

AAP TODAY

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February 1989



**Tough job
Marg, but
someone
has got
to do it!**

What is staffer Marg McDonald doing in a room full of naked men? In fact, it was all in the line of duty for the intrepid reporter from AAP's London Bureau. All is revealed on Page 3.

Books bonanza!

AAP staff members are hoping to take the publishing world by storm after bursting into print in four separate ventures.

Two reporters have succeeded in getting their works into print, a third has one in the pipeline, and AAP has issued the fifth edition of its glossy annual hardback "Class Racehorses", compiled principally by staff specialists.

Most journalists are convinced they have at least one good book in them, but relatively few get around to writing it.

Some get side-tracked.

Staff burst into print

Some lose enthusiasm for the topic that once obsessed them.

Some lack the time, some lack the opportunity, some lack the resources. Others still content themselves with inventing even more excuses than are listed here.

And of those who write their opus, a good number have even more problems finding a publisher.

The three AAP journalists to clamber over all the obstacles and thrust their talents before the literate world are

Sydney's **Sandra Harvey** and **Bruce Montgomerie**, and Melbourne's **Robert Windmill**.

Sandra's book on the Father's Day bikie massacre due out soon, sprang from her initial involvement in the case as a reporter.

Bruce and Robert, both racing writers, seized on subjects dear to their turf interests. Bruce wrote a biography of champion trainer Bart Cummings and Robert a history of racing in his home city, Geelong.

In a special centre page spread in this issue of **AAP**

TODAY, all three tell of the blood, sweat and tears that went into their work.

The fifth volume of *Class Racehorses* has full form of all the group one, two and three winners during the season in Australasia.

This volume will also delight followers of thoroughbred breeding with five-generation pedigree charts and breeding details of Australia and New Zealand's cream of the crop from 1987-88.

It includes 84 colour action shots and portraits in its 500 leather-bound pages.

It retails at \$75 but staff can buy it at the discounted price of \$50.

CHAMPAGNE QUIZ: P3 BLOOPERS GALORE: P8

AAP creates new picture agency

AAP has expanded its pictorial operations by creating an Australian picture agency.

For years the company's pictorial activities have centred on the distribution of foreign news photographs in Australia and New Zealand under an arrangement with the Associated Press, and on providing communications facilities to move picturegrams between newspapers.

This latter operation resulted in the creation of a large communications network linking all metropolitan and many regional daily newspapers.

Domestic pictures were handled ad-hoc as an exchange between papers on the network.

AAP formalised the system on January 1 with the commencement of its Australian picture agency, details of which were announced at a seminar in Sydney late last year attended by newspaper executives from Australia and New Zealand.

The seminar was held to brief the industry on AAP's picture plans and to demonstrate a new range of equipment for picture transmissions and processing available from the AP.

These included PAGE – Photo Art Graphic Editor, or electronic picture desk – and the Leafax portable scanner



Newspaper picture executives and AAP's Geoff Want (top at rear) watch a demonstration of PAGE, the new Associated Press electronic picture desk.

which transmits images from 35mm colour or mono film, either negative or positive.

The Australian picture agency is restricted initially to regional daily newspapers, who pay a monthly subscription fee. Subscribers receive a minimum four pictures per day.

The photos are supplied by contributing newspapers, who are paid for their input.

The service commenced with most of the regional dailies connected to the AAP picture network subscribing and it was hoped the remainder would soon come on line.

"It is hoped the 19 regional dailies not on our picture network will soon be encouraged to invest in a picture receiver," said National Media Manager

Geoff Want.

"The agency is being developed because of a need by many Australian newspapers for a basic, national picture service which is affordable.

"The papers most in need are those without strong network affiliations but there is no reason why even those papers now well served should not subscribe to the agency."

Geoff outlined the company's additional pictorial plans, which include:

- the possibility of commencing a graphics service;
- expanding AAP's special events activities;
- beginning a domestic portraits service;
- and fuller use of the company's photo archives.

Racing shake-up

AAP's two racing based services, Formguide and Thoroughbred Information Services (TIS), have been amalgamated under the Media division headed by Editor In Chief Barry Wheeler.

