

DUTY FREED

Official Newsletter of the



RETIRED CUSTOMS OFFICERS'
ASSOCIATION

OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA INC.

www.rcoa.org.au

February 2020

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Contributions

If you'd like to contribute an article to this newsletter, please send it, preferably by e-mail, to the editor. Copy deadline is the 11th of each month of publication.

Please address general correspondence and subscriptions to the Secretary.

All cheques are to be made payable to the 'Retired Customs Officers' Association of WA Inc.

Membership

RCOA welcomes new members of former Customs officers. Current membership is 121

The membership fee for former officer & spouse or single is \$10. An application form is included on the inside back page of this Newsletter.

Annual subscriptions are due on January 1st each year. Please check your address label for your current financial status.

Planned Events 2020

👋 Tuesday March 3rd 2020
BBQ @ Point Walter

👋 Wednesday April 8th 2020
Lunch @ Ciccierello's Mandurah



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Minutes of Annual General Meeting held at the Market City Tavern, Canning Vale on Tues February 4th 2020

President (Ray Treen) opened the meeting 11:35 am and welcomed those attending.

Members present: Dave Atkinson, Gary Byrne, Ruth Chipman, Dennis Cleverly, Peter Costantino, Graham Cruttenden, Roly Dixon, Brian & Sue Green, Jan Hall, Neil Hopkins, Ian Jamieson, Judy & Ron King, Mike Metcalf, Wayne Mitchell, Chris Mulconroy, Diane Pemberton, Karen Sayers, Mark Skeels, Trevor Smart, Geoff Smither, Ray Treen, Jen Wales, Bernie & Hazel Webb

Apologies: Ken Atkins, Geoff Calkin, Kerry Coleman, Richard Coleman, Elsie Crowe, Fran Foster, Con Greenwood, Ron de Gruchy, Ron & Wendie Dyer, Ted Elliot, Debra Hall, Karen Jardine, Brian Lucas, Gordon Marshall, Lee Miles, Max Mohr, Rod O'Donnell, Bev Perrin, Paul Rhodes, Sylvia Shaw, Roly & Sue Sweet, Brian & Kathleen Ward, Rob Wales

Minutes of previous AGM were circulated in the 'Duty Freed' for all members to read and were accepted as read.
Accepted by all in attendance

Treasurer's Report was circulated in the 'Duty Freed' for all members to read and were accepted as correct. The accounts have been Audited.
Accepted and agreed by all in attendance

Entertainment Report: We seem to hold most of our events South of the river merely by default more than design. In the past we organised outings north of the river but attendance was very low and the absence of those living North of the river was noted. Paul Rhodes & Huw Williams have volunteered to investigate & plan NOR events for 2020

AGM 2019 - 28 attended the meeting & lunch The Market City Tavern

March – we had Bruce Zilm with his Bush Poetry in Wellard

April – Pontoon Outing in Mandurah was enjoyed by 9 of us

December – 25 in total celebrated a Christmas lunch at The Market City Tavern

Accepted by all in attendance

President's Report: was presented & accepted by all in attendance, no copy at time of print.

Ray Treen, President

Election of Office Bearers: Steve Smallwood took the chair and proceeded with the election of office bearers for the next year. Only one nomination was received per position and were elected unopposed as below.

President Ray Treen

Vice President Vacant

Secretary Hazel Webb

Treasurer Bernie Webb

Committee: Dennis Cleverly, Roly Dixon, Neil Hopkins, Ian Jamieson,

Karen Jardine, Ron King, Mark Skeels,

Duty Freed Editor: Hazel Webb

With no further business, Ray thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 11:50am

Lunch commenced 12noon.

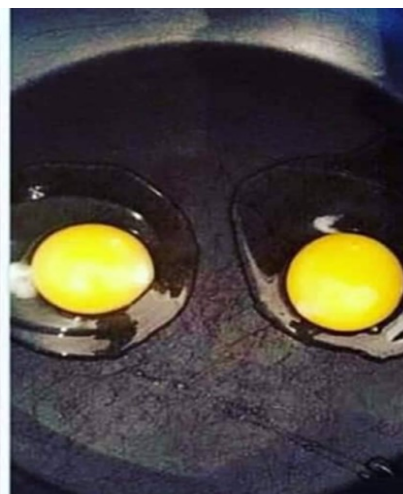
The next Annual General Meeting will be Tuesday February 2nd, 2021 @ The Market City Tavern with Roast Lunch

The next committee meeting is 11:30 am Tuesday February 11th, 2020 @ The Well, Wellard

.....

