

Retire the attire

Sittings of the Supreme Court in Alice Springs are a big event.

It was a source of amusement therefore to witness lawyers awaiting the commencement of the April sittings. The lengths to which some lawyers will go to be "suitably robed" is extraordinary. The following account according to *Hoojafink*, is true:

Our morning started in the robing room. Two men were discovered in an unusually 'close' position fussing about each other's necks. Curiosity was short-lived as the stapler was produced. "just staple it up at the back mate; she'll be right and watch out for my neck, don't staple it to my neck" click...click... "one more on the side"...click! The job was done. At five minutes to 10am and he was ready to move to Court number one. We had thought to comment on the yellow-brown appearance of the jabot, but they were so pleased with themselves, we dared not.

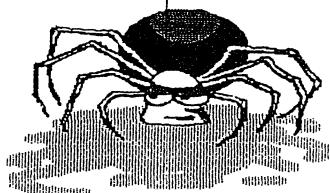
On the way to court, the lawyer who had applied the staples (who did not have his own robes) arranged that after the 'stapled one' had made his appearance, he would borrow his robes. We wondered whether one of them had a staple remover in his brief case, but thought little else about the matter.

Later, after the swap had been made, it was clear that something had happened to the stapler. Now, the jabot presented with a large bulge at the back of the neck. He proudly said that he had "tied it up" and seemed to think that no one would notice his strange new posture.

When suggested that this lawyer should purchase a set of robes, his response was: "How much are they; pretty expensive eh?" Answer: "Yes, but you obviously need your own set". "But they are really expensive?" This is interesting as the lawyer in question is the proud new owner of a very (very) expensive motor vehicle.

Another lawyer had borrowed a wig. It was an incredible object. It appeared to have been squashed by heavy law books for the last few years and been rediscovered. Imagine a round head wearing a flat bath mat. Learned friends kept their distance from the bath mat, and we couldn't help but wonder whether others, like us, pondered the possibility of something nasty living deep within.

THE SPIDER'S WEB



A wig was not a problem for another lawyer, although his robes were a concern and may well have been slept in the night before. His defence was as follows:

In relation to all of the creases: "I tried to iron it last night, but it didn't work too well".

In relation to the strange white spots: "I have been doing some painting and I used it as a drop sheet".

In relation to the creased bar jacket: "Well, I put it in the washing machine; I bleached it, and hung it out in the sun".

When asked why he didn't take it to the dry cleaner: "I was frightened they might spoil it".

We await the next arraignment day with more than usual interest.

Cyber conception

The Victorian Law Reform Committee visited Darwin this month inquiring into section 154 of the Northern Territory Criminal Code. The Law Society was among many groups quizzed by the four Victorian members of parliament. The Northern Territory Law Reform Committee chairman, Austin Asche was another. After the tape recorder was turned off the conversation turned to advances in information technology and artificial intelligence, reminding the chairman of this little gem.

"A sceptic was told that the computer in front of him could answer any question he put to it. He typed on the key board: 'Where is my father?' The computer screen read: 'Your father is currently on the second hole of the city golf course.' "The sceptic triumphantly told the machine: "No that's wrong. My father is in plot two of the cemetery." The computer shot back: 'No that's not your

real father. Your father is now on the third hole of the city golf course.' But surely it doesn't take a computer to affirm the old adage that "it's a wise man that knows his own father"?

La Passionara?

These Southerners didn't escape town without sampling the barra - let alone the views of the La Passionara of the NT Criminal Lawyers Association. A chance meeting with el Presidente left them and no one else at the Bar - let alone the Lizard Lounge - in no doubt that section 154 was but a minor worry in terms of launching headlong into code law.

Snakes alive?

So where did the Law Society president get his sun tan? No, it wasn't Surfers Paradise. More like a site inspection at Howard Springs while on a hearing of the Planning Appeals Tribunal. As the Law Society's own Indiana Jones tells the story, the tribunal and the party trudged through knee-deep swampy water carrying umbrellas in a vain attempt to beat the blazing sun. Slightly worried about what might be lurking in the vegetation our intrepid president asked a local witness: "Are there any anacondas in there?" "No," came the reply. "There's no small snakes here mate!"



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