The services will operate as separate sections – production under Editor Peter Brown, and marketing/development under national media manager Geoff Want.

The production section will be headed by racing editor Ken Boman, who is appointed to the new position of Racing Services Manager.

The restructuring includes the appointment of national news editor Les Murphy to the new position of media marketing manager.

Deputy national news editor Reg Gratton is appointed national news editor.

AS a footnote to the story in the last edition about the tipping exploits of rugby league writer Wayne Heming, Brisbane bureau chief Paul Reid reports: "The day before the Melbourne Cup, Wayne assured all and sundry that Empire Rose could not win, thus keeping his tipping record intact."

New look in the west

AAP's quartet of operators at the Perth stock exchange now have company uniforms as part of the new-look professionalism in the west.

The operators are there to key information into the AAP data base for use in Monitor and other electronic financial services.

They record the trades as they are being called out and chalked onto the boards.

They also type in statements to the exchange and quarterly, half-yearly and

yearly company reports, for use in Comnews and other financial services, often at a mind-boggling rate.

Bill Bowen, WA group manager, said: "The highest number of company reports we've had in a day is 130.

"Bearing in mind that the standard company report is about five foolscap pages, and generally full of figures, our girls have to have an extraordinarily low error rate – and they do.

"They also have to be extraordinarily fast."



Showing off their new uniforms, from left: Stephanie Branch, Lisa Strange, Raeleen Sweetman, Carol Roberts.



Pen poised, Marg McDonald waits expectantly for Wallabies Andy McIntyre, Julian Gardner, Bill Campbell, Tom Lawton and Brad Girvan to reveal all.

HOW many girls can say they turned 30 surrounded by 30 footballers?

Marg McDonald, intrepid reporter from AAP's London bureau, did on a sunny Scottish Thursday amid a camp full of Wallabies.

Marg, the first female to cover an Australian rugby tour, said that thankfully there were no marsupial-type surprises.

"I just received many hardy slaps on the back after training (the forwards hurt the most) plus a few kisses, flowers and offers of drinks.

"The entire trip the players treated me perfectly – not like a stranger in a skirt but as a person doing a job.

"Of course having 'a woman among Wallabies' for the first time did produce some funny moments.

"Like the first time I came into the dressing room wearing four layers of clothing from the English autumn outside to find four players just out of the shower.

"They didn't say a word but quickly put both hands over their eyes."

Marg inherited the nickname "Mad Dog Marg" because of a black balaclava her mother knitted to keep her head warm.

As a reporter who ventured where no woman had gone before, she also became news herself.

London's Mail On Sunday described her as "a woman

One giant Wallaby leap for mankind

who understands only too well the difference between a ruck and a maul.

"Ridiculous reactions to her appointment from the doyens of her chosen field illustrate the degeneracy of the collective male intelligence rather than another case for the Equal Opportunities Squad.

"At the Queensland Cricketers' Club, she was forced to drink her beer on the ladies' side of a yellow line drawn through the clubhouse, even though she was covering the match between Australia and Pakistan with a male colleague (they sat side by side of the line to make the point)."

The Mail On Sunday quoted Marg as saying: "If a woman hasn't seen a naked man by the time she's 30, then there's not

much hope for her. They're really polite boys. They seem to think it's like having a sister or a wife with them. They worry that I get bored."

Marg had to learn to live with being called Michael or Mark when she telephoned officials or coaches.

She also had to get used to being accused of stealing players' hotel keys, of giving players a cold (she says she got hers first) and being made to feel like a laboratory experiment by some officials.

"Most thought I must be 'butch' or a feminist toughie to come on a football trip – a bit like Germaine Greer in a jersey.

"But I hope once they met me, they realised I was just a journalist trying to do a job."

THE AAP QUIZ



WELCOME to the first AAP TODAY quiz, the winner of which will net two bottles of fine champagne.

Entries should be sent to Doug Conway at 364 Sussex St, Sydney.

The first correct entry opened gets the champs.

Good luck.

1 – AUSTRALIANA.

Translate the following exclamation into the Australian idiom: "Cast projectiles in the direction of those large, lustrous, noisy, black birds that are in an advanced state of combustion."

