

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Financial support for clubs called for

If the ACT Government really wanted to pursue "healthy ageing" policies, ongoing financial assistance needed to be provided to seniors' clubs so that their members were not discouraged from participating by the fees needed to keep the clubs financially viable, and properly maintained, President Anne Murray told this year's annual general meeting, which took place at the club on 20 September.

Anne, who was re-elected for a twelfth consecutive year, said that while the Government was generous with funds for special projects, it was not prepared to recognise the need for ongoing funding.

"When clubs reach a certain size and have both a large membership base and facilities to manage, then management expenses are significant", she said.

"However, unlike the licensed clubs, our only form of income is membership fees, plus fetes and raffles, hiring, individual and business donations. We have put our activities fees up to \$4 a session. For a member who attends, say 45 weeks in the year this is \$180 per annum. If you attend two activities (and the club wants to encourage as much participation as possible) then you are paying \$360 a year plus annual membership. This is a significant expense for many seniors".

Anne thanked the Management Committee for its hard work and commitment throughout the year, and Treasurer, Heike Elvers "for her precise management of our finances".

She said club extensions had led to an increase in activities, both formal and informal, and a feeling of pride and wellbeing within the club.

"Computer courses are much in demand, we have long waiting lists, and 96 members undertook courses this year. Our four skilled instructors, led by Judy Henderson, have excellent reputations".

Club office bearers - 2010-11

President - Anne Murray

Vice President - Neil Stevenson

Secretary - Gail Giuliano

Treasurer - Heike Elvers

Management Committee - Noel Lane, Grahame Hellyer, Pat Birrell, Geoff Crossley, Roy Parekh

Public Officer - Raphaela Stukoff

Auditor - Hal Hickey

Meridian

Editor - Dennis Blewett

To Frommeles to honour war dead



Music teacher Margaret Wright, with husband Paul, recently visited France, where a family member was amongst Australian soldiers buried with military honours at Frommeles. See page 5.

Anne said that one of the most rewarding outcomes for her as President was to have members take action which contributed to the healthy life of Woden Seniors.

Examples included generous donations to the Building Fund, and organising a new activity

"Thank you Rose McNeice for introducing a very vibrant mah jong group; thank you Margaret Kennedy for introducing members to the engrossing world of bridge; thank you Tony and Julie McDonald for teaching some of us to do cha-chas and foxtrots and rumbas".

Anne said the club had endorsed a program of special events - examples of what could be achieved with tight planning, enthusiasm and the support of members. Fund raising activities netted \$13,500 overall.

The Business Friends' Program, begun more than two years ago, had flourished at first. Then, real or perceived concern about the financial crisis, had led to a downturn. A more positive response was now becoming evident.

"One company that stands out as a great supporter is Richard Luton Properties which has contributed \$7350 this

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President's address

From page 1

past year through generous donation from the sale of members' properties. In addition, the Luton office prints posters and brochures for us, and makes and sets up road signs for special events".

Anne thanked Polly for her outstanding contribution. "She has a job which requires many different skills. She carries them all out exceedingly well. She is loyal, sensitive, confident. She sets a very high standard".

Anne concluded by saying that the club continued to need strong leadership and clear directions, effective communication within and with the broader community, and goals and plans for the immediate and longer term. "These are management priorities".

Treasurer's Report

Presenting the Treasurer's Report for 2009-10, Heike Elvers reported "a successful trading year, despite a number of difficulties".

For example, the floor in Hall 1 was water damaged and had to be replaced. "But still our operating profit was only \$7000 less than in 2008/09.

"Hiring income has increased despite not having access to Hall 1. Membership fees remain stable and car parking fees have increased.

"Fund raising has shown a marked improvement.

"The support we have enjoyed from our Business Friends in 2008/09 has not been as high as previously. We hope that this important source of income will return to previous levels with a stronger economy.

"The increase in repairs and maintenance is mainly due to the painting of Hall 1 (\$3000), the \$2500 difference to insurance payment for Hall 1 floor, the new carpet on the verandah (\$2663) and a hot water system (\$899).

