

BLUES NEWS ON LINE

Contributions to mtoft@ozemail.com.au

August Edition

Vol 7 of 2003



Jason ties the knot: Back (L-R): Kelly and Jason Carter. Front (L-R): Hayden (11), Courtney (8) and Reece (13). Now don't they make a beautiful couple! All Jason has to remember is to look after his new wife like he looked after the umpires as a liaison officer in March and April last year (and your wedding anniversary). Congratulations to you both. On behalf of all the readers of BNOL I wish you years of happiness together. Tofty

In this Month's Edition

- Jason and Kelly's Honeymoon in NZ
- Making Rules Simpler with Alan McAuliffe
- Survival of the fittest
- The Typical Softball Umpire (TSU)
- Mastercard Wedding (No not Jason's)
- In search of past umpires—Merv Lane (Queensland)
- Forum question. Have your say?
- Queensland umpires put on hold for a month.
- Much More

National Championship Umpire Applications

**MARGO'S
MEMO**



- Sixty-three [63] umpires applied.
- Depending on team entries, there are a maximum of 96 places available.
- Forty have applied for multiple appointments.
- Candidates:
 - Seven [7] applied for Level 5 and/or SkillShare;
 - Eight [8] applied for Level 6.
- One Level 5 candidate, from WA, has subsequently withdrawn for financial reasons.

It is anticipated that the appointments will be published in September.

ACT Skins Tournament

Eight [8] umpires indicated that they are prepared to travel to Canberra at their own cost in December to assist with the 2003 Skins.

Tricia Sibraa QLD (DUIC),
Darren Sibraa QLD L5
Damien McCauley SA L6
George James VIC L6
Julie Richardson WA L6
Peter Richardson WA L6

Umpires from ACT who have indicated they are available:

Ken Culpitt ACT L8
Rod Dawson ACT L5

National Umpiring Meeting

The National Umpiring Meeting [SDUs and Umpire Staff] will be held in Melbourne over the weekend of 23-24 August. All States will be represented and four [4] States will have observers.

The major topic this year is "Duty of Care – Legislative Changes" presented by Ian Fullagher, ASF Legal Counsel.

A full report of Ian's presentation will be in the next edition of BNOL to keep you all up to date with this very important issue.

Making Rules Simpler

with Alan McAuliffe (Big Al)

Believe In Officiating

an extract of an article from Referee Magazine August 1996

We all know officiating is a tough business. If it were easy, everyone would do it.

There are many pitfalls that mentally weigh on us: lack of quality assignments, unprofessional partners, time away from home and family, association politics, coaches giving us a hard time ... the list goes on. Each one could be a reason to quit officiating. In fact, many who do quit cite those things and others as major factors.

The hard truth is, those things equate to ready-made excuses for failure. The officiating business is no different than life itself: There are good days and bad days. Those who quit officiating without really getting into it have probably moved onto something else in their lives. Odds are, they'll quit that, too.

We've got so many people beating us up mentally in officiating that it can be difficult to see the job through. Have you ever asked yourself in anger after an especially tough game, "Who needs this?" When you stop and think about all that officiating gives to you, the answer is, "You do."

Officiating gives you a chance to shape the lives of young people. It gives you a chance to remain active in a sport you love. It gives you a chance to ensure ethics, sportsmanship and fair play remain important factors in your life and the lives of others. It gives you a chance to be a positive role model. It teaches and reinforces your responsibility, a work ethic and professionalism. If you're really into officiating, officiating gets into you. Fight through the officiating world's critics and cynics that eat at you daily. You are performing an admirable service for others by giving of yourself.

It's okay to have bad days and poor thoughts about your officiating. That's human nature. But find ways to turn those negatives into positives. When you're down, read this list; you'll stay on the right track as a quality person and, in turn, a model official.

Be receptive. Sometimes our biggest problems come from other people. We don't like having our egos bruised. Even people with extremely strong personalities hurt once in a while.

