



**Dealing with Change**

If a change is really as good as a holiday then life for many of us would feel a lot like lazing on a sun-drenched Fijian beach, year in, year out, and without a care in the world.

If only. Everyone reacts to change differently, but while change is sometimes welcome, more often change is accompanied by uncertainty, apprehension and insecurity. Understanding how to deal with these feelings can be a big help in managing change.

If things are changing in your work or personal life, you might find the following tips helpful:

- **Accept that some things are beyond your control:** Focus your attention on things you can control and avoid wasting time and effort trying to control things you can't
- **Change may be beyond your control, but your reaction isn't:** Observe how you react and think about how this makes it easier or more difficult to deal with the change
- **Stick to the facts:** It is easy to become worried or upset about rumours which may or may not be true, so stick to the facts and try to ignore rumours
- **Find support:** Speak with people you trust who are in the same position or who have gone through a similar change, they might be able to offer new insights and useful advice

Sometimes change can overwhelm our normal coping resources. If you feel like you need guidance on how to deal with change or would like a fresh, independent perspective on your situation, please call Convergence International on 1800 337 068 to arrange an appointment with a counsellor.

Freecall 1800 337 068  
www.convergeinternational.com.au

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# RMFN Update

by Gina Lambe, Chief Executive Officer

RMFN completed its first year of incorporation with the Annual General Meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> November. We welcome Magdy Shamaly from Gisborne to the Committee of Management, whilst saying farewell to Mary-Anne Somers and Jane Zagorski. Jane was one of the founding members of RMFN in Victoria and State President for many years before Amber Moynihan was elected to the position. Jane has been an extremely valued member and we look forward to her keeping in touch with us in the future.

RMFN Spouse/Partner Education and Training Grants – Round 11 will be offered early next year.

The guidelines and application form can be accessed on the RMFN website [www.rmfn-vic.com](http://www.rmfn-vic.com).

Closing date for submissions is Friday 27<sup>th</sup> February 2009.

## GP Family Networking Events

Divisions have now been advised that funding is available to run these events and been provided with details for making application. From the positive feedback, it seems as though these are definitely popular and there is a need to run more of these events.

Check out the RMFN website [www.rmfn-vic.com](http://www.rmfn-vic.com) for upcoming events in your division.

## RMFN Mentor Training

These one-day courses to be held in April/May 2009 will run in three separate locations in rural Victoria.

For interested RMFN members: contact Gina on (03) 9348 7806 or email [gina.lambe@rmfn-vic.com](mailto:gina.lambe@rmfn-vic.com).

Dates will be available and listed on the website in February 2009.

## Rural Doctors Association of Victoria (RDAV)

This year's conference was an amazing event with some 100 delegates registered for the joint event with Otway Division of General Practice. Whilst the weather was a little unpredictable and one of the children's activities required last minute change, it was a most successful conference.

RMFN took the opportunity to launch its new logo at the conference which received positive feedback.

Next year, RDAV is combining with ACRRM and RDAA holding the event in Melbourne from 22<sup>nd</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> October, at a venue yet to be determined. Don't miss an opportunity to attend and place the date in your diary now. Details will be progressively loaded onto the websites: RMFN [www.rmfn-vic.com](http://www.rmfn-vic.com) and RDAV [www.rdav.com.au](http://www.rdav.com.au)

## Vic Felix Induction Weekend



Vic Felix held its 2009 Induction Weekend for GP Registrars at the Foundry Arms Hotel in Bendigo on 6-7 December. I attended the Saturday night dinner which included a graduation ceremony with certificates awarded to VFME registrars who had completed their training in 2008. Sunday provided an opportunity for RMFN to present information to registrars and their spouses/partners. Five divisions also attended: Bendigo, Central Highlands, Mallee, Murray Plains and WestVic.

## getGP Supervisor's Workshop



getGP held a Supervisor's Workshop at their offices in Churchill on 11<sup>th</sup> December and by invitation I spoke with them about the RMFN and the support that it provides to registrars. Although a number of the supervising doctors have spouses who are RMFN members, the doctors are not always aware of the support that RMFN has to offer.

## RMFN Logo

As mentioned above, RMFN has a new logo.

Incorporation was seen as an ideal time to make this change and better represent who we are.

The logo represents a family on a sunrise, creating their future in rural Victoria, and offering themselves to help their medical communities with their knowledge and experience. The shape of the family resembles success and happiness in a safe and inspirational environment which helps raise their children.