"We were able to pay off \$6068 on the loan. The future of the club is bright. In the coming year, without any loss of availability of activities or rental space, we should see a marked increase in income from both activities and hiring".

Enhancing the quality of life of people 50+

The Chief Minister, Jon Stanhope, recently launched a pilot project in Weston Creek to find out about the needs of people aged 50+.

The ACT Government has asked Communities@Work to consult with people in this age group to determine what services they need to live comfortably in their own homes and what activities they would like to enhance their quality of life.

The number of people in the ACT aged 50+ is expected to increase by 45% over the next 20 years, and Communities@Work is assessing daily living and home related services that might be required such as transport and home maintenance, and the need for personal and financial services, health services, organised physical and social activities, and continuing education needs.

An Information and Advisory Service has been established so that seniors in Weston Creek can find out about the services and activities currently available.

A survey is also being conducted to obtain detailed information about the lifestyle needs of people aged 50+. The survey, conducted through Winton Sustainable Research Strategies, is being distributed to all households in Weston Creek.

In addition, over the next six months a variety of community events to help seniors engage with their community and enjoy a range of social activities is being conducted.

It is envisaged that the Weston Creek pilot project will provide valuable input to the development of a 50+ network across the ACT.

The Information and Advisory Service can be accessed by:

- phoning the hotline, 1800 761 171

- dropping in for a chat at Communities@Work's office at Cooleman Court between 10am and 12pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays

- sending an email to 50plushotline@commsatwork.org

More information can be obtained by visiting www.commsatwork.org



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Glass half full or half empty?

With Anne Murray re-elected President at the recent Annual General Meeting, *Meridian* considered the time appropriate to discuss with her the club's current situation.

Dennis Blewett: This will be your 12th year as President. I remember that in 2006 you did not intend to stand but, in the absence of a nomination, you were persuaded to do so. You didn't think then, did you, that four years later you would still be President?

Anne Murray: Certainly not. It was to be for one more year only.

Dennis: Looking at where we are today, I suggest that one can take a glass half-full or a glass half-empty view. Certainly, Woden Seniors is a far more attractive club than it was 10 years ago, having completed the first part of a proposed three-stage development. But is there any reasonable expectation of further development on our present site?

Anne: I don't think so. The Management Committee and I have put a huge amount of effort into seeking to attract interest from the corporate sector and we have also persisted in seeking funding from the ACT Government. Very recently I met with the Chief Minister, and he made it very clear that we would not be receiving large grants for capital works.

Dennis: It never seemed likely that we would receive from the Government the money required for Stages 2 and 3 of our Master Plan, did it? And four years ago the corporate sector - having initially shown interest - was deterred by perceived problems, such as the irregular shape of the block, difficulty of access, and easements, plus our very proper insistence on such matters as security of tenure and adequate car parking.

Anne: That's right. As far as the ACT Government is concerned, we have attracted small, but nonetheless very welcome grants, and these have helped with necessary repairs and small improvements to the club. But not substantial grants that would allow us to re-examine the big picture.

Having said all that we now have - as you know - a three-man consortium very much interested in a development that could see us move into a new building, probably across the road opposite the library, and we are very much prepared to listen to any proposal put to us. However, I cannot over-emphasise that we would continue to insist on the strictest safeguards, such as the involvement of our own architect, the continuation of our concessional 99-year lease, and

adequate car parking.

Incidentally, it is proposed that Woden Community Services, which is desperately short of space, would be involved in the redevelopment should it go ahead, and we see a close relationship with Community Services as desirable and beneficial.

Dennis: Does the club still have the benefit of a Community Services worker?

Anne: Yes, she visits the club at least once a week, usually on a Thursday, and she is always available to help our members with any problems they may be experiencing.

Dennis: Wasn't a Community Services bus, and a staff member to drive it, also available to take groups to the theatre, cinema or other entertainment venues?

Anne: Yes, but no interest was shown.

