

## Anne Murray Room, Life Membership

It was a full house at the club on the last day of June as members gathered to see the unveiling of the Anne Murray Room to mark the end of Anne's twelve-and-a-half years as club President.

Anne was also made a Life Member of the club, with long-time member Peter Whitting presenting her with the certificate.

As is customary on such occasions, a cake was also produced, and Anne invited to cut it.

Introducing Anne, Vice-President Neil Stevenson paid tribute to her immense contribution to the club, and read a letter from club Patron Michael Bryce (see p2, col3).

Anne said it had been a privilege to serve, and thanked members for the support she had received. She added that she would continue to remain very visible at the club, although not in a managerial role (see *Anne's farewell message p3*, and *Dennis Blewett's appreciation p2*).

As ever at club functions, thanks must go to volunteers who prepared and served refreshments, tea and coffee, and a selection of wines, ensuring the success of the occasion.



Anne Murray, having been made a Life Member of Woden Seniors, thanks members for their support over twelve-and-a-half years. Vice-President Neil Stevenson (centre left) will be President until the Annual General Meeting in September.

## A Winter Serenade wins warm approval

Members who attended the club for *A Winter Serenade* were rewarded with a splendid afternoon of music.

The Canberra Mandolin Orchestra, reprising the success achieved when they last played for us, got us off to a bright start with a selection ranging from *Never on a Sunday*, the *Harry Lime* theme, and *La Bamba* to Chopin

and Vivaldi.

The Canberra Chordsmen, whose choreography is always so innovative and entertaining, were equally well received. *That's my baby now*, and *Silhouettes* showed the choir to great advantage, and Peter Allen's *I still call Australia home* never fails to stir an audience.

We were treated to varied, but unfailingly admirable, solo performances from Rosemary Lohman (*She had a letter from her lover*, from Merrie England); Ken Smith (*Girls were made to love and kiss*); Neil Stevenson (*They call the wind Mariah*); and pianist John Fraser (*Dream of Olwen*), who was joined by Anne Murray to play Schumann.

The afternoon ended on a high, with the Rhythm Syndicate, under the inspirational baton of Shilong Ye, giving us such favourites as *Puttin' on the Ritz!*, *I only have eyes for you*, *The more I see you*, and *Baby, it's cold outside*.

During the interval we repaired to Hall No 2, where we were served with a splendid afternoon tea. Thank you, everyone. And see you next year! DB

## THE ANNE MURRAY ROOM



Members congratulate Anne after the unveiling of the Anne Murray Room.

# Anne Murray - an appreciation

By Dennis Blewett

This year Woden Seniors celebrates its 30th birthday, and for the past twelve-and-a-half of those years Anne Murray has been President.

Anne has now resigned, and Vice-President Neil Stevenson will be President until the Annual General Meeting, on Monday 26 September, by which time it is hoped someone else will have expressed a willingness to become President.

Anne stresses that her decision to resign was taken for no other reason than her belief that twelve-and-a-half years is enough. However, Anne has agreed to a continuing role as chair of the club's committee charged with discussing with the ACT Government any proposals that the Government might initiate relating to the club.

Three factors have identified Anne's presidency.

Firstly, her *presence* at the club. We have become accustomed to Anne being there almost every day, and it is unreasonable to expect whoever succeeds her to be similarly visible (presumably, a duty roster involving other office-bearers will need to be considered).

Secondly, Anne looks at the "big picture" and is unafraid of responsibility (she held management positions in the Public Service for twenty years). On assuming the presidency she dared to dream of an expanded, attractive club (not simply an "activity centre"), a focal point for older people in the Woden "catchment area", and it was Anne's enthusiasm and energy that resulted in the establishment of the Strategic Planning Group charged with redeveloping the club. After many months and countless meetings it became evident that, were a partnership to be formed with private developers, the developers would want too much and offer too little; and the ACT Government offered only limited - albeit welcome - support. So the club decided to go it alone, pressing ahead with the first one-and-a-half stages of a three-part development program.

Government support for Woden Seniors, as with all things, will no doubt continue to change as governments and ministers come and go, and competing claims for funding are assessed and reassessed.