The key to being receptive is considering the source. "You're terrible!" coming from an overbearing, loud-mouthed Little League mother shouldn't get much attention in your mind because the source is not credible. Conversely, you

become a better official and a better person if you are receptive to thoughts and ideas coming from people you respect. Open your mind every so often to listen to new concepts and consider other people's opinions. The survivors are those who adapt to change.

Be honest. Unreal expectations place an extra burden on an already intense job. You must be honest with yourself about your abilities. Thinking that you're going to be an Olympic Official one day is not a bad thought ... unless you realistically don't have the ability or you've set an unrealistic time frame. The sooner you're honest with yourself about what exactly it is you want out of officiating, the more relaxed you'll become. You'll reach an inner peace that means mental comfort each time you take the field.

Become a leader. Too often, officiating becomes an "every man for himself" endeavour, with officials backstabbing and undercutting each other for assignments and promotions. Don't fall into the trap.

If you adopt the philosophy that you're going to *help others reach their goals*, you will reach yours. By becoming a leader, you can encourage people to work hard and do the right things to make themselves successful. In turn, you're raising expectations for them and for yourself. Learn to love helping other people. Those you help are better, you're better and the game is better for it.

Be passionate. You've got to love what you're doing, or you really shouldn't be doing it. Look forward to your next assignment to see if you can meet its challenges and exceed your expectations. Let officiating get inside you to the point that it becomes a lifestyle. If you're passionate about integrity, honesty and professionalism, you've improved your quality of life. Is that worth getting passionate about? Absolutely!

Be courageous. It takes tons of courage to rise above pressure and do the right thing. Doing what is right - versus what's popular or safe - takes strong will and conviction. You've got to believe in your heart that what you're doing is the right thing. When you do make a mistake (and you *will* make mistakes!), it takes great strength and courage to bounce back and learn from it. Give it your best at all times, never stop learning and stand tall through adversity - all life lessons shared in officiating.

Be persistent. Set attainable goals and work to reach them. A goal is simply a dream with a deadline. Adopt the Nike slogan, "Just Do It," in your everyday life. If you treat officiating like a business that you enjoy, you will be persistent in seeing the job through. Wake up every day thinking, "How am I going to improve officiating today?" Maybe you'll study the rulebook, help a new

Continue Page 10

The TYPICAL SOFTBALL UMPIRE (TSU):

(Two differing opinions)

A. BigBlue49 basically wrote: The TSU tries to be prepared - know the rules, have a clean & pressed uniform, shined shoes, hustles, but most of all, tries his/her best to give the players, coaches, parents & fans the best game they can on any particular day.

B. John T. responds: The TSU calls two whoppers and large fries a snack. Shows up one minute before game time, read the rulebook back when they were a trainee, washes their uniform twice a month whether it needs it or not, tucks their shirt in if physically possible, assumes their shoes are shined because when standing up can not see them, calls close plays at second from behind home plate, but most of all tries his/her best to get the game over ... if in doubt ... it's an OUT!

According to coaches and parents, the TSU may/must have some deteriorated senses that lead to bad calls. From my experience, and this is far from a scientific study, sight is the first sense that we humans lose. Because when an ump obviously **MUST BE BLIND** to make the call that he did, he hears every word that I mumbled under-my-breath from across the infield.

According to the pitchers parents, the TSU can ruin any promising young pitcher:

When the pitcher throws one ball in the dirt, five feet in front of the plate, and the next ball off the backstop ... it is because the UMP has an inconsistent strike zone, and she (the pitcher) is having trouble zeroing in on it!

When after four consecutive walks, and nine total in two innings .. the coach finally yanks the young pitcher ... the pitcher's parents realize that if the UMP had given her that one close strike ... she would have mowed down the side! Of course, the other team was screaming at the UMP about the six questionable strikes he gave her.

Before every pitch, the pitchers parents hope:

- A. the opposing hitter won't hit a shot over the left fielder's head.
- B. their daughter will fire a strike past the batter.
- C. the batter will foul tip a ball off an exposed area of the UMP's skin.