Someone asked me to explain
my views on racism so I sent
them this picture.
Pretty plain & simple

and we bleed the same colour
too





Sausage Sizzle @ Point Walter Reserve

Perth side of the kiosk

Tuesday March 3rd at 11:00 am

Sausage, onion, bread & sauce will be provided

BYO everything else you need including tea, coffee, chairs, tables, plates, cutlery, etc

Members Free, non-members Gold Coin (pay on the day)

Numbers attending to be advised by Friday February 28th for Catering

**Cicerello's Seafood
Restaurant
2/73 Mandurah Tce,
Mandurah
Wednesday April 8th
2020@ noon
Pay as you order, see you there!**



Seniors Deal

Bursting Pipes in your Home

Something that is far more common than you would expect – the failure of the flexible joiner pipes found on most toilet systems (between the tap on the wall and the toilet cistern) and occasionally inside vanity cupboards, laundry cupboards and kitchen cupboards.

This was recently brought to my attention by Hazel's brother-in-law. He awoke early one morning last week, swung his legs out of bed onto the floor only to discover he was standing in 5-10 mm of water. As it transpired the flexible hose connection on one of the toilets had suddenly, for no reason, burst overnight, expelling many litres of water under mains pressure throughout the entire house.



He had to employ a local company to dry out the carpets. While chatting with the operator it was revealed that they handle, on average two similar incidences a week - just in Geraldton! The carpets and practically all cupboards standing on the floor are a write-off. The insurance bill is around \$42,000 and you can imagine the extreme inconvenience of it all. When you empty the cupboards where do you put all the 'stuff'? You almost need to move out of home while it is all fixed and of course it isn't all going to happen 'tomorrow'.

The moral to this story is replace your flexible pipes around the 7-year mark. They come in different lengths, starting with 300mm @ \$11.70 (beats \$42,000, not to mention the inconvenience). Apparently as from June or July this year they will need to be marked with some sort of specific band with a number to show that they comply. If the 'band' does not exist insurance companies will not cover them if they burst. I have this last bit of information second-hand and do not know the exact details).

So why isn't this a well-known event (or is it and I have just never heard it before)? Why don't insurance companies advise us of this? They would save many \$100,000s if it was prevented in the first place!

[Sent in by Bernie Webb, thank you]

The Flat Earthers

"Where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise," so wrote the English poet Thomas Gray in 1792. And so it is with climate change deniers. Safely within their narrow cocoon of ignorance they disregard the overwhelming evidence that climate change is caused by humans. This has now been established as an irrefutable fact. They blissfully take their evidence from right wing commentators and politicians, or a few scientists who must also think the earth is flat. They cannot move into the real world that constantly affirms climate change is an existential threat to the future of Earth. To leave their comfort zone would be folly.

Wayne Gregson, former Commissioner of the DFES, speaks with authority when he calls the deniers "Flat Earthers". I would also call them neo-Luddites. It is surprising that there are so many deniers who write letters to the papers and of course the Coalition is replete with climate change deniers. They all have the Murdoch media as their publicity arm. I wonder which Flat Earth Society they belong to?

The Coalition's stance on climate change is ambivalent despite Scott Morrison being shamed into at last realising there is a link between the fires and a fast-changing climate. However, he is still refusing to commit to a policy change that will see Australia take further initiatives in respect of climate change and all its consequences for Australia. Instead he sees controlled hazard reduction burning as the way to prevent future catastrophic bushfires, something that in the past could have been done safely.

