



# Grey Funnel Line



OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE HMAS SYDNEY ASSOCIATION (VIC INC)



## EDITORIAL

**HO, HO, HO and a Merry Christmas to all from the HMAS Sydney Association Committee**



Well I expected that the second edition would be a little light hearted seeing that it will be posted for the Christmas Season, a time to reflect on family matters, the past twelve months and how we look at the future as world issues tend to impact on our daily lives.

As I sit here compiling a short editorial I will start off by wishing our Secretary, Membership Director, Marketing Manager and guru of every office, other than the remaining Committee positions, a speedy (no pun intended) recovery. David has been seriously ill with a prolonged stay in hospital, at this time we are still not sure as to what ailments he may have procured, just let me say, I offer up a prayer with some hope that **He** upstairs is listening. There will be more in this Xmas edition from our beloved President and hopefully he will provide us with heavenly presents in the format of good news on David.

Let me finish by wishing you and your families a Holy and Enjoyable Christmas Season and a Prosperous 2023. Let us all look forward to a much improved up and coming year and that we can get together in mateship, remembering "ONCE NAVY, ALWAYS NAVY".



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### I AM BACK

If you have a RED DOT in this issue, it means that you owe us some

Oxford Scholars for  
**2022 - 2023**

Remember we operate our membership dues from the beginning of the fiscal year

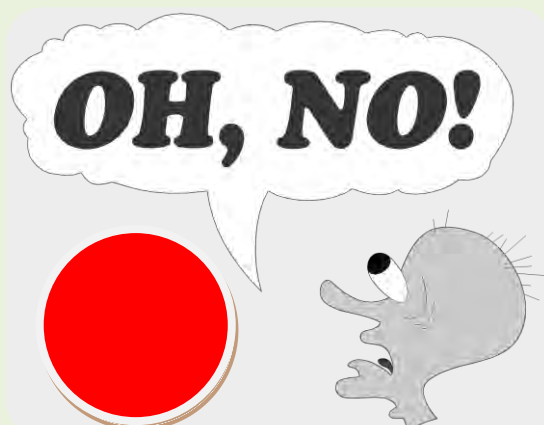
**July to June**  
**DUES - \$25.00**

**You may remember that in the last edition the editor included this message.**

**You will come across a RED DOT in this edition even if you have already paid your dues, however for those of you that have not paid, please do so now!**

**This has caused some consternation and anxiety amongst a number of you, with a result that our treasurer is being contacted in an attempt to check your current financial status within the Association. As our Membership Director is currently indefinitely indisposed we will attempt to obtain the current membership files and check on your status.**

We have a substantial email list of over 200 members but only about 1/4 of those 200 members paid up. We urge you to pay your dues for 2023 and make our Association strong again. We are aware that the past two and bit years have been tough and like so many organisations we have lost touch with the rank and file, that is you, are most valuable asset. You will again find a Red Dot below. We cannot individually place that dot in our electronic newsletter, meant only for those who are currently un-financial, however we do find it a ready reminder tool. Therefore please check your current dues to see if you are up to date. We will attempt to help where ever possible.



**HMAS SYDNEY ASSOC**

**The  
Crew**

**Wishing you a Merry  
Christmas & Prosperous  
New Year**

### PRESIDENTS REPORT FOR CHRISTMAS NEWSLETTER

I open this report with the news that our Secretary, David Dwyer OAM is currently in hospital fighting a rather severe illness primarily caused by the flair up of encephalitis within his system. As you would all possibly be aware, David was our initial Secretary in 1985, and for the majority of time since then has filled that position and also looked after our marketing section with a dedication I am sure we are all well aware of. I will naturally ensure that David's progress will be posted on our home page, so that all those concerned are kept up to date with his progress.

I am sure all of us who have served with him, or have come into contact through other avenues of the Naval family will wish him, Beryl and the family our kindest regards, and our sincerest hope for a complete recovery in the very near future.

Consequently because of the above our marketing section will be put on hold until other arrangements can be initiated.