What is certain is that, if the club's interests are to be safeguarded, we can do no better than have Anne, with all her experience and determination, be a member of the team representing us.

Thirdly, Anne worked tirelessly to win support for the club. Grants from the ACT Government have largely been forthcoming as a consequence of her persistence, and it was Anne who initiated the Friends program, whereby links were forged with local businesses (the support given to the club by Richard Luton is perhaps the best example).

She has also worked to foster a good working relationship with Canberra's other seniors clubs, believing that if clubs speak with a collective voice it becomes more difficult for government to deny them support - support that is the proper responsibility of government anyway, as well as being a sound investment. A sound investment because if older people remain physically active and mentally alert they make less demand on government health and welfare services. Anne has constantly reminded the ACT Government that it should regard seniors clubs as a valuable adjunct to welfare services, not as a drain on resources or an irritant.

At another level, Anne's persistence on behalf of the club is demonstrated by her appeals to members to support club initiatives. It is not easy - and perhaps even unpleasant - to impose oneself on an activity taking place at the club to appeal for support, whether it be to attend a forthcoming function, or to buy raffle tickets. She has not always found a receptive audience. But, if Anne didn't do it, who would? We are about to find out.

On a personal note, I became editor of *Meridian* almost ten years ago when Anne invited me to do so, and I have enjoyed a splendid working relationship with her ever since. To whom will I go now for information about what is happening in the club?

In thanking Anne for her remarkable service over twelve-and-a-half years one might reflect that we will only fully appreciate her contribution to Woden Seniors when she is no longer making it.

## Warm tribute from club Patron

Dear Anne,

Even though I can't be at your farewell, I wanted to say a few things which I hope you will not be too modest to share with members.

I have known you for a long time, and admire that you are always in the service of others, sharing your compassion and spirit with people.

Woden Seniors is lucky to have had your warmth and compassion for this part of your life, and I'm sure it is the reason why Woden has such a happy cohort of people. Your style of management is infectious.

This is also why I have enjoyed visiting the centre and, of course, I hope to continue doing so while I remain at Yarralumla.

I am sure that Woden Senior Citizens is the envy of other community groups.

I hope that your members continue to honour your work, and enjoy relaxing in the Anne Murray Room.

With warm regards to all, and best wishes to you.

*Michael*

*(Michael Bryce, Patron, Government House, Canberra)*

## Minister's tribute

I would like to acknowledge Anne Murray's hard work and dedication to Woden Seniors over the past twelve-and-a-half years. She has made a valuable contribution to the club's development, which now has more than 800 members. Anne's leadership in developing the club's Strategic Plan in 2004 and its Master Plan in 2005 has resulted in Woden Seniors being well placed for future growth in the Woden area.

I also recognise Anne's interest and passion in all matters related to older people in Canberra and her generosity in sharing her wisdom with me since I became Minister.

*Joy Burch MLA, Minister for Ageing*

# A pleasure and a privilege

By Anne Murray

By the time members read this, I will no longer be President of Woden Seniors, or a member of its Management Committee. After twelve-and-a-half years I decided that the time had come to move on. It was not an easy decision but, once I had made up my mind, I decided to act quickly.

I have enjoyed my time as President, and it has been a privilege to serve. My one regret is that the club was not able during my presidency to attract government or private enterprise support to build the sort of club envisaged in our Master Plan.

Indeed, as I write this I believe that we are as far away from the realisation of that dream as ever. A proposal by Waldren Constructions to develop a site opposite the Woden Library to include new club premises has been rejected by the ACT Government which has, instead, said that it (the Government) will assume responsibility for building new club premises when it considers it appropriate to do so.

It must be recognised that Woden Seniors occupies a “gateway site” and it is unreasonable to believe that at a future time our site will not feature in plans to further develop Woden Town Centre. The challenge for the club, when that time comes, will be to ensure that we are not disadvantaged. A positive for the club is that occupancy of our site ensures that we are in a powerful bargaining position.

Which brings me to my future role. I have agreed to chair the sub-committee charged with any discussions with the ACT Government on proposals it may make affecting the club. I want to make it clear that how long I serve in this capacity is a matter for the club’s Management Committee and, of course, myself.