It doesn't matter how the fires are started. What the experts in many fields are actually saying is that in the past with reasonable rainfall, the forest detritus would have been full of moisture that reduced the forest fuel load. Climatic conditions and fuel loads have changed to the extent that controlled burning is now restricted and cannot always be used for bushfire mitigation. Recent experience has shown that such burning can now get out of hand very quickly and lead to uncontrollable fires. This is the new norm.

There are so many signs of climate change. Severe and unprecedented destructive weather around the world; temperatures that have never been experienced before; and abnormal droughts, floods and environmental disasters. It is also said that increased earthquake activity may be caused by melting glaciers, ice shelves and thawing permafrost, all so massive in size and weight that they are causing the Earth's crust to move.

In Australia we have weather conditions turned on their head with severe drought and when it does rain, often severe flooding with overwhelming consequences. Our major river systems are running dry for the first time, fish are dying by the millions while towns are running out of water and have to be supplied by bottled water. Dairy farmers are having to sell their cows and other farmers de-stock, while fruit and vegetable crops are not producing because of drought and fire. Australia's sheep and cattle population is continuing to fall due to lack of feed and the ongoing drought. We are now experiencing the most devastating bushfires on record with the season starting months earlier than usual, uncontrolled fires in all States at the same time and expected to continue well beyond the normal season. The appalling suffering and loss of an estimated one billion native animals and birds and the loss of untold insects, and all losing their habitats, may see some of them driven to extinction. This should be enough to convince any thinking person that there is a crisis that needs to be addressed urgently.

The worst of the deniers are those who compare the current bushfires with those of the past. They have a macabre view that bushfire severity is measured by the number of deaths and more people have died in previous fires. What they choose to ignore is that coping with bushfires has changed dramatically over the years with communications and warnings being able to alert people to the dangers they face, improved equipment including the greater use of aerial water bombing and the emphasis on the protection of lives and property as well as fighting fires. There has still been the tragic loss of lives, property and communities but given the unprecedented extent of the fires and the heroic efforts of firefighters, as bad as it is, it may have been worse. Even so, nearly six million hectares of forests, grasslands and farms have been lost. This is a statistic that means there is a crisis.

Some of the reasons for these events are, glaciers and ice shelves in Greenland and the Polar regions melting at unprecedented rates, oceans warming, increasing carbon dioxide in the atmosphere that not only increases temperatures but also affects the climate beyond rising temperatures. Carbon sinks like forests, grasslands and soil are not able to absorb as much carbon because of deforestation in the Amazon (20%), Asia, Africa, South America and in Australia with both legal and illegal land clearance.

Those deniers who ignore all this evidence and rely on spin and evangelism to support their narrow view must live on another parallel flat planet. So please, look at the irrefutable evidence on climate change and make up your own mind to see if you really care about the existential threat to our Earth and future generations.

Gordon Marshall
February 2020.



Superannuated Commonwealth Officers' Assn. (WA) Inc.

Perhaps some of you are aware of what the Superannuated Commonwealth Officers' Assn. (WA) Inc. is doing, and perhaps some of you are not aware of what is happening?

SCOAWA is the only remaining Branch of the SCOA organisation that was created back in 1923. After the second World War there was a Branch of SCOA in every State (not sure when the ACT Branch originated).

Before the turn of this century, the SCOA organisation was well supported and had a membership of well over 20,000 (2,000 in WA). Things picked up when the indexation of the Age pension was changed (1998) from the CPI to whichever was the higher of the CPI and MTAW (Male Total Average Weekly Earnings). In 2009, another index was created (the Pensioner Beneficiary Living Cost Index (PBLCI)), and the Age pension was then increased by the higher of the CPI and the PBLCI benchmarked to 27.7% of MTAW.