2 – NEWS.

On what date was The Times of London first published, and what was it then called?

3 – AAP.

The company moved its head office from Melbourne to Sydney in 1964 for the introduction of which cable?

4 – HISTORY.

"Four score and seven years ago..." were the opening words to a famous speech delivered where?

5 – SPORT.

Name the Australian medallist on the victory dais with Tommie Smith and John Carlos when the two Americans made their black power salute at the 1968 Mexico Olympics.

6 – ENTERTAINMENT.

In a popular song, what did the young man require in order to continue his pursuit of Sylvia for a further three minutes?

7 – LITERATURE.

Francois Marie Arouet, author of Candide, was better known by which pen name?

8 – CURRENT AFFAIRS.

Name the ferry which capsized off Zeebrugge, Belgium, in 1987.

9 – NATURE.

Name the process by which green plants combine energy from sunlight with water and carbon dioxide to make food.

10 – GEOGRAPHY.

Name the most southerly, northerly, easterly and westerly states of the USA.

Thanks from the Yanks

UNITED States Ambassador to Australia, Bill Lane, has written to thank AAP for arranging an international news feed direct to a function hosted by the embassy on US election day.

Politicians, diplomats, journalists and interested bystanders gathered at Canberra's Hyatt Hotel to eat hot dogs, drink Budweiser beer and follow the election count.

The AAP print-out service kept them up to date on the figures in all states as they rolled in.

In a letter to Wally Parr of media marketing, Ambassador Lane said: "As Americans living 'down under', we often feel a bit far away from the US, especially so when fast-breaking political events are taking place.

"No political event is as important to us as a presidential election, and your ticker allowed us to follow it with great detail."

Ambassador Lane was due to return home after his term in January, no matter who won the election, although at the function he wore his political persuasion proudly on his sleeve (or more correctly on his lapel) with a "Bush-Quayle" button.

Instant fame for Warwick

JUST a week after joining the staff, Sydney racing writer Warwick Barr not only had a race named after him but he covered it, too.

He was on hand to report the 1960 metres Warwick Barr Pace, first race on a media card at Harold Park trots.

Warwick, who joined AAP from Trotguide, also did the right thing by tipping the winner, 4-5 favourite Genuine Gadget.

An AAP man was mistakenly left off the program that night, but Harold Park officials atoned at a later meeting by naming the last race the Tim Gossage Stakes.

AAP Today 4

RACING, A TOP TRAINER AND THE MIL

SANDRA Harvey's book on the Milperra massacre took four years, scores of rejections, dozens of note books, hours in court rooms and jail cells, and countless journeys foot-slogging around Sydney.

"Brothers In Arms" by Sandra and Sydney Morning Herald reporter Lindsay Simpson was the culmination of a mammoth project which occupied them for years both during and outside their normal working hours.

Sandra covered what was to become Australia's biggest murder trial for AAP, but her fascination with the case went beyond that.

For the record seven people – six bikies and a bystander – were killed during a clash between members of the Bandido and Comanchero motor cycle clubs at the Viking Tavern at Milperra, in Sydney's south, on Father's Day, September 2, 1984.

"Once inside the court," said Sandra, "when I finally overcame my awe of the 43 men housed in two reinforced dock cages, I knew my curiosity wouldn't be satisfied just by reporting the facts as told to the court.

"I wanted to know more about them – the way they thought, their lives as bikies, even what they ate for lunch, the personalities of the men involved and ultimately the reasons that led such a group to such a bloody end."

The pact to write a book was sealed over a dinner at a Penrith restaurant after court the follow-



The scene outside the Viking Tavern at Milperra after Father's Day massacre.

ing night, and Sandra and Lindsay began researching in their spare time.

Conceiving the idea, carrying out the research and interviews, and writing the book was one thing. Finding a publisher was another task in itself.

At one point they took three months' leave from their jobs. "We decided to take a gamble

and take time off work to ourselves fully to writing Allen & Unwin published they liked the idea but we see more before they sign the dotted line."

The gamble paid off a two secured a contract.

The committal at 1 Court lasted 12 months a trial 13 months after whi

Robert's race

MELBOURNE racing writer Robert Windmill found out just how tough it can be to publish your own work as he raced against time to produce his book before the 101st Geelong Cup.

