

Up in Smoke

A tale downloaded from an American world-wide web site revealed a novel way to spend taxpayers money. To warn the public about July 4 bush fires, sherriff's deputies and firefighters gathered at a remote bomb-disposal range outside San Diego to blow up thousands of illegal fireworks for the media. Sparks from the demonstration fell on a nearby hill, causing a 10 acre bush fire that required 50 firefighters, two water dropping helicopters and a bulldozer to extinguish.

Insurance against ... Incompetence?

The following are actual statements found on insurance forms where car drivers attempted to summarise the details of an accident in the fewest possible words. They serve to confirm that even incompetent writing can be highly entertaining.....

•*The other car collided with mine without giving warning of its intention.*

•*I thought my window was down, but found it was up when I put my head through it.*

•*I was on my way to the doctors with rear end trouble when my universal joint gave way causing me to have an accident.*

•*The pedestrian had no idea which way to run as I ran over him*

•*I saw a sad faced, slow moving old gentleman as he bounced off the roof of my car.*

•*I told the police I was not injured, but on removing my hat found that I had a fractured skull.*

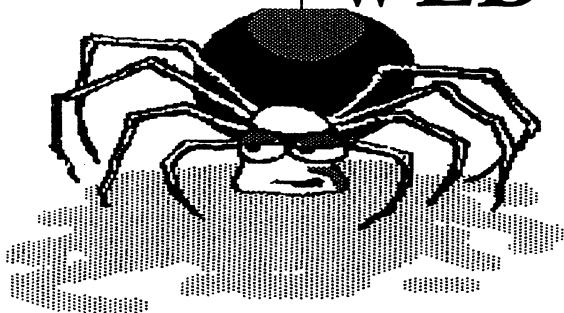
•*My car was legally parked as it backed into another vehicle.*

•*An invisible car came out of nowhere, struck my car and vanished*

•*To avoid hitting the bumper of the car in front I struck a pedestrian.*

•*In an attempt to kill a fly, I drove into a telephone pole.*

THE SPIDER'S WEB



Stretch of the Imagination.....

From the County Court of Victoria comes a tale of name which seems to have counsel lapsing into cliches.

Drake (for Shegog, cross-examining witness whose name is *Streich*)

"Your version, Mr Streich, I suggest to you, is perhaps described as simply a stretch of the imagination, is it not...."

Thought for the Day...

"The Brain is a wonderful organ; it starts working the moment you get up in the morning and does not stop until you get to the office!"

No Sex please.... we're Singaporean.

Balance was surprised this month to find the usually highly conservative Malaysian Bar Council newsletter *Infoline* running this anecdote..

"A Singapore man was charged with abducting and raping a woman but jailed and fined for engaging in oral sex, an offence punishable by life imprisonment under the Singapore Penal Code".

The Judge apparently ruled that consent was not an essential element for the oral sex charge.

Hacking the System

Recent advice from a famous defense counsel who could argue plausibly that Santa Claus exists, (one Edward Shapiro, acting for OJ Simpson) has included the following on handling the press. Forget press secretaries, public relations statements and the like, all you need to do, advises Mr Shaprio, is "get the media on your side". He advocates the following novel ways of getting your message across to the media:

•Control the 'spin' on TV stories by limiting statements to a few sound bites. The less choice you give the news reporter, the greater chance you have of airing the precise words you want

• When you like a reporter's stories, call them up and compliment them on their objectivity

• Use phrases you believe in and repeat them continuously. The media will repeat them and in time, the repetition will become fact. That is your ultimate goal.

Rumours that Mr Shapiro will host a CLE in media relations entitled "How to make friends and influence the media" are completely unfounded.

1997 Churchill Fellowships for overseas study

The Churchill Trust invites applications from Australians, of 18 years and over from all walks of life who wish to be considered for a Churchill Fellowship to undertake, during 1997, an overseas study project that will enhance their usefulness to the Australian community.

No prescribed qualifications are required, merit being the primary test, whether based on past achievements or demonstrated ability for future achievement.

Fellowships are awarded annually to those who have already established themselves in their calling. They are not awarded for the purpose of obtaining higher academic or formal qualifications.

Details may be obtained by sending a self addressed stamped envelope (12x24cms) to:

The Winston Churchill Memorial Trust
218 Northbourne Avenue, Braddon,
ACT 2612.

Completed application forms and reports from three referees must be submitted by Thursday, 29 February, 1996.