This year's ceremony at the Shrine for the loss of HMAS Sydney II was well attended, and we were fortunate to have the Naval Officer in Command Victoria, Commadore Greg Yorke CSC AM RAN conduct the main address. Wreaths were laid by our Patron, Commadore Jim Dickson AM MBE RAN Rtd., Commander Terry Makings AM RAN Rtd, Commadore Greg Yorke CSC AM RAN, and your Association President. A prayer was offered by John Hasker, a

## Grey Funnel Line

cousin of Surgeon Commander John Reid Hasker RAN who was lost on the Sydney 81 years ago. A very moving ceremony, my thanks go to the RAN and their personnel who assisted, and all others who helped to ensure that a grateful nation remembered the sacrifice of so many.

On closing, I take this opportunity to wish you and your families a very Merry Christmas and a pleasant and peaceful New Year. Have a really good one.

Kind regards,

*Chris Thompson*

### THE GREY FUNNEL LINE

Don't mind the rain or rolling sea  
The weary night never worries me  
But the hardest time in a sailor's day  
Is to watch the sun as it slips away.

It's one more day on the Grey Funnel Line.

The finest ship that sails the sea  
Is still a prison for the likes of me.  
But give me wings like Noah's dove,  
I'd fly above her to the one I love.

It's one more day on the Grey Funnel Line.

Oh Lord, if dreams were only real,  
I'd have my hands on that wooden wheel.  
And with all my might I'd turn here 'round  
And tell the boys that we're homeward bound.

It's one more day on the Grey Funnel Line.

I'd pass the time like some machine  
Until blue water turns to green.  
Then I'd dance on down that walk ashore,  
And sail the Grey Funnel Line no more.

And sail the Grey Funnel Line no more.

**ANON**

### WHO?



### FISHNET STOCKINGS?

## BEHIND THE FRONT LINE

**By Bruce Davies**

*Edited by Lee Andrews 2022*

Some fifty nine years, Australian forces landed in Vietnam to fight in a controversial war that divided Australia and changed both countries forever.

THE Australian experience in South Vietnam divided the nation more than any other conflict. What some considered in 1962 to be an expedition to support democracy against communism became a drawn-out war that seemed to have no end. Was it really, as the dissidents were saying, a civil war and one in which Australia should not be involved?

The war arguments percolated throughout the country and they generally centred on conscription, Australian casualties and Vietnamese nationalism. Nevertheless, the leaders of Western democracies during the 1950s held a sincere belief that because of Vietnam's geographic location its loss to a communist-inspired expansion would



damage the stability of south-east Asia. That instability would then have a detrimental influence over economic development and the recovery of other nations after World War II.

**In strategic terms, Australia would suffer through its isolation. The recommendations arising from these strategic analyses** continued into the 1960s.

The conclusion that the falling domino theory - a euphemism for the subjugation of south-east Asia by a communist bloc - was false, appears to be explained by a judgment that it didn't happen, therefore it was never feasible.

This conclusion assumed a military confrontation only and not coercion through military posturing combined with an ideological invasion. There were always two strands to the strategic planning issues that affected Vietnam.

The strand that grabbed the headlines and created fear was the threat of a war in which the communist bloc - later fractured - smashed its way south. Another strand, less overt and possibly more disturbing for Western leaders, was the threat posed by any socialist-communist hindrance to post-World War II rebuilding.

Restrictions on economic development, access to raw materials and emerging markets had worldwide implications.

That perceived threat underpinned the philosophy of engagement and protection, which carried a strong influence among the democratic-capitalist decision-makers.

US president Harry Truman drew the first communist containment line during the Greek Civil War (1946-49), a theme reiterated in later years by presidents Dwight Eisenhower, John Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson.