"Geelong Racing" eventually was launched by 3UZ race caller Bryan Martin at a cup eve function where guests included trainer George Hanlon and jockey Darren Gauci.

But it was touch and go until the last minute. The printers pulled out all stops but even so the binder didn't start work until the day of the launch.

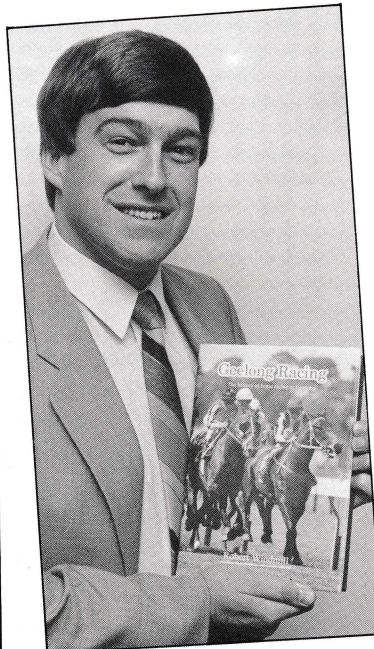
A power blackout at the binders delayed matters further and

he didn't see his book 3.30pm.

He made it to the function after tearing down the Highway from Melbourne Geelong with a car books, arriving still in dress with just 20 minutes spare. The book itself, I was four years in the making.

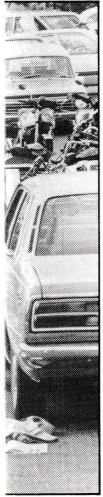
The idea came to him he was working at the News. "I found that the Cup results were unknown that the local racing is non-existent," Robert said.

"After doing a little I found that Geelong important pioneering in racing not only in Victoria Australia.



Robert Windmill and "Geelong Racing"

e bikie in Arms



famous Sandra Harvey, left, with co-author Lindsay Simpson.
— Photos: Bruce Miller.



tice Adrian Roden handed out six life sentences, sentencing a total of 31 men for murder, manslaughter and affray.

Four years after the killings, most of those involved are free and the nine convicted of murder currently are appealing their sentences.

Sandra and Lindsay are hopeful of signing a film contract.

Their manuscript is in the hands of a leading Australian company which is entertaining the prospect of an international film.

"While the crime is essentially Australian with its setting and characters unique products of a Sydney sub-culture, bikies are a worldwide phenomenon," Sandra said.

gainst the odds

"All the early Victorian champion horses in the 1840s and 1850s came from Geelong and many of the stewards at Geelong were renowned around Australia.

"As I delved further into the history the more I felt that a book needed to be written."

Robert spent a year gathering results and statistical details as he beavered away at Geelong's Deakin University, the Victoria Racing Club, Geelong Historical Records Centre and State Library of Victoria.

He did his writing at night and his research in the mornings. "I originally thought that I would write the book in a month but it took seven.

"My parents and friends were great supporters and without them the book would not be out today."

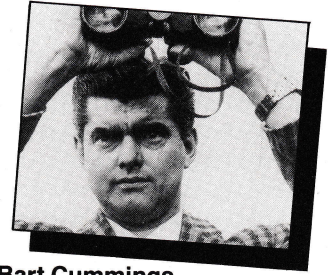
Towards the end, with his AAP job, he was working up to 16 hours a day.

"I tried to get backing from the Geelong Racing Club but while they thought it was a great idea they were not prepared to support it financially.

"It was extra pressure and as late as two weeks before the book launch I was seriously thinking of pulling the book off the presses.

"Only after thinking of the amount of work that had gone into it and the importance of the timing did I go ahead."

No flies on Bart, or Bruce



Bart Cummings

BRUCE Montgomerie's job as a racing writer puts him in contact with all the big-name trainers, but he was stunned to discover that no books had been written about any of them.

"It seemed ludicrous that nothing had been written on either Bart Cummings or Tommy Smith, who are household names in Australia," said Bruce.