Dennis: Moving on, if we may... As far back as 2003, when we conducted a planning workshop open to all members we identified problem areas within the club. One was the need to attract younger members, and encourage them to take a greater role in running the club. It was also suggested younger members would perhaps organise activities such as trips to the theatre and sporting events, and perhaps organise, for instance, golf days, and dinners. Am I correct in supposing that we are still almost exclusively a club for people far in excess of 55, who continue to regard the club purely as an activity centre? The experience with the community bus perhaps underlines this point. And I believe the response to the possibility of holding a dance, mooted in the last *Meridian*, was underwhelming. We come to play bridge, to dance, or whatever, perhaps pick up a book from the library, and by 4.30 the club is empty.

Anne: That is so. It comes down to people being prepared to organise things. Or not. There is always great support for such occasions as the Melbourne Cup day, the Christmas dinner, and our concerts, and the response is always, "We must do this more often", but we shouldn't expect the same people to do it all the time.

Dennis: So, what sort of Woden Seniors do you envisage? Clearly not a club open until late, with a bar, restaurant, cable television, and "housie".

Anne: No, that's right. Although it has been suggested - and I emphasise that this is merely a talking point at this stage - that were we to move into new, custom-designed premises, a restaurant could be included where light, inexpensive lunches could be served. Such a facility could attract not only our members but also take advantage of the lunchtime trade provided by the many office workers in the Woden area, thereby providing us with another income stream. Ambitious perhaps, but one should not close one's mind to anything.

Should we move, our club would be much the same as it is now, but we would have better facilities (we continue to have problems here with who has the use of which room, and when, and we can all get a little precious about "our" space).

Dennis: Is the room we are sitting in now [the lounge room] much used?

Anne: It is used, lots. For instance, Rosemarie McNeice recently organised a new mah jong group which is proving very popular, and members come in to make a cup of tea, read a newspaper, select a book, and talk.

But, you are right, we are activity-based - and will probably remain so wherever we are - but what this club is about primarily is people coming here and interacting with other people. It is about companionship; learning new skills; it is about combating isolation. I see people come to this club, and blossom.

Dennis: I remember when the ABC's Alex Sloane talked to people when she broadcast live from here a year ago that they spoke almost exclusively of their interaction with other members rather than of the activities they take part in here.

Anne: What we are doing here is providing a quality environment, and we always seek to make improvements as best we can. We make people welcome and comfortable. If we had an annual government grant of \$50,000 a year we could do so much more.

Dennis: I remember - going back again to the ABC's live broadcast from the club last November - that, when Alex Sloane put to the ACT Minister for Aged Care, Joy Burch, that such a grant "did not seem like an unreasonable amount of money", the Minister responded "It doesn't". But that was only on radio...

So, glass half empty, or half full? Which is it?

Anne: Three quarters full. Woden Seniors enhances the quality of life of a great many people, and that is a considerable achievement.

Melbourne Cup afternoon

On Tuesday 2 November, members will be invited to "bring a plate" for a Melbourne Cup afternoon tea.

Vice-President Neil Stevenson is in charge of arrangements, and bookings will be taken prior to the event (further details will be posted on the notice board and emailed to members via the fortnightly news update).

Cost will be \$10.

Champagne will be provided and, as in previous years, "sweeps" will be conducted and the afternoon's racing shown on a big screen.

Christmas lunch

Christmas is not too far away - again - and this year the club's annual Christmas lunch will take place on Monday 6 December.

Watch out for further details, and remember to book early, as this event is always one of the highlights of the club's year.

Library continues to prove popular

The library continues to be a popular part of the club. Once again I'd like to thank those generous members who have donated their books to the library. This is the reason the library keeps going.

Donated books which don't make it into the collection are put aside to be sold at the fete, which means all books donated are used for the good of the club. (The book stall always makes a lot of money! Ask Pat!)

I've been absent from Canberra quite a lot this year and this could continue, so if there is anyone who would like to assist with the library, help keep it in order and sort the donated books while I'm away, could you leave a message with Polly and I'll contact you.

