

## Membership renewal time

THE time is approaching when membership renewals are due (30 June 2005).

The plan is as follows:

- 1 - Membership can be renewed at any time the office is open after 1 June 2005.
- 2 - Renewal forms will be held at the club and not posted out to members.
- 3 - Forms have been printed for each member required to renew.
- 4 - These forms contain personal and emergency contact details currently recorded on the club data base.
- 5 - If these details remain current, renewal will involve simply signing and dating the form and paying the renewal fee of \$6 and, if required, the parking fee (now \$6 also).
- 6 - A receipt will be issued

## Seminars - financial planning; wills and powers of attorney

THE Commonwealth Bank of Australia and the Public Trustee for the ACT will present seminars at the club on Monday 6 June.

The first, on Financial planning, begins at 12.15, and the second, on the Importance of having a will and enduring powers of attorney will follow immediately afterwards.

The CBA says, "If you are over 65 and own your own home, Equity Unlock for seniors offers you a practical and flexible solution to your finances. It can allow you to supplement your income without limiting your



- together with, where appropriate, a blue permit for the car park.
- 7 - New members who joined after 1 January 2005 do not need to renew membership.
  - 8 - New members will need to renew their car park permits. Club management and volunteer helpers will do their best to process renewals quickly. If it looks as if the system is over-stretched, please try to pick another time. - George Heron.

lifestyle or selling your home.

"You can use it for such things as home maintenance and renovations, a new car, medical expenses, a holiday, or simply to supplement your day-to-day income.

"If you have retired or are close to retirement it is time to consider how your assets can be best positioned to generate a healthy income.

"There are legitimate ways to maximise the benefits available through the social security and taxation systems that can make thousands of dollars difference in your retirement income".

Members of the Chordsmen relax outside the club before appearing at a recent Sunday afternoon concert. More photos on page 6.

## Want to understand today's technology?

THE club has organised a series of lectures for members and friends on Mondays at 12.15 starting 13 June.

The lectures will help seniors keep up with what is happening in the world of consumer products. If you sometimes wonder what your friends and grandchildren are talking about, come and find out.

The talks will cover topics like: computers, digital cameras, digital television, MP3 and mobile phones. They will all be addressed to the average senior who would like to keep abreast of things but feels a bit left behind. We promise you, you won't be overwhelmed by jargon.

The program is on the club notice board. Just bring your lunch and come along and listen.

Did you know the U3A also runs lunch-time talks on Tuesdays at the Hughes Community Centre on a very wide range of topics of interest to seniors?

Grahame Hellyer

## Editor's comments

# Managing the car park

Have you noticed that politicians when emphasising their reasonableness always assure us that they "want to sit down with whoever and . . ."? Whereas sportspeople always assure us that they are going to stand up, a necessary precursor to being counted.

### MANUFACTURING NEWS

News is never scarce, because the media can always manufacture it. An unconfirmed shark sighting is worth as many pages as there are to fill; and threatened strikes by beer and petrol delivery men are sure winners, especially at Christmas time. How many pages and how much air time of "news" has been of created with stories on the wasteland that is Civic, and "solutions" that involve ornamental pools (remember the one in the Woden Town Square?), pedestrian bridges and, of course, coffee shops?

### TELLING IT LIKE IT IS

The [ACT] Government will introduce a number of revenue-raising initiatives from next financial year, including a 10 per cent increase in parking fees, more parking officers and three new speed cameras. - Canberra Times.

### REALLY?

Most people do not object to graffiti; rather do they object to its location. So says Youth Coalition of the ACT spokesperson Carrie Fowlie. If "artists" were to practise their "art" in daylight hours, people could "engage" with them, and "learn more about it". Greens MLA Deb Foskey is in agreement. "Graffiti has a valued role in youth culture as a form of free speech and public art. In particular, large colourful murals are considered to add value to public spaces", the Canberra Times quotes her as saying.

### MOBY DICK

What a delight it was to see John Bell, Australia's premier Shakespearean actor, in his one-man performance of Moby Dick, on a recent visit to Hobart. On stage for almost an hour-and-a-half, and carrying a stick which became a telescope, a harpoon, and Ahab's whalebone leg, Bell's performance was compelling.