"Strangely there has never been a book on an Australian racehorse trainer, unless you count the publication on Tommy Woodcock, who strapped the mighty Phar Lap and trained him when he raced in America."

In 1984 Bruce decided to put this to rights.

The choice of Bart Cummings as a subject makes sense — he has won seven Melbourne Cups, five Caulfield Cups and trained 500 feature race winners — but one senses the taciturn Cummings wit might have had something to do with it, too.

"Bart doesn't say a lot, but when he does you listen," said Bruce.

"He tells the story of a health inspector who came to his stables once and told him that he had too many flies around the place.

"How many should I have?" replied Cummings."

Bruce said his main difficulty was the loneliness of sitting for hours by himself typing out his manuscript from notes, records, genealogy and old newspaper cuttings.

"It took about two to two and

a half years to finish and another 18 months to find a publisher.

"I did have to keep on the move to catch Cummings to question him for the book.

"He is up at 3.30am and away from the track by 7am. I had to question him on the run on many occasions

"While research took the longest it was interesting unravelling the past and fitting it into a story.

"I even discovered that Bart's great grandfather, Thomas Cummins, spelt his name differently. Neither Bart, his sister Theresa nor brother Pat knew that.

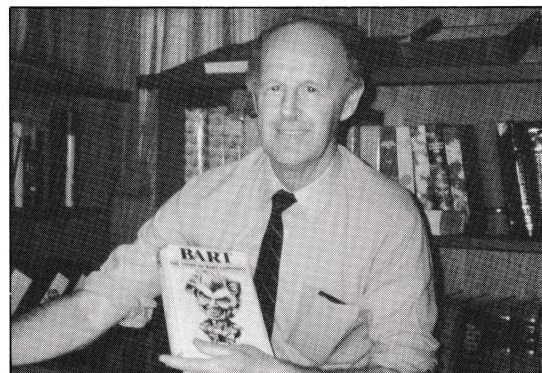
"As Bart's father Jim Cummings was also a champion trainer I had to spend hours unearthing his record and history of the time covering the early part of this century.

"I drove to Eurelia (pronounced You-Really-Are) in the far north of South Australia where Bart's father Jim Cummings was born and reared.

"It was a desolate area and I was glad to get back to civilisation.

"Bart in comparison had a gentleman's life as his father was well established financially by the time Bart was in his childhood."

"Bart — The Story Of Bart Cummings" is the first book Bruce has had published but he has finished a manuscript on "The History Of Rugby League" and is well advanced on a manuscript of "Tommy — The Story Of Tommy Smith".



Bruce Montgomerie and his first published book "Bart — The Story Of Bart Cummings".

Ad network's final trials

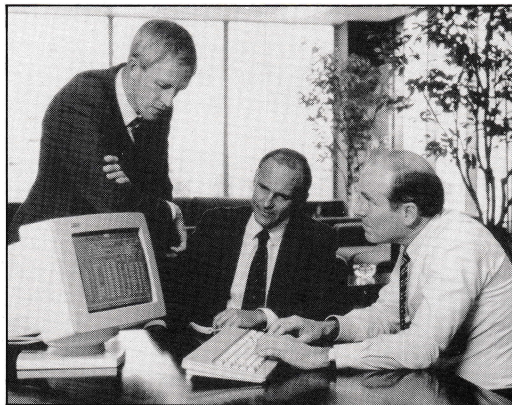
AAP's newest service, a business communications network for the media advertising industry, is entering its final stages of trials in preparation for a launch later this year.

The Australian Television Network (ATN) and leading advertising agency George Patterson have been involved in earlier trials, and the service is being expanded to include the Nine and TEN TV networks prior to launch.

The Advertising Services Network (ASN) will operate initially between television and major advertising agencies.

Plans are well advanced for services to John Fairfax, News Limited and other newspapers, and for faster dissemination of industry research such as McNair Anderson survey data.

Specific magazine and radio



services will be added progressively.

The ASN supports a new electronic approach to the cycle of advertising booking, confirmations, material instructions, invoicing, placement details and funds transfer.

"The network will allow each subscriber to transmit and receive data on their own personal computer, mini or main-

frame system," said ASN manager Ian Lane.