We hope you like your new logo!



*Have a wonderful festive season, keep safe and enjoy your family.*



## Neen Gow (New Year Cake)

### Ingredients

3 Chinese dried red dates  
5 slabs brown candy [peen tong] about 11 ounces  
3 teaspoon vegetable oil  
7 cups glutinous rice flour 1 tablespoon white sesame seeds  
1 large egg  
Vegetable oil, for pan frying

### Equipment

2 small bowl s  
8 inch soufflé dish  
1 large mixing bowl  
pan - with steamer  
fry pan or skillet

### Method

1. Soak red dates in 1/4 cup cold water for approx. 30 minutes until soft. When softened remove and discard pips.
2. Cut each candy slab into 8 pieces. Place in a bowl pour to cups of boiling water over the sugar, and set aside until dissolved and cooled.
3. Grease heat-proof soufflé dish with vegetable oil.
4. In a large bowl place rice flour. Make a well and stir in cold sugar water. Knead the dough in the bowl, adding an additional 1/3 cup cold water until dough is smooth, slightly moist and shiny, 5 to 10 minutes.
5. Place dough in prepared dish and pat until it fills the dish evenly.
6. Cut the red dates into halves and place cut side down in a ring around the outside of the dough, leaving a few to decorate the centre.
7. Sprinkle the top with sesame seeds. Coat with remaining 1 teaspoon oil, using your fingers and lightly pressing down on the dates and sesame seeds
8. Place the dish in a steamer over a pan of boiling water. The steamer should be large enough for the dish on to touch the sides. Check the water from time to time replenish when low. The cake is done when the cake leaves the sides of the dish.
9. Remove dish from steamer and pour of excess liquid
10. Place on rack to cool.
11. Run a knife along the edge of the cake to loosen sides.
12. Place cake rack over dish and invert to un mould. Then flip cake right- side up onto cutting board. Wrap the cake in plastic and refrigerate until ready to use.
13. When ready to eat cut cake into quarters. Then cut each quarter into two 1inch wide stripes. Cut each strip crosswise into scant 1/4 inch slices. Beat an egg in small bowl until frothy and dip the slices into the egg.
14. Heat skillet over medium heat until hot but not smoking. Add a small amount of oil to barely coat the wok, add the egg-dipped slices in batches and cook 2to3 minutes per side, until golden. Serve immediately.

## Food symbolism - Chinese New Year

The dishes served during this time are for something positive and hopeful.

- Chicken and fish dishes symbolise happiness and prosperity (especially when served whole.)
- Dishes made with oranges represent wealth and good fortune because they are Chinas most plentiful fruit.
- Noodles represent longevity; therefore, they should never be cut.
- Duck symbolises fidelity, while egg signifies fertility.
- Bean curd or tofu, however is avoided because its white colour suggests death and misfortune.
- Fish is served because yu (fish) is similar to the word for plenty.

# Book Reviews

## *The Duchess*

Author Amanda Foreman

Published by Harper Perennial

This book is written about Georgiana; the Duchess of Devonshire. It is based on letters she wrote during her lifetime and those of her friends.

Amanda Foreman started her research as part of a doctorate in 18th century British history.

This book is far from dry and trudity but gives an insight to the role of an intelligent woman of the 1700s. Georgiana was caught up in the politics of the era as she hosted any social occasion.

It gives an idea of the social and moral issues of the time. One can gather from it the decadence and excess of the big house in England and the continent.

Although publicly admired and loved, she had self doubt in her personal life. In fact some parallels could be drawn with her relation the Princess of Wales.

This book is a must read if you are interested in womans place in society both then and now.

*Reviewed by Amber Moynihan*



## *Everyman's Rules For Scientific Living*

Author Carrie Tiffany

Picador by Pan McMillan 2005

Measured Love, Science And The Land

As I read *Everyman's Rules For Scientific Living*, I couldn't help but reflect that 70 years on, some Australians are still grappling with learning how to live in this brittle, dry country. You only have to read the papers to see the battle between the various factions: some who have a 'take it all while we can' attitude, versus others who have a longer term vision for Australia's rural communities. Today's farmers probably understand better than most how to co-exist with nature. Their knowledge is tempered with a respect for their environment. Much of this understanding has been underpinned by scientific research in conjunction with farming communities. We have come a long way, but the work hasn't finished, and nature still has some secrets to be unlocked.