Sue Marks

Autumn Fete raffle prize winners

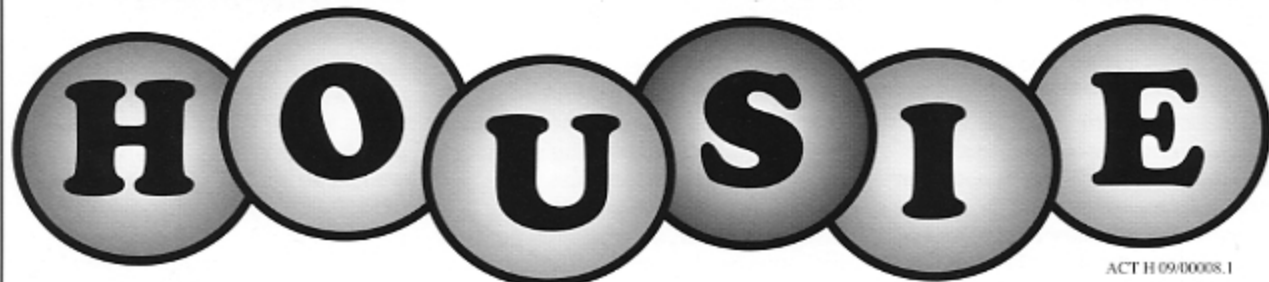


The draw for the Autumn Fete raffle prizes took place at the club. Pictured are Anne Murray and Rosemarie McNeice. Iris Blewett took first prize, Irene Norman second, and Jenny Gregory third. There were six other prizes. The fete raised more than \$4000.

Bridge group congratulates its director

The Saturday bridge group took time out recently to congratulate director John Brown on becoming a grandfather for the first time. John and Barbara's daughter, Samantha, wife of Andrew McLintock, gave birth to a daughter, Ella, at Calvary Hospital on 20 August, which by a happy coincidence is also John's birthday.

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for the information of members and guests

Pilgrimage to Fromelles

By Margaret Wright

I have a liking for memorials, and if they have lists of names, I always scan them for my family name, 'Clingan'.

Thus, when I was walking along King Street, Newtown (Sydney) about ten years ago, and found a war memorial that was new to me, my practised eye ran down the lists of over 600 names. There, for the first time, was the name, Clingan, A.S. This was a memorial to all the students of Newtown Superior Public School who had enlisted in the First World War. I remembered the name as a distant relative on my family tree.

I determined to investigate further, and to find the location of his grave. The Australian War Memorial (AWM) gave me the information from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC), that he did not have a grave, but that his name was on the large Australian memorial, VC Corner, at Fromelles, France. He had died on Wednesday 19 July 1916. The AWM records were more specific, giving his profession, the ship on which he sailed from Sydney and the date, and that he was 'initially reported as "Missing in Action"'. His identity disc was sent from Germany to the British, via the Red Cross, in 1917, following the publication of his name in a German newspaper death list. His status was revised to 'Killed in Action' at Fleubaix, France, on 19 July 1916, aged 22.

The next step was to apply for a copy of his dossier, kept in the Australian Archives. Here was a treasure trove of information. I now had his age, description, religion, address, workplace, and samples of his handwriting, uncannily similar to mine.

After preliminary training in Australia, he embarked for Egypt, and after seven months there, during which time he broke rules twice - absent from parade and failure to obey an order of an N.C.O, for which he received field punishments (pack drill and bread and water) - he was transferred to the 53rd Battalion.

In June the 53rd embarked to join the BEF in France, and by July 12 Alexander wrote his last letter home to his mother that he was OK, and that they were among red poppies, and could 'feel the percussion and see the flash of the big guns.'

On 19 July 1916, the Australian and British battalions attacked a well-entrenched German position outside the tiny village of Fromelles. There were 5,533 Australian casualties, making it the worst day in Australian military history.

Alexander was one of about 250 Australian and British soldiers, whose names appeared on the German Death List in 1917, indicating that they had probably reached German lines and been buried by them.