"They will be connected to the ASN message switch, which acts as an electronic gateway linking each subscriber to its trading partners.

"AAP will administer the network and provide a range of security, support and value-added services."

He said one immediate

ASN manager Ian Lane (right) with Hugh Watt (left), national media director of George Patterson, and Geoff Cousins, the agency chairman.

benefit to the industry would be in the clerical area.

"There will be direct savings in time and money through the elimination of unnecessary computer data re-entry, the physical delivery of paperwork, duplication of effort and errors resulting from manual processing.

"ASN will also complement the key role of sales operators, media buyers and accounts staff by providing a time management tool to assist in the more productive and accurate processing of daily work and improved customer services.

"To the best of our knowledge this is the first time a network service of this type has been designed so comprehensively to help solve communication problems within an entire industry.

"This puts AAP in a strong position for growth in this area."

Gold Coast glasnost!

IT'S difficult to know what left the most lasting impression – the glitz of the Gold Coast, Brisbane's surfing Lord Mayor, a rowdy question time in Canberra or Sydney's glittering harbour.

Whatever, senior Tass journalists Askold Biryukov and Vladimir Ianchenkov got a close look at Australia in the raw during a 12-day visit as guests of AAP.

Their trip reciprocated that of AAP's London bureau chief John Coomber and financial services editor Leigh Mackay, who visited the Soviet Union last June as guests of Tass.

Askold, who had served nine years as a correspondent in Tokyo, was delighted with our food, range of beers and exotic wildlife – particularly the latter, judging from the rolls of film he devoted to lolling kangaroos and koalas at Sydney's Koala Park sanctuary.

Vladimir was raised in a Cossack family on the Don and spent his later youth riding with sabre and tuba (no mean feat) in a mounted Cossack army band.

He insisted on visiting a typical Aussie farm outside Can-

berra, perhaps hoping to glean hints on reforming Soviet agriculture.

Queensland news editor Paul Reid is convinced our Tass friends are unlikely to forget their three-day Queensland visit in a hurry.

After a meeting with Premier Mike Ahern and obligatory pilgrimage to Expo 88, Paul showed them the Gold Coast which he thought would explain more about Queensland than anything else could.

They combined that with a call on Brisbane's Lord Mayor Sallyanne Atkinson who was involved in a conference on the Coast.

What was supposed to be a brief courtesy call extended into lunch and then an invitation to go for a quick surf with the Lord Mayor at the beach across the road from the hotel.

Despite their paranoia about sharks, Askold and Vladimir accepted without hesitation.

A jet-lagged Askold had his own introduction to Queensland fauna in the early hours of his first day there when he was woken by what he vowed were "giant reptiles" screeching in the tree outside his hotel window.

Welcome to Queensland, possums...



AAP's Tass visitors at Darling Harbour.

New Gold Bulletin launched

AAP has launched a news service for investors, stockbrokers and analysts interested in Australian gold mining and exploration companies.

The "Gold Bulletin" is a joint venture between AAP and two Perth-based companies, the Resource Information Unit Ltd and corporate communications consultants Corporate Strategy Pty Ltd.

It comprises summaries of the latest announcements and reports concerning gold companies listed on the Australian Stock Exchange and is circulated on the AAP Reuter Monitor service.

The bulletin is aimed at the nearly 2,000 Australian Monitor subscribers.

• FOOTNOTE of particular interest to old-timers: both Mark Mentiplay and John Feary of Corporate Strategy are former AAP journalists.



COMCO sales and marketing staff at a Darling Harbour luncheon. From left: Phil Booth, David Blanks, Tom Murchie, Brian Perkins, Lesley Elias, Rob Padgett, Sharon Brown, Peter Choquenot, Suzanne Hudson, Tom Dooley.



Part-time Santa Maurice Maneschi dons his party suit.

IF the ability to laugh at yourself is an indication of wellbeing, AAP staff showed they were in a state of rude good health during the office Christmas party season.

Editorial staff in Sydney organised a Hollywood-style awards night which took no prisoners, and every good-humoured barb was taken in good part.

COMCO employees also got together for a Christmas bash and awards presentation in similar vein.