Unfortunately, this method of indexation was not applied to ex-Commonwealth employees. Since that time, we have been trying to get the same method of indexation for our CSS and PSS pensions as has applied to the Centrelink Age pension. To some people, this may not seem a major issue, however, here is a quick look at one example:

*A recipient of a CSS pension was paid a gross pension of \$24,092 as from 1 January 2000.
This CSS pension increased to \$40,583 on 4 July 2019 - an increase of \$16,491 (68.45%)*

*The maximum basic rate of the Age pension (couple) as at 1 January 2000 was \$15,906.
This amount increased to \$33,332 on 20 September 2019 - an increase of \$17,426 (109.56%).*

As mentioned above, the SCOA organisation continued to be well supported until a few years ago. There was a problem with gaining new members, plus there was also a problem in some States in getting people to take on the tasks of President, Secretary and Treasurer. The main problem in attracting new members is that the CSS scheme closed in 1990, the PSS scheme closed in 2005 and the new PSSAP scheme does not include defined benefit pensions. This meant that the "old brigade" were diminishing, and the newer era of retirees were not greatly interested in the indexation of pensions as it did not apply to them.

Several years back the concept of a centralised organisation began to gather momentum. The main benefit (seen by those who supported it), were that a centralised organisation would have more "clout", and it would solve the problems in getting a President, Secretary and a Treasurer for 6 States (plus the ACT). The idea of having all the financial issues "under the one roof" also seemed attractive to those people who supported the concept - it would be less costly. Right here and now, I should say that WA never ever supported this concept. We felt quite strongly that we were capable of doing what we had always done - plus we doubted that any benefit would be gained by having the SCOA organisation being run from Canberra. The WA Branch has always played a significant part in whatever the SCOA organisation was doing - we were never guilty of just hanging around and letting someone else do all the work.

SCOA Australia was officially registered in the ACT in February 2013, but it was not until a few years later that the Queensland and South Australia Branches closed down and transferred their members to SCOA Australia. The Tasmanian Branch then closed down and sent their members to Victoria. It was a few years later that NSW, and Victoria, also closed down and sent their members to SCOA Australia. This left the ACT, and WA, as the only 2 Branches still operating as a stand-alone Branch legally registered in their respective States/Territory. The ACT Branch had always been an active Branch, and, like WA, did not wish to close down, however, eventually it happened and they also joined up with SCOA Australia. WA remained as they always were.

The rest is history. SCOA Australia soon realised that moving to a centralised organisation was not working and the financial costs (3 employees costing over \$100,000 each year), was too much to bear. Within 2 years of operating on behalf of 5 States, and the ACT, they chose to close down completely as from 30 June 2019.

(Continued next page)

(Continued from Page 5)

This left SCOAWA as the only remaining part of the SCOA organisation that began 96 years earlier.

It is true that our members are all getting older, and our numbers are diminishing. However, we are still active in preparing Pre-Budget submissions and discussing the issues with politicians. We engage with the government on several issues besides indexation of our pensions. There is not enough space here for me to give a detailed list of the many areas we are involved in, but here are a few

- the tax treatment of our CSS and PSS pensions
- the Taper rate used in the calculations of the Age pension (many members are in receipt of a part Age pension)
- the Deeming rates also used in the Age pension
 - affects many of our members - as well as many other retired people
- abolishing the Works Test for those aged between 66 and 74
- allowing those over the age of 75 to be able to contribute to superannuation
- increasing the scope of the NDIS to include people over the age of 65
- increasing the benefits of the SAPTO
- lowering the interest rate used to calculate a DAP when entering an Aged Care establishment
- refrain from any changes to franking credits.

On a State level, we are also involved with several other organisations in submitting an annual joint submission to the State government concerning matters that involve all seniors/retirees resident in WA. We have been instrumental in cancelling the mandatory practical driver's test for people once they turn 85 (although they still have to undergo a medical examination after reaching 80, and, if the Doctor so decides, then a practical driving test needs to be taken).

There is an organisation called the Alliance for a Fairer Retirement System (AFRS) which only commenced operating last year - mainly on the franking credits issue, but they have now broadened their interest to other matters involving superannuation and various retiree benefits. Although not technically a member, we do maintain a close connection with what they are involved in and we are, at the moment, preparing a submission to the Review of Retirement Incomes panel that was created in September last year.

We maintain contact with ACPSRO (Australian Council of Public Sector Retiree Organisations), and we have recently visited the South Australian Superannuants organisation, in Adelaide, in an effort to establish a closer working relationship. To further discuss our relationship with these 2 organisations would take some time - probably best left to another day.