It is only in recent years that the Bavarian archives were consulted to confirm that they were buried in pits dug by the German (Bavarian) soldiers, with the dignity they were required to show to their own men.

After the war, dedicated war cemeteries were established, and soldiers found in the field were buried, and those in battlefield cemeteries were reburied. These pits at Pheasants Wood were missed by the newly established War Graves Commission officers when they painstakingly combed the battlefields seeking remains. Even today, the remains of soldiers found during road or building construction are reburied in one of the war cemeteries.

However, the large numbers found in the pits near Pheasant Wood, on the edge of Fromelles, meant that a new cemetery had to be built. The elderly owner of the field donated the land and the first war cemetery in many decades was built there.

The Oxford Archaeology team charged with recovering the 250 soldiers set up a morgue and forensic laboratory, and meticulously recovered all the remains and artefacts such as a toothbrush, a marked page from a Bible, a

train ticket (return half from Perth to Fremantle) buttons, boots and mementos from loved ones. DNA was extracted from most bodies.

In Australia and in Britain, the army set up a data base of people who knew they had a family member whose name had appeared on the German Death List, or in some way believed a family member had been lost at Fromelles. We were asked to send a family tree, and the DNA experts decided whose modern DNA would be used to try to find a match with that of the soldiers recently found.

Alexander Stanley Clingan was among the first 75 to be identified, and eight family members decided to make the trip to France for the dedication of the new cemetery.

Since February this year, all the soldiers have been buried with military honours and a head stone, named if possible, or otherwise identified as 'Known Unto God'. These words are always used on the graves of unidentified soldiers, and were suggested by Rudyard Kipling, who lost his only son in the war. It is the policy of the CWGC to give each soldier an individual grave if possible.

As I had been designated as the family historian, I was asked to contribute to a book, *Remembering Fromelles*, published by the CWGC, and this accompanies an exhibition still on at the Imperial War Museum in London.

The Army estimated that six thousand people would attend the dedication ceremony on 19 July, and arranged for buses to transport people from the nearby city of Lille.

Fromelles that day was alive with anticipation and emotion. The villagers had decorated their houses with Australian, British and French flags, and flower boxes were at their most beautiful on all the windowsills.

The ceremony, within the beautifully landscaped new cemetery, was to be in two sections. To set the scene, family members were asked to read from letters and diaries which had been lovingly preserved for 94 years in the families of the missing men.

I was privileged to be invited to read from Alexander Clingan's last letter to his mother. This was to be followed by the funeral of the last (unknown) soldier.

The Duke of Kent (President of the CWGC) opened the ceremony, and the readings followed.

Towards the end of the readings, the sound of fifes could be heard wafting on the breeze playing Handel's *See, the Conquering Hero Comes*. This was accompanying the coffin of the final soldier on a First World War wagon drawn by four horses from Pheasants Wood through the village to the lych-gate of the new cemetery. Following on foot were Prince Charles and the Governor General, Quentin Bryce. The coffin was taken onto the shoulders of six Australian and British soldiers and carried through the lych-gate to the grave, accompanied by the chaplains of the British and Australian armies. The Last Post was played on a cornet (engraved with the maker's name 'Boosey and Hawkes') which had been found on the battlefield.

After lunch each family was invited to have a private ceremony at the grave of the family member, and the chaplain of the Australian army, who had buried Alexander earlier in the year, spoke the 23rd Psalm, as she had done then, and conducted a short and very moving service.

I placed a red poppy from the Australian War memorial, as well as eucalyptus leaves from our Canberra garden on his grave. I also placed eucalyptus leaves on the graves of unidentified soldiers nearby.

Ruth Clingan never knew the fate of her beloved youngest child, and family lore says that she would go to Sydney's waterfront to meet every returning troopship in the hope of finding him or hearing news of him.

She would have been content to know that Alexander now rests in a named grave in a beautiful setting, in a country which respects highly the Australian soldiers who gave their lives for the freedom of this faraway land.