The TSU:

- A) is Consistent.
- B) creates a new strike zone at the beginning of every inning.

The TSU:

- A) is the first person on the field to break a sweat!
- B) broke a sweat back in 1983.

The TSU spends most of the off-season:

- A) In a strict physical training program so that they can stay at the top of their profession for many years to come.
- B) Drinking beer and eating pork rinds.

The TSU:

- A) Takes charge of the game, and keeps everything running in a consistent, timely, safe and orderly manner. After the game, you can't remember who he was!
- B) Loses control of the game during pre-game instructions, is intimidated by over-zealous coaches and parents, doesn't see bats laying in foul territory, turns any game into a three ring circus. After the game, and after the arguing stops, you wouldn't recognize him ... except for the red-jacket and top hat.
- C) Takes charge of everything, who, what, where, when and how! The field, the dug-out, the stands, the concession stand, the league, the tournament, the parking lot. His power is limited to his line of site! The Gestapo of Umpiring! After the game, you scurry to the rulebook, sec. 4 rule 2.13/9-2 [application] (B) "If in the judgment of the umpire ... traffic on streets adjacent to the park ... the umpire shall detour traffic to other thoroughfares.

Previous editions of Blue's News On-Line are available
from the Resource Library on the Umpire's Website
nuc.softball.org.au

MasterCard Wedding

You gotta love this guy..... This is a true story about a recent wedding that took place at an American university. It was in the local newspaper and even Jay Leno mentioned it. It was a huge wedding with about 300 guests.

After the wedding at the reception, the groom got up on stage with a microphone to talk to the crowd. He said he wanted to thank everyone for coming, many from long distances, to support them at their wedding. He especially wanted to thank the bride's and his family and to thank his new father-in-law for providing such a lavish reception.

As a token of his deep appreciation he said he wanted to give everyone a special gift just from him. So taped to the bottom of everyone's chair, including the wedding party, was a manila envelope. He said this was his gift to everyone, and asked them to open their envelope.

Inside each manila envelope was an 8x10 glossy of his bride making it with the best man. The groom had gotten suspicious of them weeks earlier and had hired a private detective to tail them.

After just standing there, just watching the guests' reactions for a couple of minutes, he turned to the best man and said, "You can have her". Then he turned to his bride and said, "You deserve each other". Then he turned to the dumbfounded crowd and said, "I'm outta here."

He had the marriage annulled first thing in the morning. While most people would have cancelled the wedding immediately after finding out about the affair, this guy goes through with the charade, as if nothing were wrong.

His revenge...making the bride's parents pay over \$32,000 for a 300 guest wedding and reception, and best of all, trashing the bride's and best man's reputations in front of 300 friends and family members. This guy has guts, real guts. Do you think we might get a MasterCard "priceless" commercial out of this?

Elegant wedding reception for 300 family members and friends.....\$32,000.
Wedding photographs commemorating the occasion.....\$ 3,000.
Deluxe two week honeymoon accommodations in Maui.....\$ 8,500.

The look on everyone's face when they see the 8x10 glossy of the bride and the best man.....**Priceless.**

There are some things money can't buy, for everything else
there's MasterCard.

Congratulations on 50 Years in Softball Betty McGuire (VICTORIA)

Saturday, 16 August sees a celebration in Melbourne to mark Betty McGuire's 50 years of involvement in softball. What an achievement!

Betty started playing in 1953 and aside from playing has taken on many roles in her home association over the years.

She has completed more than 30 years as Secretary of the Sunshine Association – outstanding when you consider that the average time a person lasts in this position is around 6 years.

Betty achieved her Level 6 [Australian Badge] in 1976 in Adelaide at the Women's Championship – her badge number is AA51 - and was selected for umpire at the "Mini" World International Series [the forerunner of the South Pacific Classic] in Brisbane in 1980 - her International Badge number is ISF92.

Remarkably, Betty continued to umpire until recently in her home Association of Sunshine in Melbourne and has inspired a son-in-law and a granddaughter to take up umpiring.

As I said, what an achievement. Our heartiest congratulations Betty.