### HOW TRUE

Great minds discuss ideas; average minds discuss events; small minds discuss people. - Unknown.

Thanks to the effectiveness of the new signs and regular monitoring of the car park, unauthorised usage seems to have reduced substantially. Consequently, we have been able to allocate three more spots to car park hirers without detriment to the availability of spaces for members. This is good for revenue.

Ten parking spaces have been marked with numbers. These are at the back of the club, in the vicinity of the waste hopper. These are intended for allocation to hirers, and members are accordingly asked not to use them unless there is no alternative space.

Because there are lengthy periods when the car park is under-utilised, the club by-laws have been changed to allow members to park at any time. However,

## WANTED

### Seniors Interested in Radio Announcing

No previous experience necessary and no costs involved  
Valley FM 89.5 in Tuggera-nong is seeking up to forty seniors willing to undergo training over the next few months, and to work in small teams of three or four, once a week, to present radio programs.

We need people who love the "good old music" that you seldom hear on radio these days; who can talk to the community; who are prepared to learn new skills; and who enjoy relaxed, weekly outings with like-minded individuals.

Does this sound like you? Or someone you know?

If so, please contact Anne Murray, club President, to express interest in the first instance.

She will then arrange a presentation by Valley FM 89.5.

This program is available courtesy of a Seniors' grant to Valley FM 89.5 from the ACT Chief Minister's Department. Find out more at: [www.valleyfm.com](http://www.valleyfm.com)

members are asked to respect the principle that priority for parking must go to those attending the club, and should therefore avoid using the car park, except when visiting the club, during peak activity periods. - George Heron

### Congratulations, Dorothy!

**D**OROTHY Rafferty, long-time pianist for the Woden Senior Singers, was a major prize-winner at this year's Chief Minister's awards for supporting and promoting positive ageing in the ACT.

Chief Minister John Stanhope made the presentation at a gala



Dorothy Rafferty dinner at the National Press Club on 7 April.

Dorothy is to celebrate her ninetieth birthday shortly.

All club members congratulate Dorothy, but particularly so members of the choir.

Dorothy practices constantly, and is always available for practice sessions and performances. Over many years, she has accompanied the choir on countless occasions at nursing homes and other venues, making many friends, and winning many admirers.

### Chairs for sale: \$5

Due to the acquisition of new chairs the club will dispose of 50 red plastic chairs. Fifteen have gone, 35 remain at \$5 each. Interested? Contact club office.

# President's Report

ON Monday 4 April a meeting was called to inform members of our progress in implementing our Strategic Plan.

I identified a number of operational changes that have been put in place over recent months including the installation of new office systems, a new management structure and the appointment of our manager, and the fact that substantially more members are involved in the planning of what we do.

It is rewarding that the ACT Government is recognising our strategic planning work and substantial grants are being received.

In this financial year the following special purpose grants have been made to us by the ACT Government:

\$30,000 for refurbishment;  
\$50,000 for refurbishment (a second grant);  
\$6,000 plus for an Outward Bound project;  
\$2,500 for a publicity and sponsorship strategy.

In addition we are to have four "top of the line" computers plus software packages to establish a community technology centre.

We continue to have generous voluntary assistance from our consultants, Alan Hodges, Grahame Hellyer and Marcus Mackay.

All of our sub-committees have terms of reference, including policy directions, but are given authority by the Management Committee to work independently unless requiring funds or seeking a change of policy.

## ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS

At this time I chair the Activities and Events Sub-committee. Jo Lising is the deputy chair, Heather Piddington is secretary,

and Audrey Williams, Sue Murray, Patricia Bodegraven, Joy McDonald and Kathy Thomas are members of this sub-committee.

We are committed to the concept of "healthy ageing" and the general well-being of members. You will have noted the extensive special events that are being planned.

In addition we initiate many of the fund raising activities of the club which are essential and we convene meetings of group leaders.

**FACILITIES SUB-COMMITTEE**  
The Facilities Sub-committee membership is Barry Allen (deputy chair), Dennis Blewett (secretary), Marcus Mackay, Graeme Shoobridge, Robin Brinton, Trevor Gibson and myself. Our manager, George Heron, attends meetings and makes a significant contribution to our work. We have called on the experience of other members or persons from the broader community.