Gilbert and Sullivan concert well received



On Sunday 18 July around 60 Gilbert and Sullivan lovers enjoyed a concert at the club.

Following a hearty meal of soup, bread and wine to offset the wintry weather, the audience was thoroughly entertained by the Brindabella Orchestra under the baton of Rodney Clancy playing highlights from Gilbert and Sullivan productions including *The Mikado*, *HMS Pinafore* and *Pirates of Penzance*.

Divas and Dons, accompanied by Shirley Cramp.

The orchestra then repeated the items having invited the audience to sing along from song sheets and they joined in with great enthusiasm.

After the interval the entertainment continued with a concert from Denise Stephenson's Divas and Dons singing more solos and choruses

from Gilbert and Sullivan's best loved operas.

Everyone spoken to after the concert agreed that it was a delightful way to spend a Sunday afternoon and asked if similar concerts could be provided more often.

The concert raised more than \$400 towards the building fund and congratulations go to all the workers, musicians and singers who contributed to making the concert such an outstanding success.

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Darwin, ideal for sunny winter break

So you want to learn to dance?

report Pat and Brian Watson

For anyone wanting to get out of wintry Canberra for a brief sojourn in the warmth, we can recommend a short break in Darwin. We had never been there and had long been promising ourselves to go - what was that wonderful Northern Territory advertising slogan? "You'll Never Never know if you Never Never go to the Never Never now." So off we went! With the direct Canberra/Darwin service, the four hour flight makes the transition from the frosty Canberra mornings to the warmth of the Top End easy. It was distinctly warmer there - 33C as opposed to 12C when we left.

Darwin, has become a modern and surprisingly large city with some very pricey real estate and an interesting waterfront precinct with restaurants, hotels and areas of historic interest. Lots of up-market shopping outlets as well as the usual souvenir traps, galleries and attractions. Our hotel was very centrally situated so we found most were within easy walking distance. A hop on-hop off tour shuttle services 14 of the major collection points in the CBD with drop-offs at 18 tourist destinations.

We included a visit to Kakadu National Park in our itinerary with a very attractive 2-day all-inclusive tour with Australian Pacific Tour Company (APT). Pick-up was from our hotel by a very large and comfortable touring bus with knowledgeable driver/guide. We were offered a choice of overnight accommodation within the park - Gagudju Crocodile Holiday Inn, Gagudju Lodge Coominda or, Hawk Dreaming Wilderness Camp - we chose the latter as it offered safari tent accommodation, something different to the usual hotels and motels. It turned out to be one of the highlights of our visit!

Wildlife, cultural cruises on Yellow Waters and the East Alligator River, visits to rock art sites and Aboriginal Cultural centres and the age-old scenery of this wonderful area made for a fantastic tour. So much more still to see - could be that we'll be spending a few more winters in the Top End.

By Dennis Blewett

How best to learn to dance? A familiar question. In fact only a few days ago I was phoned by someone I scarcely know but who remembered my name when he and his wife decided that they would love to be able to dance.

"You are about sixty" I guessed, generously. "You have not danced before. Why now?"

"Well, we would like to go out more, wear nice clothes, meet people, move confidently about a dance floor, feel good about ourselves", he said. Then he added: "We so enjoy watching *Dancing with the Stars*".

Dancing with the Stars I would guess has inspired many people to part with their money at dance studios, as did the movies *Dirty Dancing* ("I'd like to mambo, like Johnny") and *Strictly Ballroom* (remember Scott and Fran rumba-ing to Doris Day's *Perhaps, Perhaps, Perhaps*?).

If only it were that easy! The reality, of course, is that anyone can look good on a dance floor, or at least reach their full potential, if they have the opportunity to do what the "stars" do in *Dancing with the Stars* - put themselves in the hands of a top professional dancer. And I mean top, not someone who helps out at a studio, and is professional only in the sense that they are paid for doing what they are doing, often inexpertly.