I have also accepted an invitation to chair the Special Projects Sub-committee. Again, while happy to serve in this capacity, I will be equally happy to step aside at the discretion of the Management Committee.

In summary, where I can be of service to the club, I will serve, as an enthusiastic and loyal member of the

club. But, I will no longer play any part in the management of the club.

Woden Seniors has been a big part of my life for many years, and I have made many friends and have countless happy memories. All this will not end, as I will continue to support the club, and intend to regularly attend club activities.

Thank you, everyone. Finally, I hope our new President finds the role that has given *me* so much, equally as enjoyable and fulfilling.

## Members encouraged to write life stories

Thanks to a small grant from the Canberra Southern Cross Club, the ACT Writers Centre is sponsoring eight fortnightly writing workshops for the Woden Seniors Club.

Organised by Megan Costigan and taught by Wilma Davidson, the workshops are assisting ten Seniors Club members to write their own life stories. In addition to printing copies of individual stories for members and their families to enjoy, a collection of the stories will be developed and launched later this year.

The project offers seniors a unique chance to capture their stories in print - including their wisdom, adventures and personal experiences in life.

## Best service for club

recalled by Barry Hogan

Anne Murray has been President of Woden Seniors for as long as I have been a member of the club.

Within a few months of my joining the club, I found myself supporting her at an extraordinary general meeting which resulted in her successfully retaining her position as President. Even though I served on the Management Committee for a number of years, I still feel that this early action was possibly the best service I ever performed for the club, for it helped ensure that Anne retained her position as President.

Over the years, I may not have agreed with Anne on everything she has said and done but I have never for a minute thought that she was not the best person for the position she has held, nor that her constant efforts on behalf of the club were anything less than far-sighted and innovative, having consideration for both the projects successfully completed and the longevity of her tenure.

It would seem to be a little obvious to write that “she will be a hard act to follow”, but one can only hope that there is someone within the membership who can take over and carry the club forward with the single-mindedness and determination that Anne has displayed over her many years in office.



*The creative juices flowing at the writers' workshop.*

# Is it too late to learn another language?

By *Grahame Hellyer*

Once they retire many people think about doing those things which they didn't seem to have time for when they worked – like learning another language. They may want it for an overseas trip, or just for the challenge – or to convince themselves that they are not yet “past it”!

Well the good news is that it is not only possible, but neuroscientists now say we should be exercising our brain as we get older by such things as learning another language, or a musical instrument or even just doing puzzles like crosswords, etc. If we don't stress our brain a little and encourage it to make new connections it will atrophy.

The trouble is many people have the misconception that if you have an aptitude for languages then you should be able to learn without much effort. They then convince themselves of this by spending 10 minutes studying now and then and, when they don't make any progress, say “obviously I don't have the aptitude.” Unfortunately learning a language takes regular effort. You really need to spend at least 20-30 minutes most days if you want to make any progress, particularly at the start. Constant repetition (seeing or hearing them at regular intervals) is the only way to learn foreign words. (You may have noticed that your grandchildren who spend perhaps two ½ hour sessions a week for some years with a specialist teacher make little progress unless their classroom teachers constantly use the language, too – and they are supposed to have quicker brains than us.)

Seniors have the benefit of being able to attend classes at the U3A at little cost, if you can find a place on a beginners course in the language you want.

In book shops you can buy not only text books, but language courses on CD which you can play at home or in your car so that you can hear the pronunciation. (These can be quite expensive but you can find some in the library.)

A common mistake is to buy one book on the language and try to work through it. Eventually you hit a wall, particularly if you don't have a good

grasp of grammar terms. Also, a book can only give you a limited number of example sentences – not enough for the constant repetition mentioned above. If you don't have a teacher to help you through the book then you should probably use 2 or 3 texts and, when one gets hard, switch to the other for a while.

The internet is a great boon to language learners. There are sites like the BBC with free lessons – audio and video – in various popular languages; one can read foreign newspapers with instant translation of words using free add-ons to the popular web browsers. Other sites may offer some free material but require payment for full access. There are sites which offer ‘flash cards’ – pages appear asking you to translate a word and if you get it wrong the word will automatically pop up again after a short period. There are even flash cards which teach and test your ability to write Chinese or Japanese characters. If you spend an appropriate amount of time with these systems it is almost impossible not to learn.