This sub-committee has the responsibility to examine ways to improve the club's facilities and advise on maintenance issues. It has the major task of identifying refurbishment priorities for government funding. As mentioned, these funds are now worth \$80,000 and a further amount is anticipated this financial year.

For an extensive period of time we have been examining offers for a possible joint venture on this site. At the end of 2004 there was a Melbourne company and the John Hindmarsh group with whom we were consulting.

The sub-committee has always been mindful of members' needs, current and future, and of paramount consideration is that any arrangement must not cause significant major disruption. At this time, we have not felt confident or convinced that a commercial partnership should be pursued.

As earlier stated, the ACT Government through the Chief Minister has supported our

objectives and endorsed the work we have undertaken. The Chief Minister has acknowledged that improvements to the current facility are necessary and he has been instrumental in ensuring that we received refurbishment funding as a short-term measure.

On the advice of the sub-committee, the Management Committee has agreed that "at this time" the club will cease to investigate any commercial joint venture proposals for redevelopment on this site.

As a priority we will continue to seek financial support from the ACT Government for a major upgrade on this site.

As an alternative we will examine other land options with government to ensure our facility appropriately meets the physical and social needs of our current and expanding membership.

Anne Murray



## SENIORS CARD

If you are sixty years of age or older, a resident of the ACT and no longer working full time, you may be entitled to an

ACT Seniors Card.

Apply at any Public Library, Government Shopfront or the COTA National Seniors office at Hughes.

Start enjoying concessions and discounts on goods and services now!

For more information call 6282 3777.

## Grants used for refurbishment

**L**AST year, the club received a grant of \$30,000 under the ACT Government's Renew Community Facilities Pilot Program. Expenditure of this grant is nearly complete. Items funded in recent months include purchase of 50 chairs, with arms, and fabric and fillings for the seat cushions that are being made by Gail Giuliano. Additional shelving has been installed in the cloakroom (now essentially a store room) and in the back office. This has helped substantially to reduce cluttering elsewhere in the office. The large sign on Melrose Drive has been replaced. The new sign advertises rooms for hire, and has a graffiti protection coating.

In March, the club received a further grant, for \$50,000, under Round One of the Renew Community Infrastructure and Facilities Program. This funding will

allow the club to refurbish the floors in the two halls, upgrade the kitchen, paint external areas, carry out major plumbing and drainage repairs, improve heating and cooling arrangements and repair, upgrade or replace equipment used by club members.

At the time of writing this article, work on the plumbing and drainage had almost been completed. This work involved clearing the down pipes from the gutters, clearing the storm water and sewerage pipes of tree roots, repair of gutters and provision of overflows from the box gutter at the join of hall 2 and the veranda. This work will overcome the problem of flooding in the car park and avoid further occurrences of storm water entering the building. It will also reduce the frequency of blockages to sewerage outlets.

George Heron

## Club seeks to promote activities, services

**A**RISING from the strategic planning process, the Club is seeking to develop a strategy implementation plan for promoting the Club, its activities and services, to expand membership and attract sponsorship.

An application under the ACT Seniors Grants Program 2005 was submitted seeking funds for this purpose. The application was successful, and \$2,500 has been allocated to the club.

This funding will allow the Club to work in partnership with Rave Communication Pty Ltd, a Canberra-based public relations agency, to implement the project with respect to the most urgent aspect, namely the development of the strategy for promoting the Club to potential sponsors.

Developing the strategy for attracting more members is less urgent because membership has been growing steadily this year and a more rapid increase would

need to be preceded by improvement and expansion of the club's facilities to accommodate greater activity levels. This aspect of the project will be implemented through participation by the club in the ACT Branch of the Public Relations Institute of Australia Students' Awards for Excellence (Student Challenge) program.

This program involves final-year public relations students from the University of Canberra (UC) or the CIT, under the watchful eye of a senior public relations practitioner, assisting community or not-for-profit organisations with a public relations project.