Personal tuition then, a deep pocket and unlimited time - and almost anyone will be able to dance - with a professional/expert. Particularly the ladies who, dancing with a male teacher accustomed to leading and physically stronger than they are; find it much easier to learn than does a male pupil, who must firstly learn not to "wrestle" with his physically weaker female teacher.

It comes as a disappointment to realise subsequently that looking good with an expert partner does not translate to looking good with an inexpert one. And here we have the greatest - often insuperable - problem. One needs a partner who is equally enthusiastic, and willing to learn. And not over-assertive or argumentative. Clearly a tall order.

In short, enjoyment of *Dancing with the Stars* is not helpful to my "friend" and his wife, whose sights need to be set much lower. What they have going for them is that they have partners - each other - and they are equally enthusiastic - at least to begin with.

So, what to advise? Not a studio, where one can spend a small fortune on personal lessons (how long is a piece of string?*) or participate in a group class and make agonisingly slow progress, quickly becoming disillusioned either way (especially if progress is compared with that of a 20-something "star" benefiting from the undivided attention of a Luda Kroitor, who is doing all the dancing anyway, leaving her pupil to posture and smile). What is the alternative?

I advised my "friend" to try sequence dancing, through which most people of mature years ease their way into dancing (sequence dancing is popular throughout Australia). There is a wide choice in Canberra - at Woden and Belconnen Seniors, the Canberra Old Time Dance Club, the Harmonie-German Club, and elsewhere.

Sequence dancing is ballroom dancing (modern and Latin) set to 16- or 32-bar sequences, that is steps are repeated, with all couples dancing the same steps at the same time. Most clubs provide tuition and, more importantly, novices can venture on to the floor and follow a couple who appear to know what they are doing. Ballroom made easy and yet, like McDonald's, still a little bit fancy.

"You won't dance like a star", I told my "friend", "but you will put on nice clothes, meet nice people and, most importantly, get on to the floor quickly without being overwhelmed. It's a start, anyway. And pretty soon you may find that newcomers are following in your footsteps."

"Of course, at a later stage, if you do decide you want to mambo like Johnny, or rumba like Scott and Fran, or make a foxtrot look like a foxtrot and a tango look like a tango, you may decide on one-on-one lessons with an expert after all".

*Four years ago two dance instructors were ordered to repay a Hong Kong investment banker \$A8,000,000. Sixty-one-year-old Monica Wong had agreed to pay in total more than \$A16,000,000 to Gaynor Fairweather (who, with dance partner Donnie Burns, won the world Latin dance championship for a record 16 consecutive years) and Fairweather's husband, Mirko Saccani.

Lessons are less expensive in Canberra.

Frequently asked questions

answered by Grahame Hellyer

Question: I have heard I can get books free, or more cheaply, using an EBook reader. What does this involve?

Answer: EBook readers have suddenly become very popular as more manufacturers have started to produce them and prices have dropped. Borders sells one in Australia called Kobo for under \$200. It looks like reading on paper (e-paper), rather than a computer screen and it is lighter than a paper back, but can hold 1000 books. The Kindle (also e-paper), sold by Amazon, downloads books over a free built-in mobile phone-type connection. It will be available in Australia soon.

There are other dedicated readers which look like a small computer screen as well as the iPad, which is a computer and doubles as an EReader. They are all designed to be held like a book to read.

Apart from the Kindle, books are first downloaded onto a computer and then software transfers them to your reader.

Virtually all significant books out of copyright have been digitised under an international project call Project Gutenberg and can be downloaded free. These include everything from Ancient Greek plays through Shakespeare, Jane Austen, Dickens, Mark Twain and thousands of others. Current books, those on sale in bookshops, must be paid for, but are only about half to two-thirds the price of paperback.

You can also read these on your computer without buying an EReader. There are a variety of formats which the books are offered in, but the one which is becoming the standard is EPub, so look for this if downloading.

Question: I am confused by the choice of TVs in stores. What is the difference between LCD and Plasma TVs?

Answer: In simple terms, LCD are more expensive to make and therefore dearer. Plasma are cheaper, but in fact give a better picture. Until this year LCD were more economical to run and the screens were less reflective. Most manufacturers concentrated on LCD and gave up plasma.