As we all get older, we begin to become aware of the many facets of Aged Care and what can be involved when we become not quite so independent as we once were. Hopefully, this won't happen for a long time (??), but very few of us are immune to the process of getting old. SCOAWA has been involved in assisting the spouses of members who have left this planet in getting the reversionary pension that they are entitled to - including de facto partners.

Time to go. Hope this has been of some interest to some of you. If anyone wishes to talk about other issues, then I am available on 9447 1313, or rdegruchy@bigpond.com.

Regards

Ron de Gruchy
President
SCOAWA

Caring for the retirement interests of public sector superannuants and retirees

Birthdays

March

Bob DANKS	4
Geoff THUNDER	5
Ted ELLIOTT	6
Paula SINCLAIR	10
Diane PEMBERTON	11
Ron SAKER	13
Robyn WOLSKI	13
Warrick GATES	13
Sue GREEN	21
John WAIGHT	21
Malcolm PLANT	22
Kerry COLEMAN	26
Darrol HOROCKS	27
Kathleen WARD	27
Moirra HERON	27
Rod SPENCER	27

April

Amanda BOTT	2
Geoff CALKIN	3
Maureen BECK	4
Jim HUNTER	5
Jean DE GRUCHY	7
Colin HARDMAN	8
Denise SPENCER	9
Ray TREEN	13
MAXWELL MOHR	14
Robyn STONE	14
Juliet KINSELLA	16
Derek KOCH	18
Ian FORREST	18
Lorraine FORREST	19
Linda GIBSON	22
Marie GLOVER	24
Alan HALL	25

May

Narelle WALSH	2
Neil HOPKINS	3
Ros GATES	9
Julia STOREY	10
Bob MARTIN	12
Vicki ELLIOTT	13
Graham CRUTTENDEN	13
Sandra RICHARDS	16
Peter COSTANTINO	19
Emma DAVIES	20
Les PREEDY	21
Jennie LEWIS	22
Con GREENWOOD	25
Melody MITCHELL	26
Huw WILLIAMS	27
Dennis WHITESIDE	27
Colleen SORENSEN	27
Paul HUBBARD	28
Frances FOSTER	28
Greg KITNEY	31
Richard BROOK	31

Wedding Anniversaries

March

Rob & Jacqui STEWART	2
Bob & Chris DOUGLAS	2
Peter COSTANTINO & Narelle	5
Darrol & Joan HOROCKS	8
Sue & Brian GREEN	15
Geoff & Robyn WOLSKI	18
Lance & Nita BLACK	27
Jim HUNTER & Carol MOREY	27

April

Dennis & Lin WHITESIDE	1
Geoff & Helen SMITHER	4
Marie & Peter ALEXANDER	6
John & Juliet KINSELLA	19
Bob & Robyn STONE	20
Rob WALES & Jennifer STOKES	21
Tim & Sheryl PILKINGTON	22
Jack & Jess ELEY	27
Michael & Robyn METCALF	27

May

Ross & Wendy BLACKALL	3
John & Sandra RICHARDS	7
Terry & Emma DAVIES	25

Birthdays

June

Brian LUCAS	7
Richard COLEMAN	7
Nita BLACK	11
Roslyn BOYLAN	12
Sarah PLANT	13
Terry EMERSON	14
Jo WILLIAMS	18
Phyllis SMITH	18
Yvonne PAGE	23
Greg BARTROP	28
Karen PATRICK	28

July

Michael METCALF	8
Sue SWEET	9
John RICHARDS	9
Les HERON	9
Ron DYER	13
David ATKINSON	14
Christopher CORNISH	15
Gary BYRNE	17
Roly SWEET	18
Sue HOPKINS	26
Max GERREYN	27
Shirley McDONALD	28
Kevin SHEPHERDSON	29
Robyn METCALF	29

August

Geoff WOLSKI	2
Mary O'NEILL	3
Chris DOUGLAS	6
Tina GAUSDEN	8
Mike HRABAR	8
Ken GIBSON	9
Robynann DAVIES	10
Elsie CROWE	10
Geoff SMITHER	11
Jacky HUBBARD	18
Wayne DALE	18
Wayne MITCHELL	19
FLYNN	25
Brian D'CRUZ	25
Margaret DANKS	29
Leanne MIFFLIN	29
Kerry MCCUBBIN	31