Paranoid cyclist: If someone has gone to this much trouble, just let down both tyres.

The TSU comes to the game with:

- A. Face mask, shin guards, chest protector, ball-bag and clicker.
- B. A chip on his shoulders, zero patience, a holier than thou attitude, and enough money to pick-up a large pizza on the way home..

Through the course of his/her umpiring career, the TSU:

- A. gains experience, and gets better every year.
- B. gains weight, and gets bigger every year.

In all seriousness

The Typical Softball Umpire does a pretty decent job. Just like there are good and bad coaches, parents and players ... we must suffer through that occasional UMP that is probably not good at his day job either. Good UMPS often make a part-time career of it, bad UMPS get tired of the criticism and crap ... and move onto basketball where they really stink!

Every UMP and Umpire Association sets their own standards, you can (usually) tell by how they look when they walk onto the field. If you are a new UMP or a bad UMP, at least look good, maybe you'll fool some people. Look bad, poor mechanics, poor judgment = kill the ump!

You are entitled to pay, and you earn every penny. I wouldn't come ref your kids basketball game for FREE either.

But let's not quibble ... you may love the game and you probably have been a coach or a player ... but when that check doesn't come - neither will you! You are not volunteers and we are not required to thank you ... you've cashed the check! (We may thank you if we appreciate the job that you've done ... win or lose.)

In summation: I appreciate those UMPS that give it 110%, because I've seen plenty that gave 75%, but the bottom line is ... I'd rather pay someone to give me 50% effort and be impartial, blown calls and all, than have volunteer UMPS!

STOP HONKING AND START HELPING

A young woman was driving to work at morning rush hour. The light turned red and she came to a screeching stop. Her car stalled.

As she desperately tried to restart her car, the light turned back to green. A truck approached behind her and the driver began honking the horn.

Through one light change and then a second, the young woman nervously pumped the accelerator and turned the ignition, and the truck driver continued to honk his horn.

Frustrated by her inability to get her car going again, and the impatience of the truck driver behind her, she calmly got out of the car and walked back to the truck.

As he opened the window, she politely said to the truck driver: "If you will start my car for me, I would be happy to continue honking your horn for you."

And so it is with criticism. We can honk our horns of criticism as long as we want, but it rarely changes the situation or the people involved. All it does is make negative emotions surface or explode.

So it is best to heed Abraham Lincoln, who said "You only have the right to criticize if you have the heart to help."

Have your say!

Here is an opportunity to voice your opinion. Send an email to the Editor and have your say. (mtoft@ozemail.com.au) Names will be withheld if requested. Your opinion is important and it will be interesting to see the results.

Forum Question

A. What action/s can be taken by an umpire in determining the difference between parental support and a parent who is being disruptive and bringing the game into disrepute?

B. When is it considered that supporting parents have cross the line?

Many sports are trying to address parental support problems and I am sure we have a number of umpires who have had experience in this matter. I am looking to get some input from these questions and maybe we can use this as a medium to get input regarding a number of other issues in future editions.

Being something new for BNOL we will tread carefully at the start.

NZ Rulz!
(Jason Carter, WA)

I reckon that if you ask any bloke who's ever been married, the wedding is by far the worst thing about getting married. There's the months of preparation, the "I'm a Princess" attitude of the bride-to-be, the in-laws and relatives, paying 200% the normal price of things because it's for a wedding – the list of things that can drive you nuts is endless.

The real reason for the honeymoon isn't for smooches, cuddles and making up sickly nicknames for each other – it's to have a much needed rest. When deciding on a destination for our honeymoon, I decided I didn't want to be blown up by an extremist group or catch SARS from some wheezing, snotty concierge in a hotel. So I settled on New Zealand – nice and safe, relatively close and with an essential ingredient for an excellent holiday (in my mind, anyway) – snow!