We know that China, which held sway over Vietnam during the mid-1950s, did have a falling domino plan. [As revealed in *Zhou Enlai zhuan*, Dick Wilson's biography of Zhou Enlai] that is evident in the exchange of telegrams between [Communist Party chairman] Mao Zedong and [premier] Zhou Enlai at Liuzhou, southern China, on July 7, 1954:

*The Indochina issue was different from the Korean issue in that Indochina could affect all south-east Asia (including Burma, Thailand, Malaya, Indonesia, the Philippines), Pakistan, India, Australia, New Zealand and Ceylon. 'If we are not careful, we will affect 600 million people in 10 countries. We should make necessary concessions. In this way, we can isolate the minority (the United States), win over the majority and reach a final agreement.'*

Another conversation that also involved Zhou Enlai took place much later, in March 1971. Le Duan, the North Vietnamese leader, told the Chinese foreign minister that weapons being provided to the Thai Communist Party were shipped through Vietnam and Laos. "It [Thailand] also knows that China has a road that runs to the Sino-Lao border. Therefore, it faces the threat of the war expanding all over south-east Asia."

Le Duan added: "We want to smash the US-Japan alliance as well as the alliance between the US, Japan, and the regional bourgeois class."

The Soviet Union also expressed a broader strategy to follow a victory in Vietnam. Soviet diplomats at Hanoi believed in 1971, "when the DRV [Democratic Republic of Vietnam] has become the leading force in the struggle of the peoples of Indochina, we will possess comparatively more possibilities for establishing our policy in this region. It is not excluded that Indochina may become for us a key to all south-east Asia".

Furthermore, in 1979, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Socialist Republic of Vietnam, released this statement about a Chinese Communist Central Committee meeting in August 1965:

*We must by all means seize South-East Asia including South Viet Nam, Thailand, Burma, Malaysia and Singapore . . . This region is rich in raw materials it is worth the costs involved. After seizing South-East Asia, we can increase our strength in this region. And we shall be strong enough to confront the Soviet-East European bloc; the East wind will prevail over the West wind.*

A more subtle result was that under the darkness of defeat, America's global credibility was damaged and the country also lost its political will to challenge Soviet revolutionary missions into the Third World: in a broad sense, falling dominoes on a different board. The previously strategically important South Vietnam was now a discarded Cold War battleground, and Australia could do no more than slink away in the shadows.

### RETURNING HOME

REGARDLESS of the international strategic climate, when the men who had served their tour of duty returned home it was often into an atmosphere of either apathy or disdain.

Some veterans deliberately avoided mentioning that they had been in South Vietnam on return to Australia. Even the military hierarchy sensed the public mood, and service personnel working in the national capital were

told to avoid wearing uniform on public transport. It was no wonder the veterans felt as if their blood, sweat and tears had been in vain.

The nation's political division - with the Australian Labor Party vehemently opposed to Australian involvement in the war - led to feelings of betrayal and suspicion of politicians, especially those to the left of the political spectrum.

Even the bastion of returned soldiers, the Returned and Services League of Australia (RSL), let down the veterans through the attitude of some clubs that spurned the returned veterans. Thankfully, such cases were isolated but they should never have arisen at all.

Some Vietnam veterans found that it was better to keep quiet about their recent war service to avoid possible verbal and physical confrontation with opponents of the war.

Following a battle against perceived indifference by the government to health problems and disagreements with the RSL that the league was not proactive in its aid to Vietnam veterans, the veterans turned to each other and formed organisations like the Vietnam Veterans' Association in 1979, and the Vietnam Veterans' Federation in 1981.

These bodies carried the fight to government departments such as the Department of Veterans Affairs regarding the special circumstances under which Australia's soldiers, sailors and airmen had fought.

Years later, further concerns on the RSL's attitude towards Vietnamese matters were raised in October 2011, when the national president of the RSL attempted to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with his counterpart in Hanoi.

He did this without proper consultation with the membership of the RSL. The reaction was intense and the issue was cancelled.

### THE AFTERMATH

THERE was no post-war counselling in the late 1960s and early 1970s. National servicemen were discharged within weeks of returning to Australia and sent back home into a climate that was far from conducive to resettlement and repatriation.

In Australia, unlike America, the rate of suicide among Vietnam veterans was found not to be greater than for the civilian population, but this was from a study of national servicemen and did not include regular soldiers.