So, if you have been thinking about it, give it a go, NOW!

## Lady Gowrie Hall

The Canberra Services Club which was burnt down recently, will be remembered with great pleasure by many older Canberrans, including some members of Woden Seniors. In particular the adjoining Lady Gowrie Hall will be remembered as where many learned to dance.

For fifteen years the hall was sub-leased to Gwen Wallace (who shaped her professional career as Gwen King), and it was there that she conducted her very successful studio. She and husband Bill gave up their Wagga Wagga studio in 1969 to move to Canberra, and eager volunteers helped lay the splendid floor and attach full-length mirrors to the walls.

Does anyone remember seeing Gwen's daughter, Anne Harding, dance with her partner, Kerry Wilson? Anne and Kerry were Australian professional ballroom and Latin American champions in 1974, 1975 and 1976, a scarcely believable feat. *Dancing with the Stars* professionals eat your hearts out!

This year's Autumn Fair (7 May) was blessed with autumn sunshine and a large attendance, and the club benefited by more than \$3800.

As on previous occasions members generously donated sales items, and shoppers took advantage of the many bargains on offer.

The bottle stall was a new, and successful, innovation; the Tai Chi group managed the always popular cake stall; local clothing company Good Old Days offered an attractive range of women's wear; the plant and book stalls attracted many customers as usual; and the sausage sizzle and morning tea were among the other money-spinners.

*Pictured opposite: Meridian captured many of the happy faces.*

## Government House visit



*Music teacher and recorder orchestra leader Margaret Wright (left) visited Government House in April to receive the Order of Australia from the Governor-General, Quentin Bryce.*

## Worth thinking about

Generally speaking, you aren't learning much when your lips are moving.



# Images captured at club's Autumn Fair



# Benny does a job on us

By Dennis Blewett

People are *good* to us, aren't they? By *us*, I mean *seniors*. Scarcely a day goes by without someone making me an offer I can't refuse. Well, *almost* can't refuse.

We are assured that, just because we have retired from paid work, we do *not* have one foot in the grave. Rather we are experiencing a new *beginning*! A time to enjoy our *reward*! Because we *deserve* it! Because we have contributed to society and paid taxes all our lives. And, to ensure that we don't miss out, there are people out there willing - nay, positively eager - to help us spend our money!

There are superannuation, insurance, taxation and legal advisers and property developers, anxious to optimise our income, and save us from the avaricious grasp of rival superannuation, insurance, taxation and legal advisers and property developers. There are purveyors of health-enhancing gadgets, and potions to help in all imaginable ways. The illustrations that accompany inducements of all descriptions are especially flattering to women. The menfolk may be greying and a tad past their use-by date, but their wives (or "partners" to be correct) always look thirty years younger than their menfolk, and are usually shown pedalling an exercise bike or sprinting on a beach.

There are exhibitions and expos where one can check out the latest in campervans, exercise equipment and holiday destinations. There are advertising supplements in the print media, and venerable "personalities" on TV chatting cosily with an entranced, or gullible, representative of the opposite sex, telling us how to enrich our lives, or perhaps make a loved one's life less penurious when (to inject a serious note) "something happens" to us.

[To digress, should not "personalities" who spruik for everything from investment opportunities to air-conditioning systems, have some financial responsibility for the product they endorse? Remember Dawn Fraser and actor Paul Cronin, some years ago, endorsing a retirement investment company that collapsed? The directors fled, ow-

ing their investors millions of dollars. Fraser and Cronin apologised for their "unwitting contribution" to people's financial plight, and then got on with their lives.]

Then there are the "travel" features. Has anyone ever experienced an attractive, special deal for seniors? A few dollars shaved off here and there, perhaps. But something *extra*, just because you *are* a senior? Because that's what the inducements are promising - something *special* because you *are* a senior. In fact one gets what one pays for. Specials, I contend, are synonymous with off-season, a less attractive room, a table hidden away at the rear of a restaurant, a "special two-course menu".