On the first day (a Tuesday), we flew into Christchurch and stayed the night in



the centre of the city at a place called the Millennium Hotel. It's right on the edge of Cathedral Square, of which the main attraction is ... a Cathedral. We went to "The Bog" that night and had a few drinks and joined in singing with the Irish band who was playing. I don't remember what we were singing but alcohol made me sound great! To me, at least.

We picked up our Maui camper the next day. It was a 4-person camper and had everything. Shower, toilet, sink, microwave, fridge, sheets, pillows, blankets, cutlery and all the cooking gear we needed. Basically, you just grab your suitcase and move in. We stopped by a supermarket and filled up the fridge.

Kelly bought food for the fridge but I got much more useful stuff – beer. Speights beer in fact – "Pride of the South", they tell me. And it's GREAT beer.

Anyway, we left Christchurch and headed southwest to a place called Lake Tekapo. There's a nice pizza shop and a big lake there. That's about all, but it is a really beautiful place. In fact, everywhere in New Zealand is pretty much "Wow!" as



far as scenery goes so I won't go on about it. We camped the night there which cost us around \$12.



Next morning we took off to Dunedin. We went through lots of small towns and got to Dunedin in the afternoon. We each picked one place we really wanted to see in Dunedin. I picked the Speights brewery and Kelly wanted to go to the Cadbury chocolate factory. I groaned at that one – you see chocolate gives me a migraine and the thought of being in a factory of the stuff didn't exactly excite me.



We went on the tour of the factory and it was really good. Kelly made sure I understood that if they gave away chocolate, I was to say "Yes" if they asked me – so I could give it to her!

With other things that went on, we ran out of time to do the brewery tour. I at least got a photo and a stubby holder. Weird thing is, the beer comes in little 300ml cans but the stubby holder is designed for 375ml cans, so you can't use the stubby holder with their beer. Go figure.

We stayed overnight in Dunedin at a powered site in a camper park. It was starting to get really cold – the weather reports were starting to suggest that the coldest snap in 10 years was on its way.

When we got up in the morning, all the walkways were frozen with ice and the grass was all crispy. I learnt what black ice is when I went for a shower and nearly broke my leg on the walkway. It was weird – the water that was in the runoff gutters was frozen. Being from Perth, the only stuff that's frozen is in a fridge!

We packed up the van again and headed south. Things began getting icy on the roads and we heard on the radio that there had been a big dump of snow in Queenstown, which was our next destination. It was evident there would be good snow in Queens-



After the jet boating we went straight out to the airport and booked a helicopter for a 25 minute scenic flight around Queenstown and the mountains. The closest mountains were The Remarkables. The view from the top of the mountain range was spectacular and well worth the money for the trip.

After the helicopter, we went into town and hired our ski gear, organised lift passes and bus transfers. \$600 later and we were ready to hit the slopes.

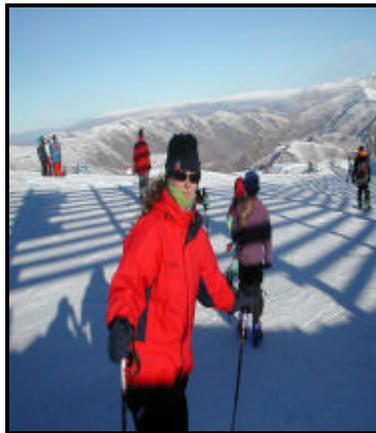


The next day we got on our bus and took the 1.5hr ride to Cardrona. Kelly had never been skiing before so it was my job to teach her. She put her skis on and headed for the slope that leads up to the beginners slope. I tried telling her that she was practising on the meeting area and *not* on the beginners slope but she was adamant that the beginners slope was too steep.

Eventually I coaxed her onto the beginners slope and within a couple of hours she was snow-ploughing her way down the first green run on the map. Apart from hurting her knee when she came off the chairlift she did amazingly well and didn't fall over too many times.

We ended up spending 4 nights at the Rydges – it was just too hard giving up the comfortable bed and ensuite. On our last night, we went to the best pizza place in the land – a little restaurant called “The Cow”. If you get to Queenstown sometime, make sure you get to The Cow. It's in Cow Lane, which looks like a mugger's haven but isn't.