If any good could be said to have come out of the poor post-war treatment of Vietnam veterans, it is that there is now a better understanding of the hidden impacts of combat. Today's warriors in Iraq and Afghanistan have a better chance of recovering from the stressors of conflict.

Nevertheless, the rate of suicide among the children of Australian veterans is worthy of mention. In a media release on August 7, 2000, Bruce Scott, the minister for veterans' affairs, confirmed the children of Vietnam veterans had three times the suicide rate of the general community.

The reasons for this remain unsolved; however, the suicides are part of a detailed and long-running analysis by the Department of Veterans' Affairs Family Study Program that is yet to report.

### CHEMICAL WARFARE

ONE of the more contentious issues of the Vietnam War was the use of herbicides and pesticides. Defoliants were used for killing off jungle foliage that might provide cover for an enemy camp, and around allied camp perimeters to open up defensive fields of view. Enemy crops or crops in remote areas were also sprayed.

It is estimated that the US military sprayed more than 76 million litres of herbicides over Vietnam in the air force operations known as Ranch Hand and Trail Dust.

Australian troops were also involved in the use of herbicides and insecticides, the latter being widely sprayed in Phuoc Tuy Province, particularly around Nui Dat. Spraying programs tended to concentrate on areas where it was considered likely that enemy troops might congregate or move through the thick vegetation while attempting to avoid aerial reconnaissance.

The most heavily used of these herbicides was Agent Orange, contaminated with 2,3,7,8-tetrachlorodibenzo-p-dioxin, a known toxic agent. Other chemicals used widely in Vietnam included herbicides (paraquat and dimethyl-arsenic acid), pesticides (picloram and DDT), antimalarial drugs (dapsone) and solvents (toluene).

The debate over the use of chemicals and their effect on servicemen in South Vietnam has been longstanding and acrimonious. Comprehensive studies have been completed in the US and by the Department of Veterans' Affairs in Australia.

It is a complex subject and one that goes beyond exposure to chemicals, as the conclusions to an Australian study [by the Department of Veterans' Affairs] completed in 2005 explained: *This study provides good evidence that Australian male veterans of the Vietnam War have an increased rate of cancer overall. There was an excess of 613 cancers; 88 per cent of this excess consisted of lung cancers, oral cavity, pharynx and larynx cancers, prostate cancers and melanomas.*

*Rates of melanoma, and to a lesser degree prostate cancer, were consistently elevated across Navy, Army and Air Force veterans, although patterns of other cancers were not consistent across the three groups.*

*The reasons for these increases are unclear. In addition to exposure to known carcinogens, lifestyle changes, including alcohol and tobacco consumption may play a role. For several other malignancies, this study provides evidence suggesting that Australian Vietnam veterans may have rates lower than the rate in the Australian population.*

Another difficulty was identified by a House Oversight Committee in the US Congress, which noted: "It is impossible to determine from records which Vietnam veterans were exposed to the toxic chemical [Agent Orange]."

A further expression of the "horrors endured by soldiers in the Vietnam War" is found in Eric Dean's analysis, *Shook Over Hell*. One of his central premises is that for the past 30 years Vietnam veterans have been portrayed by the media, politicians, and a cottage industry of mental health professionals as tragic actors in a flawed opera who have experienced post-traumatic stress disorder, unlike those of veterans of other American wars.

Dean asserts that PTSD among Vietnam veterans was low (12 per 1000) when compared against Korea (37 per 1000) with the World War II figures being higher again. Although PTSD was a new name, "neuropsychiatric impairment", previously known as "shell shock", could be traced back to the American Civil War.

Vietnam veterans have not cornered the market on battlefield-related PTSD. To the contrary, Dean provides irrefutable evidence that the Vietnam veteran has been perhaps the most adaptive of all veterans and has fared better in all respects than veterans of other wars.

### BELATED WELCOME

IN 1987 a "Welcome Home Parade" was held in Sydney to recognise the service in Vietnam of those men and women who never had a homecoming parade. It was almost as if the nation sensed the guilt of the treatment of its Vietnam veterans.