And at a separate function for the AAP and COMCO development group, programmer Maurice Maneschi donned his Santa Claus suit and even sang Jingle Bells.

The centrepiece of the main COMCO party on the rooftop at Glebe was the presentation by general manager Barney Blundell of two highly bogus awards.

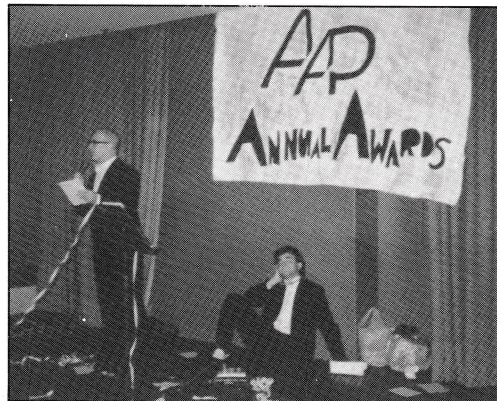
Operations manager Trevor Harris received the 1988 Gullible Award featuring a "retractable cable tray".

It was the result of a gigantic leg-pull in which colleagues tried to convince him that the company had embarked on a project costing millions of dollars to fit a Sydney building with a huge retractable cable tray, whatever that is.

Most of the fun, it was said, came from Trevor's understandable attempts to elicit more details about a totally fictitious enterprise.

Maker of the trophies and chief perpetrator of the hoax was engineer Dave Smith, who said: "I can well imagine it has set a precedent.

Lock up your ego — it's the Oscars!



Presenter Mike Koslowski courageously fights off an attack of interest during Ted Simmons' acceptance speech.

"The Gullible Award might have to be passed on to a new recipient next Christmas and I'm sure we'll all have to be on the look-out the whole year."

The incredibly Scottish Installations manager Alistair Craig received a trophy inscribed with one of his favourite sayings: "I'll no be paying for that."

The trophy featured a bolt

on two legs chasing a nut on two legs.

The idea for the Editorial Oscars was hatched by cadet Mike Koslowski and EICs' assistant Nola Blundell, who showed what can be achieved when your only resources are imagination and a keen sense of fun.

Tipster of the Year went to newsdesk staffer Hugo Uribe,

a persistently penurious punter who feels he has every right to claim office bookmaker Howard Northey on his tax return.

Howard presented the award, the only thing he has given Hugo for some two and a half years, observing that his client's best "kiss of death" effort was to back Napoli for the Italian soccer title the night before six players went out on strike.

In his acceptance speech Hugo spoke from the pocket and the heart when he said: "I feed this man. I clothe this man."

Sportsman of the Year went to Ted Simmons, whose citation was even longer than his acceptance speech, during which one host went to sleep on stage and the other walked off.

The Golden Tonsils title went to office mimic Barney Porter for his portrayal of a sports editor who kept bellowing "Get some quotes" in a mellifluous north English accent.

Sports staffer Ian Telford took out the sartorial double of Office Cleanliness and Best Dressed.

The latter reminded some of the time Ian went to lunch wearing a business shirt with thick blue and white stripes, and a companion remarked: "I enjoy your company but I object to eating in front of an awning."

Chief COMCO leg-puller Dave Smith flanked by Alistair Craig (left) and Trevor Harris.



THE tatty, dog-eared pages of the "Bloopers Book" in the Sydney news room bear testimony to the enduring appeal of that brand of human error in which the brain gets in the way of the fingers.

The Bloopers Book was started a decade and a half ago by a small band of journalists who wanted to record moments of madness that make entire desks dissolve into guffaws.

Their successors have carried on the task with a commitment that would do their forebears proud.

In the interests of that most potent form of preservation – self – the journalists point out that few of these offerings actually made it out on to the news wires.

WHAT'S THAT AGAIN?

An oft-told Army story concerns a young courier delivering the top-secret message from the front: "Send reinforcements, we're going to advance" but blurring out on arrival: "Send three and four-pence, we're going to a dance."

The messenger would have the sympathy of anyone who has worked in a newsroom.

When reporters, often in haste and under pressure, telephone their stories to copytakers in busy, noisy surroundings, they walk through a minefield of potential misunderstandings, mistakes and misquotations.