After leaving Queenstown, we went through Haast Pass. Words can't describe this place – except to say it's a “winter wonderland” with icicles and snow and green tree with snow on top – you get the idea. We stopped at a place called Fantail Falls, where a waterfall is the main feature. In the picture you can see the riverbed is made up of small rocks. Kelly made me help her collect lots of these small rocks to bring back to Australia. Apart from wondering ‘why’ you would want to do that, I had to carry the little buggers in my suitcase for the rest of the trip. Women!



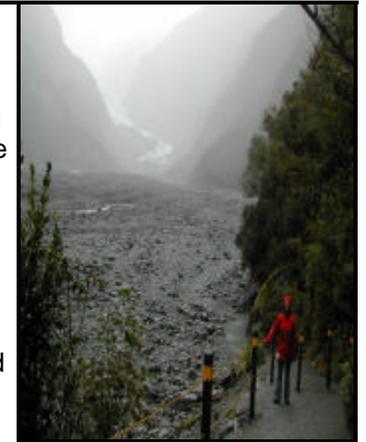
Our next major stop was the Franz Joseph Glacier. Kelly was very upset because she hurt her knee and wasn't able to do the full-day hike. You can imagine my devastation. NOT! We were able to look at the start of the glacier but that was about it. Next stop was Greymouth.

What can I say about Greymouth? It was raining and cold so we stayed in the Maui and pretty much didn't leave it until the next morning. We had a gourmet dinner though – meat pies heated up in the microwave and a bottle of red wine.

We got up early and left Greymouth (maybe it was just a bad time of year to be in Greymouth?), heading east towards Christchurch again. After making it through an icy Arthur's Pass and down more windy mountain roads, we arrived in Christchurch and returned our Maui. We were a little sad because it had been our home for 10 days. Then we got to our hotel for our last night in New Zealand and were glad to be back to our creature comforts – bugger the Maui!

After 11 days and 1800km later, we left New Zealand. I can thoroughly recommend the place for a holiday – especially if you live on the east coast of Australia. They can definitely teach us Aussies something about service.

The best thing though, being newlyweds and everything, is that I proved I can spend an extended amount of time with my wife, on a 24/7 basis – and not want to throttle her. Well, most of the time anyway.



In search of past umpires

In the June 2003 edition of Blue's News On-Line the National Director, Margo Koskelainen listed a few names of past umpires for who we have no profiles on file.

BNOL also put up a challenge for all States to search through their records so the National Data Base had at least something, no matter how small, to ensure our records were brought up-to-date.

Merv Lane's daughter-in-law Karen managed to get some details on Merv Lane and sent them through to this National Umpire's Magazine.

Merv Lane— Number 26

Mervyn John Lane was born April 26, 1931 and has given a lifetime to his two favourite sports Softball and Baseball.

Later in his career Merv was better known for his Baseball umpiring which saw him officiate on three Claxton Shield Finals and was selected to umpire in a Test Match between Australia and Japan. Merv obtained his All Australian Baseball umpire badge in 1968.

Merv's contribution and dedication to softball in the early years (when some of us were not even born) saw him rise through the ranks as one of the best umpires of his day.

Mr Lane (of course if you know Merv, he does not like to be called Mr but in this case, Sir, I am showing you some well deserved respect) started coaching softball in 1956 the same year he started umpiring.

Of course back those day you were a 'Jack of all trades'.

Talented as he was Merv was a Brisbane and Queensland representative coach having held the reins of the Brisbane B and Queensland B teams.

Merv's record of officiating (Plate) in six consecutive Brisbane A Grade grand finals was outstanding back then and is more than likely still a record 40 years on.

Merv's first State Championships as an umpire was in 1956 in Townsville and over the following six years he established himself as top umpire and was accredited with his All Australian badge Adelaide in 1962.

He was the first male from Queensland to be bestowed the honour, but he may have been the first in Australia (historians may be able to help BNOL to clarify the facts). In 1964 Merv was appointed to umpire Queensland v Brakettes a talented American touring team.