I am reminded of an experience some years ago. I went with a group of seniors by coach for a weekend in Sydney, the highlight being an evening at the theatre. The coach captain might well have been Benny Hill, cap and all. We, the punters, were collectively Jackie Wright. Remember Jackie, the little bald man, Benny's fall guy, whom Benny patted on the head? The coach captain talked us out of the scheduled afternoon excursion to a shopping centre (it was put to a vote, but Benny had done a job on the guys and locked their vote in), assuring us that we would appreciate a quiet afternoon in our motel rooms before going on to the theatre.

Dinner was of the chicken for you/fish for you variety (feel free to swap with your "partner"), cheesecake, cafes of orange-flavoured soft drink and scarcely-drinkable white wine. Then to the theatre, and indifferent seating to one side of the stage. We were supposed to be going sightseeing the following morning, but Benny warned it would be pretty busy and exhausting and advised that we make an immediate return home. He metaphorically patted our heads as we boarded the coach, and got us home in time for afternoon tea.

Yes, seniors are sure taken for a ride. Or the attempt is made, anyway. Resist! We are *people*. People who have experienced life, held responsible jobs, raised families, *achieved*! We are *not* a well-defined whole, to be exploited, to be targetted as a "marketing opportunity".

## SELLING YOUR PROPERTY!

If you plan to sell your home or other property, you are welcome to contact Noel Lane of Luton Properties (LUTON), for a confidential and informative discussion.

We offer Members of Woden Seniors special low selling fees and make a substantial donation to Woden Seniors for each property of a Member that Noel sells.

We are a major supporter of Woden Seniors.

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## Life saved could be yours, or mine!

The club was fortunate to receive a seniors grant this year to run some first aid courses. By the end of June, 30 club members had completed a basic first aid course.

The course was conducted by Brian from Red Cross. He proved to be an excellent instructor - we passed the two multiple choice tests and the practical assessment and will receive our certificates soon!

We hope we don't have to use our new skills but one never knows. Probably the most important skill we learnt was cardio pulmonary resuscitation (CPR). Some changes have been made to the technique in the last few years and it is now much less complicated and very easy to learn.

CPR has saved countless lives, from children to older people. Many members are grandparents who care for grandchildren. This course taught us how to deal with choking, abrasions, lacerations, nose bleeds, suspected broken bones etc - all things that we may encounter when caring for little ones.

For example, did you know that the recommended way to deal with a nose bleed is to keep the person sitting up with head held forward and breathing through the mouth while the nostrils are squeezed together and held for about 10 minutes?

All in all this was a very informative and enjoyable course. A productive way to spend a couple of winter mornings!  
*Judith Henderson*



*Rafaella Stukoff practises cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR).*

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## How do I record digital TV?

*By Grahame Hellyer*

*Answer:* Your old VCR will not record digital TV; you need a recorder with digital tuner(s). Some new TVs will record onto a card or USB stick but only the program you are watching, which is pretty pointless. Digital recorders, usually referred to as PVRs (Personal Video Recorders) record onto a hard drive like a computer, this means you can get instant access to any program, and don't have to play it through until you find the bit you want. Most have two tuners so you can record two channels at once - plus you can watch a recording while it is still recording - i.e. you can start the recording then come along 5 minutes later and start watching from

the beginning (even fast forwarding through the ads.) many PVRs connect to the internet and you can subscribe to a service which automatically adjusts the recording times of the programs you want to watch if the stations vary the times! This is, of course, not essential.

There are pure PVRs (two tuners and a Hard Drive holding 30+ hours of recording). Brands are Beyonwiz, Topfield, Strong and DGTEC (these range from \$300 - \$600). The big electronic firms, such as Panasonic, make combination machines which combine a PVR with a DVD recorder, or a Blu-ray DVD player, or even a Blue-ray recorder. These range from just under \$600 upwards. You really need to decide whether you need it just to catch those programs you might miss because you are out, or two favourite programs are on at the same time, or whether you want to archive a program for years later - remember if it is on the Hard Drive you can leave it there as long as you want until you feel you need to delete it to make room for new recordings - you don't have to put it on a DVD.

If anyone wants more advice feel free to call me. Polly can give you my number.

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Artists who attend the club, and whose work can be viewed in *The Gallery* continue to win the admiration of a wider audience, and attract buyers.

Helen Sahar, Iris Blewett and Marie Hoskin all sold their work at both of two recent exhibitions.