Like these:

"Wood hit his fourth boundary of the morning when he seized an over-pitched delivery from the Pakistani postman and stroked it firmly to the cover fence."

"Six fire appliances took half an hour to distinguish a fire in a carpet showroom in the Melbourne suburb of Ormond."

"Melbourne police have charged a 31-year-old man with robbery and use of a firearm to prevent lawful apprehension..."

"Mr Ling, a Korea diplomat..."

FAULT. SECOND SERVICE

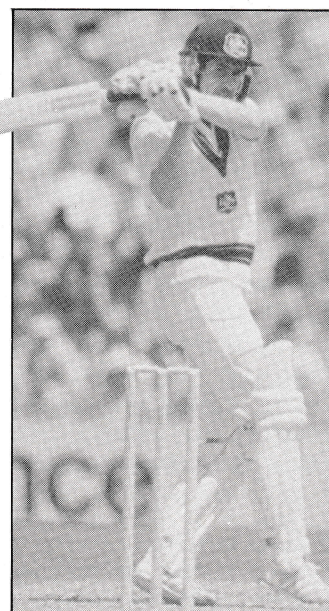
Service messages, unpublished correspondence between bureaus, traditionally have provided a rich source of news office humour.

Bloopers galore! Best of our worst



Graeme Wood, famous for dealing with deliveries from Pakistani postmen.

'But what about the Junior All Blacks?'



An eager reporter in Melbourne once filed, at U or urgent priority, the following news flash: "Heavy rain is falling in Geelong, 75 kilometres south-west of Melbourne." Asked in a service message why he bothered to file the story at all, never mind at U priority, he explained: "It's been hot all week and the community is looking (I think) for a break. Anyone going shopping etc. might want to take a brolly etc. It just seemed the type of thing the local DJs might like to quip on air on a quiet Saturday morning. The reason for the 'U' was that to be of any

use I thought it would have to be fast. Still, I'll leave it to you to decide."

Here are some other great service messages of our time:

"Service AAP Sydney. Apologies for typographical errors in copy tonight but the letter between L and N on our keyboard is issuing. Rgds. AAP elbourne."

A Melbourne story once referred to "Sir Rupert Murdoch's News Limited." After the mistake was spotted, the story was re-sent with the advice: "Repeating, withdrawing knighthood in second par."

Priorities: From NZPA at the height of the Kennedy assassination chaos: "Thanks Kennedy cover but unsighted anything on Junior All Blacks in Argentina."

The art of apology in a message to subscribers: "A technical problem has halted filing during the past half hour and caused items to be sent on your circuit in error. It has now been fixed. We regret any convenience."

WE KNOW WHAT THEY MEANT

What would life be without ambiguities like the assembly instruction on a home wardrobe

kit: "Put it up yourself."

Here are some less painful examples from the Bloopers Book:

"Police believe murdered New Zealand couple Doug and Isabel Wilson were lured to Melbourne to be killed, and it happened twice."

"Dulcify's jockey Brent Thomson quickly reined the horse in and dismounted at about the 300 metre mark. He was later destroyed."

"The 39-year-old entrepreneur started his climb up the corporate ladder with little but big ideas."

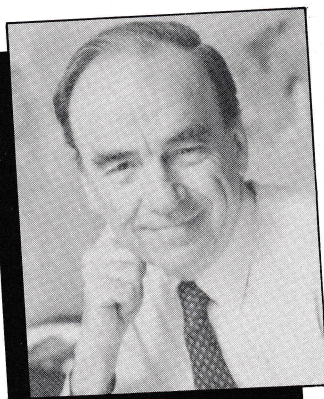
"Chairman Anthony Hill of Jamaica told Reuter: 'The chances of success are 50-50. The chances of failure are the same.'"

"He was simple, direct but oblique when a reporter asked how far he was prepared to go to stop Mr Cain."

"Knees have long been Marsh's Achilles heel."

Is this a record? "Police say the man died on Saturday night when his car rolled 370 kilometres east of Norseman on the Eyre Highway."

• **Editor's note:** Any particularly foolish mistakes in this article were deliberate.



Mr Murdoch – for a while Sir Rupert