Merv's contribution to the Saints club in Brisbane is legendary as he formed the club and coach there for 14 years and also held the position of President for 14 years.

Merv's wife, Ruth Lane was a Brisbane and Queensland representative player, donning the maroon strip in 1962.

They have four children, Julie, Raymond, Brett and Daryl all of who played softball and baseball.

- Raymond and Daryl played for Brisbane.
- Raymond has played for Brisbane since 1991
- Raymond has been in the Queensland Open Men's team since 1993
- Daryl played under 19 Queensland 1991.

Merv Lane is a true legend to our sport and on behalf of all who have worked with and have known Merv over many years BNOL thanks you for your contribution in pioneering our sport.

Thanks Merv.

Director and committee asked to wait another month

The appointment of the new State Director of umpiring for Queensland and the Umpiring Committee will not be known until August 16 as the Queensland Softball Board have delayed its decision for another month.

The interviews have been done for the top job and now it's the case of waiting for the nod. All candidates for both the State Director's position and the Umpiring Committee have been informed of the Board's decision to delay the announcements by mail earlier this month.

The current Queensland Umpiring Committee will continue its role until the middle of the month when the decision is handed down.

Current State Umpiring Director, Tricia Sibraa indicated that she is not seeking re-appointment of the top job, but is looking to assist the new director during the change-over period. The remainder of the committee have nominated for re-appointment, along with a number of other interested umpires across the State. All we can do is wait.

Survival of the fittest...were you one?

According to today's regulators and bureaucrats, those of us who were kids in the 60's and 70's probably shouldn't have survived because...

Our baby cots were covered with brightly coloured lead-based paint which was promptly chewed and licked. We had no childproof lids on medicine bottles, or latches on doors or cabinets and it was fine to play with pans. When we rode our bikes, we wore no helmets, just thongs and fluorescent ' clackers ' on our wheels. As children, we would ride in cars with no seat belts or air bags. Riding in the passenger seat was a treat.

We drank water from the garden hose and not from a bottle that tasted the same. We ate dripping sandwiches, bread and butter pudding and drank fizzy pop with sugar in it, but we were never overweight because we were always outside playing. We shared one drink with four friends, from one bottle or can and no one actually died from this.

We would spend hours building go-carts out of scraps and then went top speed down the hill, only to find out we forgot the brakes. After running into blackberry bushes a few times, we learned to solve the problem.

We would leave home in the morning and play all day, as long as we were back before it got dark. No one was able to reach us all day and no one minded. We did not have Playstations or X-Boxes, no video games at all. No 60 channels on TV, no videotape or DVD movies, no surround sound, no mobile phones, no personal computers, no Internet chat rooms.

We had friends - we went outside and found them. We played elastics and hand ball and sometimes that ball really hurt. We fell out of trees, got cut and broke bones and teeth, and there were no lawsuits. They were accidents. We learnt not to do the same thing again. We had fights, punched each other hard and got black and blue - we learned to get over it. We walked to friend's homes. We made up games with sticks and tennis balls and ate live stuff, and although we were told it would happen, we did not have very many eyes out, nor did the live stuff live inside us forever.

We rode bikes in packs of seven and wore our coats by only the hood. Our actions were our own. Consequences were expected. The idea of a parent bailing us out if we broke a law was unheard of. They actually sided with the law. Imagine that!

This generation has produced some of the best risk-takers and problem solvers and inventors, ever. The past 50 years have been an explosion of innovation and new ideas. We had freedom, failure, success and responsibility, and we learned how to deal with it all.

And you're one of them. Congratulations!

We were are fortunate to have had the luck to grow up as real kids, before lawyers and government regulated our lives, for our own good.

Toowoomba Softball Association delays naming Umpiring Coordinator

Following a meeting of interested Blue umpires in Toowoomba recently it was decided by those present and a telephone link to name a new Umpiring Coordinator for the upcoming 2003-2004 summer season.