Many veterans who had not attended Anzac Day services or unit reunions found their long-lost mates and began the slow process of rehabilitation. However, it is a common misperception that soldiers returning from the war were not welcomed home. In fact, there were 15 battalion-contingent parades through Adelaide, Sydney, Brisbane and Townsville between June 1966 and December 1972.

Nevertheless, there were many who missed out. In 1970, HMAS Sydney was in dry dock and 6RAR came home in piecemeal contingents by air. Those soldiers who served in smaller units and "trickled" across to South Vietnam did not receive a welcome home. For those who came home by air, it was deplane, and then demob or dismiss.

The parade in Sydney on October 3, 1987, was the precursor to another Welcome Home Parade and unveiling of the Australian Vietnam Forces National Memorial in Canberra on October 3, 1992.

The Long Tan battle that was commemorated by some veterans on August 18, became a politically anointed national Vietnam Veterans Day to record the nation's apology and to acknowledge that the veterans deserved greater recognition.

**This is an edited extract from *Vietnam: The complete story of the Australian war* by Bruce Davies with Gary McKay was published around ten years ago by Allen and Unwin to mark the 50th anniversary of Australia's first involvement in the war may still be available today. Bruce Davies served with 1RAR & twice with the AATTV and has an MID.**



**REMEMBER WHEN!** What would have happened if this man had shirt fronted Putin and sunk the Russian Navy? We will never know but the Ukrain would now give him a VC.

**A new teacher was trying to make use of her psychology courses. She started her class by saying, "Everyone who thinks they're stupid, stand up!" After a few seconds, Marty stood up. The teacher said, "Do you think you're stupid, Marty?" "No, ma'am, but I hate to see you standing there all by yourself**



**Marty watched, fascinated, as his mother smoothed cold cream on her face. "Why do you do that, mommy?" he asked. "To make myself beautiful," said his mother, who then began removing the cream with a tissue. "What's the matter", asked Marty "Giving up?"**



## FRANKSTON NAVAL MEMORIAL CLUB



FRANKSTON NAVAL MEMORIAL CLUB (INC) - **THE** meeting place for the HMAS SYDNEY ASSOCIATION is the home of the Frankston Sub-section of the Naval Association of Australia and is affiliated with a number of similar groups that espouse the values and qualities of current and former serving members of the Royal Australian Navy, Royal Navy, Commonwealth and Allied Navies, the motto, "Once Navy, Always".

The HMAS Sydney Association has had a long and proud affiliation with the Frankston Naval Memorial Club (FNMC) and many a function, hosted by the HMAS Sydney, has been held at the club. Foremost of these and held at this time of the year was the Children's Christmas party. Uncle David always made sure that the children had a wonderful day, with jumping castle, trolley train, magician, face painter and of course, Santa.



### Historical Data

The Frankston Sub-section was launched on Tuesday 27th August 1963 with Captain Alvord Sydney Rosenthal, DSO & Bar, OBE, RAN (Rtd), being elected as the inaugural President.

Initially the Sub-section's membership convened meetings in a number of venues, the Frankston Hotel, Summer Tea Gardens, Frankston Municipal Golf House (present Frankston Bowling Club), Frankston RSL Club Rooms in Davey Street, Baxter Cricket Club and as well, several private residences. Throughout this early period the priority was to raise funds in order to establish our own permanent meeting place. This was a prescience, lacking in so many other sub-sections, not just in Victoria but Australia wide. Having existed almost as long as the RSL, the NAA, then the Ex-Navalmen's Association, failed to capitalise on the good will of those communities within which they established themselves. Naturally there were always many more ex-soldiers than ex-sailors but why did so many subsequent sub-sections formed after WW2 not take the opportunities envisaged by the fore-bearers of the FNMC.

