

Girls are made of Sugar and spice and all things nice.
Boys are made of Frogs and snails, and puppy dogs tails.
Joe Bagnara was made of potatoes and meat and crusty white bread.
Add to that some Turf Filter cigarettes and you get the perfect body for a long life.
Follow this recipe and there is no need for exercise, this is the perfection at its best!

In his final years, dad put up one hell of a fight to keep that bit of perfection going. Chop out some thyroid, lung, and kidney, add a few pills and he managed to get an extra 20 years. His medical knowledge helped him on the way, willing to try new things to keep the body going. He challenged the medical practitioners and annoyed the hell out of them with his self diagnosis and self medication. He nearly blinded himself by stopping the eye drops he had been prescribed, and who knows what damage was caused when he tripled his dosage of Lasex. The big problem was he tripled the wrong tablet!

Dad achieved a lot in his life. His determination to get things done saw him placed in many leadership roles. He was on many committees, often serving a stint as president. There was also a lot of things that dad didn't do. He didn't go to the pub, the footy or the gym. He didn't garden and he didn't cook. He didn't vacuum nor do the washing. His time was spent doing things a bit differently. His dedication to his work was second to none. He was on call 24/7. The laboratories were always impeccably clean, a place for everything and everything in its place. This determination resulted in his services being in high demand. His job at St John Of God hospital was made in heaven for him. A nearly clean slate to build a new business, while at the same time working for a charitable organization. The customer always came first and he was proud that he was able to reduce the cost of services from his department.

His second passion was flying. He got his student pilot licence on the 6/6/1966. Flying took us to lots of places, mostly airports. We spent a lot of time at airports! The place to hang out early in his flying days was the precursor to Maryborough Airport. A local farmer let a group of blokes use one of his paddocks to build an air strip. It was on top of a hill at Carisbrook. The top of a hill was a good choice for aeroplanes, but like most things with flying, the ground transport is always a bit lacking. In winter, the car was parked on the side of the road. We then trudged up the hill along the muddy track that 4 wheel drives had trouble negotiating. After what seemed like an hours climb, a small shed and a corrugated iron toilet would come into view. The toilet provided the first clue that dad had been involved. The toilet didn't have men and ladies signs, or male and female signs, but the gender symbol for male and female painted boldly on the side.

While learning to fly, dad invented the protractor, well not really the protractor but the idea of using it to work out heading corrections when flying. The Nav Aid rule was the product and home was the factory. The raw materials would arrive, then the child slave labour would begin. All the children were put on the production line, picking up a rule and instruction manual, and inserting them into the protective sleeve. Lucky for us, 1 cent was the smallest denomination. If the half-penny still existed, that's what we would have been paid. To lift our spirits, dad would tune his radio into his favorite radio station, 119.1 MHz, the local aircraft communications

channel. The song 4'33 was on repeat, occasionally interrupted by hiss crackle alpha bravo charlie turning base for 23.

His years of flying took himself, often mum and sometimes us, on an adventure. Flying around New Guinea is an adventure I am glad I missed out on! Dad was a safe pilot. Every trip well planned, the plane checked and luggage secured. He recently told me about the time when things didn't go to plan. I can't recall the lead up to the flight, but he had flown his Beechcraft Baron and its passengers somewhere that needed him to stay overnight. On returning to the airport the next day, he found the refuellers had filled the tanks to the brim, ignoring his request for a fixed amount of fuel. The Baron was temperamental with its center of gravity, to the extent there were concrete blocks on board that got moved from the nose locker to the back of the cabin to trim the plane. With the plane full of fuel and no passengers, the COG was a problem. He couldn't get the fuel removed so his only choice was to fly. His fastidious preparation probably saved his life. Before takeoff, dad would meticulously set up all the instruments ready for the flight. As usual, he set this flight up and headed for the runway. Once in the air, the plane became uncontrollable. As a last resort, he engaged the autopilot, which was of course set up for the flight. The autopilot was able to regain control of the plane and all ended well.

Back in the old days, dad spent a fair bit of time on his motorbike. I had a phone call from Shirley and Mick Churchill the other day. Mick is one of dad's old mates. Turns out dad introduced Mick to Shirley and they have been married for 70 years. Shirley and Mick had some great stories to tell about dad and the past, about motorbikes, girls and floods. In those days, Mick lived out of town. Dad asked Shirley if she would like to visit Mick. Eager to see him Shirley climbed onto the back of dad's bike and off they headed. Somewhere along the way, the muffler fell off. Shirley fondly remembers how she had to take the belt off her dress so it could be used to tie the muffler back on!

Dad loved his cars. I was too young to remember the black chev but I do remember the two tone EK Holden. The trimatic gearbox whirring away in my ear as I lay in the passenger footwell, watching the windscreen wipers sweeping back and forth. I wonder how the next generation of children will learn how windscreen wipers work!

One sunny afternoon in Maryborough, a rather large Chevrolet Impala pulled into the drive, driven by one of those lovely used car salesmen. Dad was going to replace the EK! He needed to make sure the new car would fit in the garage. Thank goodness it didn't! Instead, the next car was a brand new HQ Holden Kingswood, bright orange in colour with a bench seat covered in black vinyl and three on the tree. Dads new pride and joy could be seen coming for miles. And the mistake of sitting on the seat after being parked in the sun was only made once! The next pride and joy was a HQ Statesman DeVille. A flashy upgrade from the Kingswood. V8 5 litre engine, auto, metallic blue with a tan interior. Unfortunately for dad, it was also bigger. On the first day, while backing out his car park at work, he hit a pole and pushed the tail light into the fender! It's always the first dint that hurts the most.

The Statesman would often be seen on the road to Ballarat airport, shuffling its passengers with comfort and speed. Unfortunately, the driver didn't dress like a chauffeur, wearing whatever tickled his fancy on the day. In his wardrobe was a 'Fly United' tee shirt. I'm not sure who gave it

to him but they must have been having a good laugh when he would proudly wear it to the airport. Eventually, someone must have been brave enough to point out the picture of two geese flying in a rather compromising position probably was not the 'Fly United' message dad intended to give. While I'm talking about airports, an airshow at the same airport gave dad the opportunity to demonstrate one of his many talents. A minibike was being used to ferry things around the airport. Dad decided to take it for a spin, and was promptly sitting on the tarmac, in front of a large crowd with a very damaged ego.

A few cars later he finally got his dream car, a Mercedes. His pride and joy and still in perfect, showroom condition after 20 years of use. Grandson Julian now has the responsibility of looking after it. Good luck Julian, he's watching you!

Dad always had something to say, often controversial and something you may not agree with. You could try and alter his point of view, but usually in vain. Things may have been different if there was a software upgrade for the hearing aids to turn them into listening aids. Although his opinions might not have been popular, they always started a conversation. That space will now be filled with silence.

Dad is gone now. He will be missed.