A team of three students from the UC has been assigned to undertake a public relations project for the Club. They will visit the Club frequently over the next few months, and may ask questions that are relevant to the project, or ask members to complete a survey form. - GH.

## Outward Bound for Seniors

**T**HIS project was made possible by the support of the ACT Government's Canberra Community Grants Program.

There was a good response to the article in the February edition of the Meridian about the Outward Bound for Seniors project.

This response indicated that the intended 16 places on the course could be filled by Woden Senior Citizens Club members. Whilst some who initially expressed interest have dropped out, for various reasons, they have been replaced by new expressions of interest. At the time of writing, 20 names remained on the list. With the prospect that we may have more names than places, Outward Bound was asked if the number could be increased if necessary. They have agreed to a maximum number of 18. Let's hope we can fill this quota!

The dates 26 and 27 May have been selected for the course. The program of specific activities is nearing finalisation. Sue Murray and Ruth Murray visited Outward Bound at Tharwa after Easter to get this process going. Later, on 22 April, three of the Outward Bound team visited the club and met with a group of interested members to canvass their specific interests. The program that emerges from these consultations will include choices, so that different activities may be in progress at the same time, and participants can choose what best suits their interests/capabilities.

A bus will leave the club at 8.15 am on Thursday 26 May to transport participants to Tharwa, and will depart Tharwa at 5.00 pm on Friday 27 May.

The Outward Bound for Seniors program should be a challenging and thoroughly enjoyable experience for participants. - GH.

# IT Sub-committee has made great strides in its first year

THE Information Technology Sub-committee, established in July 2004, handles the technical and operational aspects of the club's computing facilities. The sub-committee cannot expend funds other than those approved, does not carry out changes to the club's website or network without approval, and is not responsible for the content of information on the website or club's computers.

At the time of establishment computing assets consisted of five PCs of varying vintage and capability, assorted software and printers. One of the PCs had a dial-up Internet connection. Two new computers have since been purchased and installed in the offices. The superseded machines were transferred to what is now the members' computer room. One of the previous PCs became surplus and taken out of service.

When the Getset project wound up, the university team left their broadband Internet connection in place, and donated six months' subscription to BigPond Broadband in compliance with an agreement with the club. Requisite cabling and equipment was purchased by the club and connected, and club members are now the owners of a four-computer broadband network. The office computers are also connected to the broadband network, but there is no access between office and members computers.

An application has been made to the Digital Divide program, a local government initiative that sees refurbished computers supplied free to approved organisations, together with some software and some assistance with setting up. The application was successful and in the not-too-distant future the four members'

PCs will be replaced with newer models running Windows XP, Works and a typing tutor package. The DD program also includes a train-the-trainer component.

Dennis Glanville is the systems administrator and webmaster. The sub-committee believes that too much of Dennis' time is taken up with these duties, and moves are under way to find additional resources to shoulder some of the work. To ease the task of any potential new incumbents of these positions, Dennis spent considerable time documenting the work involved. At the same time, he also provided guidelines to be observed by members using the computers, and these are now displayed in the computer room.

Grahame Hellyer organised both content and presentation of initial training for members. He has also secured the services of several members as trainers. Trainees have reported that training has been excellent. The sub-committee is grateful to

Grahame for his efforts, especially when it is considered he travels from Hall to the club.

What does the future hold? Shortly the four new computers will be installed and connected to our network. Hopefully new webmasters and systems administrators will be forthcoming. The number of computer literate members will increase.

What will they require from the club? More advanced training? Video links between their homes and the club/friends? Guidance in upgrading and repairing their own PCs?

I invite all members of the club to suggest to this sub-committee areas in which you feel training might be beneficial. If you become aware of changes that need to be made to the website layout or appearance, or you think the members might benefit from specific software or hardware, please pass the information to the sub-committee.

We need your input. After all, the sub-committee is simply members helping members. That is what club membership is about.

David Griffiths

## No-one, but no-one, gets in without ID

Albert Einstein dies and stands in line at the Pearly Gates. When his turn comes, Saint Peter is apologetic.

"You look like Einstein, but you've no idea the lengths people will go to to sneak into Heaven", he says. "Can you prove you're Einstein, Albert?"