In 1968 the sub-section, with financial assistance from Dandenong Sub-section, purchased two acres of land in Barretts Road, Langwarrin South (then located in Baxter), for \$2,400.00, the Dandenong loan repaid in quick time. Further fund raisings ensured sufficient income for the membership to erect a building on the two acres and in November 1973 the 'Tin Shed', 24' x 24', was born and heralded the arrival of the Frankston Naval Memorial Club. In 1976 a further expansion was called for but then only two years later, August the 19th, 1978 the beloved 'Tin Shed' was replaced by a concrete breeze block structure.

A major reason behind the sub-section's fund raising success was the Ladies Auxiliary, established in 1967. Its impressive endeavours culminated in the 1980's when the Ladies Auxiliary was realigned and amalgamated into the Social Membership Section of the Memorial Club.

After several successful years, the sub-section and club saw a decline in membership during the mid 1980s. A reinvigoration of the sub-section was well underway when at the end of 1989, catastrophe. On December the 28th, a fire destroyed the premises, the greatest loss was all of the club's content which consisted of priceless memorabilia. Despair, yes, but where we have camaraderie, hope is ever present and the membership rallied to the call. A project was launched to rebuild the Frankston Naval Memorial Club, that goal was achieved with the help of the wider naval community on Saturday, 24th August 1991. As a tribute to all who helped to rebuild the club, their names are recorded within the walls of what has become a magnificent building, the Frankston Naval Memorial Club. Again, one needs to ask the question, if one sub-section can rebuild a second time, what has been the malaise within so many other sub-sections, happy to meet at their local RSL or Community Centre.

Further milestones were achieved during ensuing years. A Wall of Remembrance was erected which reinforced and augmented the 'memorial' designation in the title of the club and recorded the names of sub-section members who have 'Crossed the Bar', as well as the Sub-section's Associated members. Since 1998 extensive lobbying by Frankston Sub-section, at National level, brought about a change to the Constitution which in 2007 included full membership of the Naval Association of Australia by former members of Allied Navies. Still later the club instituted a Memorial Garden in the name of a former member, Jim Bourke. Rose bushes are planted in memory of former club members and their families.

On ANZAC Day, following the annual march in Frankston, members, affiliates and serving Officers and Sailors from HMAS Cerberus have returned to the club for lunch and social drinks, however as a result of Covid, 2020 saw the club march from the front of its premises and it appears this will continue in the future. In November the sub-section, its affiliates and club members observe Remembrance Day with an informal Commemoration Service that includes a plaque dedication to those sub-section members that have 'Crossed the Bar' during the previous 12 months. The commemoration service is followed by a light lunch catered for and hosted by the Royal Naval Association Port Phillip Bay Branch, with drinks liberally supplied from the club's bar.

Our members and affiliates are generous with their time and money, providing for, as mentioned earlier, camaraderie and social activities, involving not just the member but also families as well. Other affiliated organisations, that have set up their centre of operations to emanate from the Frankston Naval Memorial Club are the Naval Association of Australia Victoria State Section, the Royal Naval Association Port Phillip Bay Branch, the HMAS Sydney Association and the HMS Ganges Association. Also the club has established closer veteran ties with a weekly Tuesday morning coffee club where all veterans are welcome and since Covid we are enjoying closer community relations, providing a meeting place for a local Probus group.

We need to stress that if we do have a concern for the future it is merely this, younger ex-sailors have in the immediate past and present time not considered the Naval Association a viable option for a continued membership of an organisation oriented towards mateship, equality and mutual support. Within the framework of the FNMC we also offer an extensive welfare network, coordinated by our well being officer, who readily advantages members with professional DVA advocacy personnel resourced via a number of local RSLs, primarily Frankston and Noble Park.

If you want to get onboard for convivial events, further information can be obtained by contacting our Secretary.