Wedding Anniversaries

June

Ted & Vicki ELLIOTT	3
Malcolm & Sarah PLANT	4
Ron & Margaret JARVIS	4
John & Colleen SORENSEN	5
Max & Sherron GERREYN	8
Les & Maira HERON	18
Rod & Denise SPENCER	26

July

Brian & Kathleen WARD	4
Bob & Sue MARTIN	8
Renee & FLYNN	12
Ray & Noelene TREEN	16

August

Shaun & Roslyn BOYLAN	29
Tony & Kerry MCCUBBIN	31

Sending Money - be it for membership renewal or for an upcoming function - remember that you can send electronically to the 'RCOA of WA' Account at the Bendigo Bank - BSB 633-000 - A/c No. 160404489

RCOA - Membership Application ☐ / Renewal ☐ / Update ☐

First Name:			Family Name:		
Partner's Name:			☎ No.		☎ No.
Postal Address:					
E-mail address:	Please add your email address (if you have one) so we can keep you up to date between newsletters.				
ICE:	Please insert 'Who' & 'How' to contact In Case of Emergency .				

Our Newsletter includes a segment for publication of members and spouse's birth and wedding anniversary dates (day & month only printed)
If you would like to share this detail with other members please complete the following:-

Member DOB:		Partner DOB:		Wedding date:	
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Membership \$10 per year	Joint or Single	<input type="checkbox"/>	x No. Years	<input type="checkbox"/>	= \$	<input type="text"/>
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Send Newsletter by post	<input type="checkbox"/>	and / or e-mail	<input type="checkbox"/>	Signature & Date	/ / 2020
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☐ Tick here only if receipt required

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Office Use Only:	Rec'd / / 2020	EFT <input type="checkbox"/> Cash <input type="checkbox"/> AMO <input type="checkbox"/> Cheque <input type="checkbox"/> No.	Trans' No(s).
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RCOA - Functions Booking Slip

Names Attending:	
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Function:	Venue:	Date:	No.	\$ p/p	Subtotal \$
			<input type="text"/>	x	<input type="text"/>
			<input type="text"/>	x	<input type="text"/>
			<input type="text"/>	x	<input type="text"/>

Signature & Date:	
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Total Amount Enclosed \$	<input type="text"/>
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Payment to: Secretary RCOA of WA Inc. 78 Arundel Drive, Wellard 6170

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This page as well as all copies of 'Duty Freed' from the past 15 years are available to download as PDF files from our website:-

www.rcoa.org.au

Last but not Least



- * **Annual subscriptions** are due again. Please check the mailing label at the bottom of this page to see your current financial status or if you receive 'Duty Freed' via email you would have had an email sent to you if you are not financial. If unsure please ask.
- * **Email Address**—Any of you who have an email address and are receiving Duty Freed by snail mail could you please forward it to the secretary so that we can keep you informed of news in a more timely manner. We often get advice of members passing or notice of funerals etc and would like to pass the information on immediately by email, to wait for the next issue of Duty Freed could be too late
- * **Payments**—Don't forget, that if you choose, you can pay electronically via the internet or any branch of Bendigo Bank. Please ensure your name is on the transaction for us to identify payment. Paying for more than one year at a time will delay the hassle of paying next time.



REDGUM RURAL SERVICES

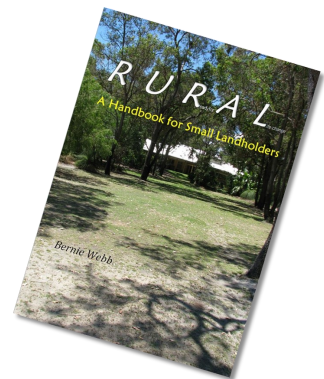
- trees pruned
- rural fencing
- gutters cleaned
- garden clean ups
- rotary hoeing
- slashing / mowing

Bernie Webb

 (08) 9439 2268
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Special Price to RCOA Members
\$20

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