Compare this with the attitudes in *Everyman's Rules for Scientific Living*. Author, Carrie Tiffany has combed through documents of the 1930's to come up with a novel that explores the heady days of science conquering the land. This book begins with a train travelling through the wheat fields of the Mallee and the Wimmera, with government sponsored support for people to efficiently produce the primary products that were so desired. Cows, horses, pigs, chickens and wheat sway in carriages, along with the personnel who have the evidence based information. Two of the staff fall in love and decide to apply their scientific knowledge to their own farming enterprise near Wycheproof. It is hard work all the way, and eventually the farm and the relationship secumbs to the dust, the heat and the drought.

But don't think that this is a gruelling read. I loved the gentle humour and the detail of the times, while the story moved along to its inevitable conclusion. This is a must read for anyone who has lived in a rural community. You will recognize the characters and feel the grit in your hair too.

*Reviewed by Sue Cunningham*



## RWAV Teamwork for Better Health Conference 2009

8<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> May 2009

The Hilton on the Park, Melbourne  
and 2009 Victorian Rural Doctors' Awards  
supported by ACRRM, RDAV, RMFN.

Closing date for award nominations:  
13<sup>th</sup> March 2009

## WHO TO CALL

### RMFN Committee



#### President

Amber Moynihan 5033 1870

#### Members

Michelle Bensley 5658 1513

Kate Connellan 5352 4680

Annie de Villiers 0438 144 821

Lynn Griffiths 0428 831 637

Deborah Jones 5529 5232

Magdy Shamaly 0412 868 068

#### Chief Executive Officer

Gina Lambe 9349 7806

## Useful Contacts

Beyond Blue

1300 22 46 36

Kids Help Line

1800 55 1800 (freecall)

Lifeline

131 114 (cost of local call)

Mensline Australia

1300 13 11 14

Suicide Prevention Crisis Line

(02) 9331 2000



### Victorian Doctors Health Program

VDHP is a confidential and compassionate service for doctors and medical students with health concerns including stress & anxiety problems, substance use disorders, mental health disorders, any other health problems, including physical health concerns.

Telephone 9495 6011  
Aikenhead Building,  
Level 8, 27 Victoria Parade,  
Fitzroy, Victoria 3065.



### Bush Crisis Line 1800 805 391

Confidential 24 hour freecall telephone counselling and debriefing service for remote and rural health practitioners and their families.

## Dates For Your 2009 Diary

### Mallee Division Conference

24<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> April 2009, Swan Hill

### RWAV Teamwork for Better Health Conference 2009

8<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> May 2009, The Hilton on the Park, Melbourne.

### and 2009 Victorian Rural Doctors' Awards

supported by ACRRM, RDAV, RMFN.

Closing date for award nominations: 13<sup>th</sup> March 2009

### RDAV Annual Conference

co-hosted with RMFN and

### ACRRM and RDAV 6<sup>th</sup> Scientific Forum 2009

29<sup>th</sup> October – 1<sup>st</sup> November 2009, Novotel, St Kilda



## Counselling Services

Telephone Counselling FREECALL 1800 337 068

### Converge International

24/7 We are there for you

Converge International, a not-for-profit and fully independent organisation, has been operating since 1960. It has the wellbeing of people and their families still at the heart of all we do.

The growing clouds of depression, stress, addiction, conflict, bullying and unethical corporate behaviour are just some of the challenges our team of over 300 experts help manage every day.

Our name change in 2007 from ITIM to Converge International marks our strategic shift to becoming a global leader in work life balance with the expansion of our Business Innovation Group (BIG), the addition of online services and the establishment of the *National Training Institute*.

### Career Counselling

Ph (03) 9349 7806

This service is available to the families of general practitioners working in rural Victoria. Secondary students, tertiary students and mature age people are eligible to have consultations with a careers counsellor by telephone, over the internet or in person.

The service is provided by a career counsellor from Box Hill Institute (BHI) in Melbourne. The individual counselling provided is supported by a wealth of material on the BHI website careers page and by books, videos, CDs etc in the careers library. In assessing individuals' needs and values, career assessment tools can also be used, where appropriate.

There are a number of common issues that bring people to career counselling, with the most obvious one being, "what career would suit me?" People also ask what they need to do to enter a particular job or profession, how to translate overseas experience to the Australian environment, how to re-enter the work force and transferring skills from one profession to another. Other aspects include the technicalities involved in the application processes to enter courses.

If you would like to access the career counselling service, please contact the RMFN Chief Executive Officer on (03) 9349 7806 to obtain an identification number and contact details.