Einstein ponders for a few seconds and then asks, "Got a blackboard and chalk, Pete?"

Peter snaps his fingers, a blackboard and chalk instantly appear, and Einstein proceeds to outline his theory of relativity.

Peter is impressed. "You really are the man, Albert!" he says. "Welcome to heaven!"

Next in line is Picasso, and again Peter, self-consciously, asks for proof of identity.

"Don't worry about it, Pete", says Picasso. "You got a job to do. Give

me use of that blackboard and chalk".

And so, with a few deft strokes, Picasso creates a stunning illustration.

Peter claps. "You are definitely the great artist Picasso", he exclaims.

"Come on in! We don't often have a day like this, I kid you not. Usually a bunch of no-hopers. But today, Al and you! Will I have something to tell the Boss tonight!"

Then Peter looks up, and sees George W. Bush at the front of the queue, looking for someone to shake hands with.

Peter says, slowly, reluctantly, "You know the rules, George. No one comes on board without positive ID. No problem for Einstein and Picasso, so what you got to say, buddy?"

"Who is dem guys?" wonders Dubya. "Never heard of 'em".

"Say no more, George", sighs Saint Peter. "You're in".



Images from the recent Sunday afternoon concert, by Barbara Brinton

# If you want to be informed then go to the internet

THE club's Information Technology Sub-committee is doing a great job, helping members become familiar with the internet and electronic mail. Once you have used it, you wonder how life was possible without it. Anything you want to know, it's there at the touch of a key, or two.

Don't bother writing a cheque, instead settle your account on-line. What's your bank balance? Easy. Check on-line. Want to know about your entitlements or government services? Or pay your parking fine? Easy. It's there for you, on-line.

Considering a holiday? Well, check out what's available, and book and pay on-line. Over the past year we have booked holidays in Australia and New Zealand "on the net". We have just returned from Tasmania, having booked our berths aboard the Spirit of Tasmania, on the net.

Considering going to the movies? Well, reviews of the film you are interested in are there for you, immediately. Want a book or CD or DVD from the library? Well, you can scroll through the library's holdings, and reserve your choice on-line.

Recently, at a jumble sale, I saw a full set of encyclopaedias, for \$10. They seemed sad, and rather pathetic. These days, if you belong to the library, to access Encyclopaedia Britannica all you have to do is have your library card number ready and go to <http://www.library.act.gov.au> and then select Online Resources from the Find a Subject and other On-line Resources tab. You can also access a wide range of newspapers and magazines.

Major media outlets, overseas and in Australia, have their own websites, and you can dig into

their archives for something you think you may have missed.

Recently I suggested a comparison between Orwell's 1984 and the world we live in, where truth and lies are indistinguishable and we are under constant camera surveillance. Had I searched the net first, I could have been even more convincing, for there was a wealth of published material developing the same theme. For instance, an article in the San Francisco Chronicle. I mention this for no other reason than to illustrate my point that, through the internet, one has instant access to what is being written, in the San Francisco Chronicle and countless other newspapers and journals throughout the world.

Our ABC has an excellent website. Program guide. Reviews. Breaking news. Want to know the cricket score? Well, it's there - live updates, changing even as you view. I used to be irritated by the Canberra Times' practice of only sometimes publishing scores. During the English season the Times might publish first-day cricket scores, and then no more! Who cares now? Tap in "BBC cricket" and you are as well-informed as if you had listened to the BBC, or bought your morning paper on your way to work in London or Manchester.

Like the aforementioned encyclopaedias, my Wisdens, the cricketer's bible, are looking rather forlorn. I was given my first in 1950, and since then I have built up a collection, sometimes buying perhaps three consecutive annuals, but then missing two. Now it is all on the net. If you want the full scorecard of Middlesex v Yorkshire at Lord's in 1898, or New South Wales v

Victoria at Sydney in 1907, or to know who Wisden's Five Cricketers of the Year were in 1913, it is there.

I find The Canberra Times equally unreliable publishing overseas football results. Well, no matter, tap into "BBC football" and there they are, and from there you can tap into the website of your favourite team. Whether it be Arsenal, or Scunthorpe United.