**REMEMBER: "ONCE NAVY, ALWAYS NAVY"**



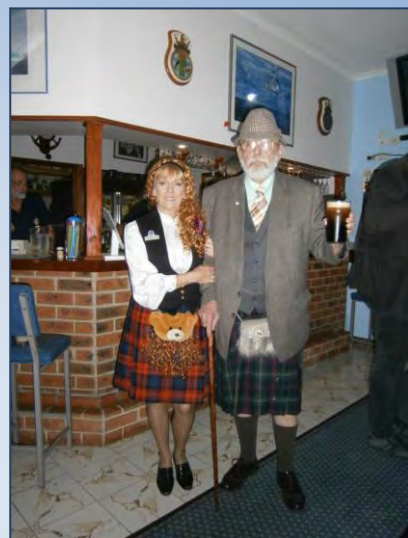
### Previous Club functions



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IF you feel that membership of the Frankston Naval Memorial Club would suit you, contact the Secretary via email: [navmemclub@bigpond.com](mailto:navmemclub@bigpond.com) or 0458 094 438, alternatively come and visit the venue, situated in Langwarrin South, No.36 Barretts Road, on a Friday night from 19:00 hours and if it suits to become a member, the cost for membership of the FNMC is \$25:00 per annum. And, if you are a former sailor you can also consider joining the Naval Association of Australia, the going rate is \$38:00 per annum. Should you avail yourself of NAA membership then we offer you a club membership of \$18:00 per annum, making it an annual total of \$56:00 per annum.

### The Green Thing

In the line at the store, the cashier told an older woman that she should bring her own grocery bags because plastic bags weren't good for the environment.

The woman apologised to him and explained, "We didn't have the green thing back in my day."

The clerk responded, "That's our problem today. Your generation did not care enough to save our environment."

He was right -- our generation didn't have the green thing in its day.

Back then, we returned milk bottles, soft drink bottles and beer bottles to the store. The store sent them back to the plant to be washed and sterilised and refilled, so it could use the same bottles over and over. So they really were recycled.

But we didn't have the green thing back in our day.

We walked up stairs, because we didn't have an escalator in every store and office building. We walked to the grocery store and didn't climb into a 300-horsepower machine every time we had to go two blocks.

But she was right. We didn't have the green thing in our day.

Back then, we washed the baby's nappies because we didn't have the throw-away kind. We dried clothes on a line, not in an energy gobbling machine burning up 220 volts -- wind and solar power really did dry the clothes. Kids got hand-me-down clothes from their brothers or sisters, not always brand-new clothing. But that old lady is right; we didn't have the green thing back in our day.

Back then, we had one TV, or radio, in the house -- not a TV in every room. And the TV had a small screen the size of a handkerchief (remember them?), not a screen the size of the state of WA.

In the kitchen, we blended and stirred by hand because we didn't have electric machines to do everything for us.

When we packaged a fragile item to send in the mail, we used a wadded up old newspaper to cushion it, not Styrofoam or plastic bubble wrap.

Back then, we didn't fire up an engine and burn petrol just to cut the lawn. We used a push mower that ran on human power. We exercised by working so we didn't need to go to a health club to run on treadmills that operate on electricity.

But she's right; we didn't have the green thing back then.

We drank from a bubbler when we were thirsty instead of using a cup or a plastic bottle every time we had a drink of water.

We refilled writing pens with ink instead of buying a new pen, and we replaced the razor blades in a razor instead of throwing away the whole razor just because the blade got dull.

But we didn't have the green thing back then.

Back then, people took the tram or a bus and kids rode their bikes to school or walked instead of turning their moms into a 24-hour taxi service.

We had one electrical outlet in a room, not an entire bank of sockets to power a dozen appliances. And we didn't need a computerised gadget to receive a signal beamed from satellites 2,000 miles out in space in order to find the nearest pizza shop.

But isn't it sad the current generation laments how wasteful we old folks were just because we didn't have the green thing back then?

Please forward this on to another selfish old person who needs a lesson in conservation from a smartass young person.

***The Green Thing***



**Christmas is  
A gift received to be given,  
A life received to be lived,  
A time for greatness to be found in smallness,  
For the Divine to seek a home in the human,**

**Dear Jesus, this Christmas my prayer is  
that I open my fragile smallness  
to the Greatness of the Gift  
so as to become part of the Gift.**

**The GFL asks that you keep 'Speed' in your prayers, he needs them.**

**May the Grand Mariner Bless You All**