A letter was sent to the Association in time for its Annual General Meeting but the nominated umpire was not endorsed.

The Annual General Meeting felt that each of the seven clubs should have an input into the selection of the Umpiring Coordinator so the position was left vacant.

With a number of plans in the pipeline for the upcoming season the Association has put back the umpires' plans for a month, therefore making the new Coordinators job very difficult leading into the new season.

Let's hope a Coordinator will be appointed sooner rather than later.

Attention all umpires

UMPIRES WHO HAVE SOMETHING OF INTEREST OR EVEN A JOKE OR TWO PLEASE SEND THEM TO THE EDITOR OF BLUE'S NEWS ON LINE C/- mtoft@ozemail.com.au

Remember that BNOL is a monthly magazine written by umpires for umpires. Send your email today so we can publish your contribution in the September issue of Australian Umpires official National Magazine.

Continued from Page 3

official, work on a new mechanic, recruit a person to try officiating, thank someone who has helped you. With the mindset that you are going to improve officiating every day, you're going to do the little things necessary to improve our entire avocation and help yourself in the process.

Be self-disciplined. Along with being persistent, you've got to be self-disciplined. No one can or should hold your hand every day. You can't rely on others to do the work for you. The only way to help others and help yourself is to establish goals, set deadlines and be productive. Again, think of officiating as a business and yourself as a business owner. By developing a business owner mentality, you will develop self-discipline because you will have the will to succeed. Don't put things off until tomorrow; do them today and move on to other positives tomorrow.

Have unshakeable faith. The world is full of negativity. The nightly news ... the daily paper ... the constant griping at work. Pressure builds constantly and negative energy saps your strength. Add to that all of the officiating woes and it's no wonder you don't want to do anything!
If you have unshakable faith that what you're doing improves others and yourself, there really are no "officiating woes." Yes, there are challenges, but challenges met are akin to success. Believe that officiating is a positive force in your life because it is. Most importantly, believe in yourself. You deserve it because you're a *real* official.

Overview of National Theory Examination

The NUC marked the papers for Level 4-8 and the average mark obtained was **83.69%**.

The top mark for each State was obtained by: - (ACT) Rod Dawson, (NSW) Andrew Rindfleish & Darrell Shephard, (NT) Cathie Allen, (QLD) Ian Goodman, (SA) Damien McCauley, (TAS) Derrin Clark, (VIC) Leigh Evans, Debbie Grove & Debbie Keogh and (WA) Graham Bancroft. Congratulations is extended to Rod Dawson, who achieved the highest mark of 97%.

State Directors were responsible for marking of Level 0-3 papers within their own State, consequently the leading results are not known. An average Australia wide mark of **68.73%** was achieved at this level. At all levels, an Australia wide average of **70.45%** was achieved.

A more in-depth report will be published in BNOL next month.

ALICE SPRINGS UMPIRE WINS AWARD

At the recent NT Championships the NTSA presented their inaugural NT awards. The first ever winner of the Umpires Award was Cathie Allen from Alice Springs. In the past year Cathie has been busy not only with Alice Springs Softball but also the 2002 Australian Primary Schools Championships held last September and also the Honda Masters Games held last October.



RECIPIENT - CATHIE ALLEN

Cathie will also be attending the Nationals this year hoping to gain her Level 5. Congratulations Cathie!!

At the same Championships three umpires went for their Level 2 assessments. All three were successful – Leah Schwartz, Mark Bentley and Ian Lee (who regained his after some years absence).

Outside circumstances caused us to be a little short on umpires for the Cham-



pionships and a big thank you must also go to Kevin Anderson (NT Director of Coaching and Level 3 umpire) and Anthony Bell (NT Men's Delegate). Both these people helped out by umpiring quite a few games

The Northern Territory program seems to be improving with age and will be great to see more NT umpires at nationals this year and in years to come.

Successful Level 2 candidates, Leah Schwartz, Mark Bentley and Ian Lee.

The Grand Final was plated by Cathie Allen with Mark Bentley on first and Leah Schwartz on third. Well done to all!