*Jenny Seymour practises applying a bandage in the approved manner. Judith Henderson is her patient.*

*Bridge is one of Woden Seniors most popular activities. The club is fortunate in having many skilful, experienced players, and play at the club is conducted in exemplary fashion. However, in the often cut-throat world of championship bridge, this is not always the case, as one of our most experienced players, LES HUMPHREY, tells us:*

## Fraud at the bridge table

The vast majority of bridge players are honest, believing the game to be not worth playing if played any other way.

However, cheating *does* take place, and the first thing to remember is that if you suspect information is being exchanged by your opponents in an incorrect manner you should call the Director a once, or have a quiet word with him/her away from the table at the end of the round. Cheating is difficult to prove, but the Director, once alerted, will be on the lookout for subsequent transgressions.

Examples of cheating are:

Scarcely audible comment before, during or after making a bid. This is usually about whether it is/was the correct bid.

Dummy indicates with a hand or finger either the suit or particular card the declarer should play. Dummy may only pre-empt the declarer's call after a suit has been led and it is to a singleton or a run. (Dummy – keep your hands in your lap until requested to play a card!)

By marking the bidding pad with the opening lead in the mistaken belief that it is not useful information

to the players during play.

When the cards are turned face down, declarer asks dummy, "Which hand am I in?" Dummy then turns over the last card and shows or tells the declarer the value of the card.

Adding a full stop after the second or subsequent bids, which tells partner, "This is my final bid".

When holding the original 13 cards always arranging them in an agreed suit order and in sequence within each suit. Partner can then work out during play the shape of the hand.

An extension of the above is to hold the first card of the second and subsequent suits slightly above the rest. In the event that there is a void only two cards are protruding.

All honours are slightly protruding, or depressed.

The holding of the cards in a manner which is not the normal way. The normal manner, unless some physical impairment precludes this, is to have the cards between the thumb and four fingers. A pre-arranged signal can be transmitted by using different numbers of fingers on the back of the cards.

As declarer, claiming the remainder of the tricks when only half of the board has been played in the full knowledge that he does not have all of the remainder of the tricks.

At the end of play to say that "x" number of tricks were made and immediately pick up the cards and shuffle them to try to bluff the opponents on the number of tricks that were actually made. If this happens to you, and you do not agree, call the Director.

Using various ways of writing a bid to indicate strength and/or length of a suit or hand.

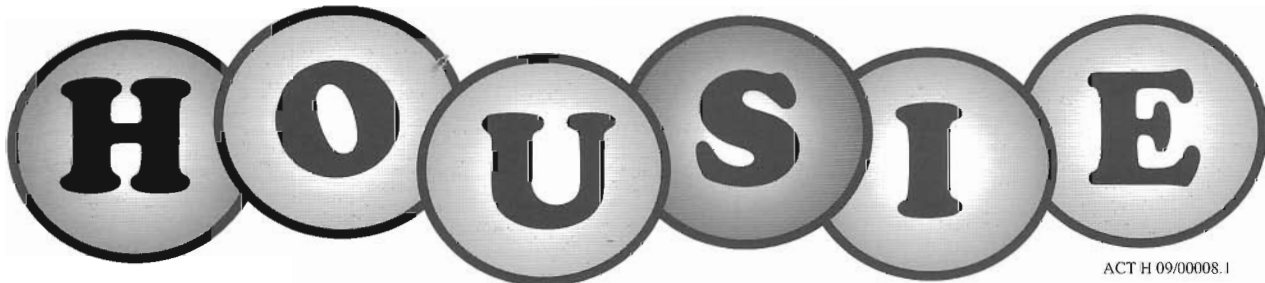
I again emphasise that the vast majority of players deplore such behaviour and there are many examples of players going to extreme lengths to ensure fairness and to safeguard their own reputations.

Examples are:

A player was selected to represent Scotland in a match and he declined. His reason was that he had played for a long time with his suggested partner and he knew by his subconscious behaviour the type of hand he had. This would have been a form of cheating!

A Canadian representative was playing at the national championship and after the first bid by his partner he called the Director. He explained that his partner had a particular habit when he had a strong hand and he had just made it.

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