Panasonic, Samsung and LG stuck with plasma (as well as LCD) and largely overcame those issues (there is a big difference between the 2010 models and previous years). Plasma have always been regarded as giving a better picture, particularly for fast moving images, providing better contrast and wider viewing angle, although LCD screens can be made brighter than plasma if you have a very bright room. LED LCD TVs are just LCD TVs where the screen is lit by LED lights which are turned off for dark areas of the picture (a major fault of LCD screens was that black parts of the picture were never completely black.) These are a bit more economical to run (about \$12 a year difference for the latest 42 inch models) but not enough to justify the price difference.

When looking at TVs in shops bear in mind that the picture settings are usually set on very bright, garish colours to look striking. Some sets can be made to look better than others by adjusting the picture settings. The setting used in the shop would not be the one you would use in the home.

Flat screen TVs are very complex with powerful processors, so it is best to go for reliable brands and get an extended warranty. All the major brands make good sets which, whether plasma, LCD or LED LCD, 99% of us would be happy to have in our homes. The top brands are: Japanese – Panasonic, Sony, Sharp, Mitsubishi; and Korean – Samsung and LG. The major stores sell various Chinese brands at cheaper prices, but if you can afford a little extra stick to the brands above. (Those underlined seem most popular.)

Plasmas only come in 42inch and above which now seems standard for lounge rooms. Smaller sets are generally bought for bedrooms or dens.

If you can, check the Recommended Retail Price on the internet before going into a store so you know whether you are getting a good price or not. Most stores will sell electronic goods at least 10% below the RRP, however sometimes they advertise an old price which the manufacturer has since reduced, to give the impression the set is on sale, when actually they are not giving a discount at all. Note that warranty prices are also negotiable!

T'ai Chi Magic Tin

Participants in both of the Woden Senior Club's T'ai Chi classes continue generously to support the T'ai Chi Magic Tin which invites donations of any spare cash. These two classes at our club are run by Elizabeth Halfnights on Wednesday mornings (7.25-8.25am) and Thursday afternoons (2.00-3.15pm). As well, participants at Elizabeth's other three T'ai Chi classes on the northside of Canberra make donations.

Since 2003, nearly \$12,000 has been donated by Elizabeth's T'ai Chi enthusiasts. Various organisations have been supported, such as Oxfam projects, TEAR Australia, Doctors Without Borders, the Red Cross, and World Vision. These funds have paid for such essential items as a sewing machine, primary schooling supplies, healthcare, assistance for child-headed households, building a sand-brick house, installing a bore-well and pump, small business loans, women's self-help groups, a water tank, flood relief, other third-world aid projects, and, at home, indigenous projects.

Our most recent donation of \$1,200 dollars for a "shelterbox" via the Rotary Club of Australia, was shipped to Haiti to assist earthquake victims. Lightweight and strong, a shelterbox is about 570mm wide, 840mm long, and 600mm deep. Each box is packed with durable, practical, brand new survival items - things vitally needed for a family who have lost everything in a disaster

(see <http://www.shelterboxaustralia.com.au/>)

Many people put something in their "Magic Tin" each week. Everyone's long-standing generosity has created this amazing total, which then goes through recognised charities to those who really need help. Modest donors simply say "It's only the cost of a cup of coffee", but as you can see it all adds up. Thank you everyone for your caring generosity.

By the time you read this, Elizabeth after 23 years of conducting T'ai Chi classes at our club will be taking a well deserved break during September and October to travel with John to Perth and back in their 1976 VW Kombi Campervan! During this time the Thursday class will continue with Lorraine and Stella (Elizabeth's stalwart assistants in the class) plus other dedicated participants in that class, and Jeff will be conducting the Wednesday early morning class. Thank you Lorraine, Stella and Jeff and all participants in the T'ai Chi classes for your dedication to the classes to help you keep yourselves trim, taut and relaxed!

Elizabeth Halfnights