My home town is Leeds. Not only is as much information available on Leeds as one might find in the Yorkshire Evening Post, one can even access 360 degrees views of Leeds, as one can of other cities throughout Britain.

Here's one for you Shakespeare enthusiasts. If you tap into [www.absoluteshakespeare.com](http://www.absoluteshakespeare.com) you will find all the plays from All's well that ends well to Twelfth Night in the complete original texts with summaries; all the Bard's 154 sonnets; the complete bibliography of everything attributed to him, engravings and paintings, trivia, biography, quotations, a list of all film adaptations, a history of the Globe Theatre and, when you have read all that, a quiz to test whether you have been paying attention.

Finally, electronic mail (email). I maintain daily correspondence with friends in Australia and Britain, as thoughts pop into my head. And I send documents and photos to people, at the touch of a button. So much more convenient than feeling that, if you write at all, you commit yourself to "writing a lot". And then you have to hunt for a 50c stamp, or join a queue at the Post Office to ask, "How much to send this to the UK?"

The internet and email have opened up a whole new world for us. Our IT Sub-committee is to be commended for helping introduce us to it.



Some of the club's computer trainers gathered to discuss the software on the computers. From left to right: Jan Wilson, Joan Carmody, Grahame Hellyer, Alma Armstrong and Judith Henderson. Not present were Liz Teather, Mike Dinn and Barrie Clarke.

## Health and safety

In recent months, a number of health and safety inspections have been carried out.

A fire safety inspection was conducted by an officer of the ACT Fire Brigade. The result was generally satisfactory, except that some improvement to the emergency exit lighting is required. This will be done soon.

The emergency lighting was subsequently tested and a number of lights were found to be defective. They will be replaced.

An inspection of the kitchen was carried out, at the request of the Club, by the ACT Health Protection Service. Though some minor issues were identified, the Club was awarded a satisfactory risk rating.

## Regular activities

Group leaders should inform Meridian of changes to their programs

|           |  |               |
|-----------|--|---------------|
| Monday    | Solo                                   | 10-11.45am    |
|           | Mahjong                                | 10-12 noon    |
|           | Choir practice (Woden Senior Singers)  | 10.30-12 noon |
|           | Computer interest group (2nd Monday)   | 1.30-4.30pm   |
|           | Table tennis                           | 2-4pm         |
| Tuesday   | Gentle exercise (YMCA instructor)      | 10-11am       |
|           | Australian history (WSCC/U3A)          | 10-12 noon    |
|           | Duplicate bridge                       | 10-12.45pm    |
|           | New Vogue dancing                      | 1-4pm         |
|           | New Vogue and modern sequence dancing  | 7.30-10.30pm  |
| Wednesday | Tai chi and gentle exercise            | 7.30-8.30am   |
|           | Water colour painting group (WSCC/U3A) | 9-12.30pm     |
|           | Table tennis                           | 9.30-12.45pm  |
|           | Carpet bowls                           | 12-1.30pm     |
|           | Recorder classes (WSCC/U3A)            | 12.30-1pm     |
| Thursday  | Recorder orchestra (WSCC/U3A)          | 1.30-4pm      |
|           | Sequence dancing                       | 7.30-10.30pm  |
|           | Play reading group (WSCC/U3A)          | 9.30-11.30am  |
|           | Craft group                            | 10-12.30pm    |
|           | YMCA gentle exercise                   | 10-11am       |
| Friday    | 500 (card game)                        | 10.30-3pm     |
|           | International folk dancing             | 12.30-2pm     |
|           | Duplicate bridge                       | 12.30-4pm     |
|           | Tai chi and gentle exercise            | 2-3.30pm      |
|           | Table tennis                           | 9.30-12.45pm  |
| Saturday  | Carpet bowls                           | 12-1.30pm     |
|           | Painting and drawing (WSCC/U3A)        | 1.30-4pm      |
|           | Round dancing*                         | 5.30-10pm     |
|           | Hydrotherapy (Canberra Hospital pool)  | 10-11am       |
|           | Duplicate bridge                       | 1-4.30pm      |
| Sunday    | Round dancing (beginners)*             | 1-7pm         |

(\*most Fridays & Sundays, but ring Santo Giuliano 6288 1911)