

# Arthritis

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

**Incorporating  
Osteoporosis  
ACT**

## NEWSLETTER June 2008

**Volume 10 Issue 2  
ISSN 1443 9077**

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*Something can be done ...  
and we're  
doing it !*

### **Arthritis ACT Board 2007-08**

Mr Bill Wood (President & Alt.  
Director Arthritis  
Australia)  
Ms Anna Hackett (Vice Presi-  
dent)  
Ms Kristine Riethmiller  
(Secretary & Director  
Arthritis Australia)  
Mrs Elizabeth Maher (Treasurer)  
Ms Julie Cochran  
Ms Helen Cody (Director Os-  
teoporosis Australia)  
Dr David Graham  
Ms Anne Messenger  
Ms Helen Tyrell

### **From the CEO**

I hope you have all had an opportunity to look at our new website that can be found at [www.arthritisaact.org.au](http://www.arthritisaact.org.au). I have received some great feedback about it, and would welcome your comments. Monte is working with one of our members who lives in the Netherlands to establish an interactive link to the website for our warm water exercise supervisors to access.

Our new brochure has been well received and we are in the process of distributing it widely to the ACT community. It was a marathon effort to co-ordinate both projects, with at least 8 different people contributing content and design.

The introduction to the community of our new two-session Challenging Pain course is getting closer. I am indebted to Jo Stewart for the huge amount of work she has put into helping me refine the manual for use in Australia, and for bringing together volunteers to be trained in how to conduct the course. Jo and I have run two separate leader-training programs in the last month. Once the licensing agreement has been signed with Arthritis Care, we will be able to offer the course to our members – and then to the community generally.

**If you are interested in attending the course, you could leave your name and a contact number with Wen and we will get back to you with the finer detail when we have**

**set some dates.** (Information on the content of the course can be found further on in the Newsletter).

Changes in staffing arrangements are underway at Arthritis ACT.

I would like to give a very warm welcome to our new Youth Support Worker, Roz Lawrence. Roz is also organising our Healthy Bones Week activities this year. She is a nurse by training, and comes with a wealth of experience working for NGO's in the health and welfare sectors in the ACT. Please make yourself known to Roz when you are next in the office.

Monte Scharbow, who has been our Educator for some time, is developing further our Workplace program. Robyn McIntosh who had commenced in that position has taken up a lecturing role across ANU and ACU. A new generalist educator will be employed shortly to allow Monte to spend the time needed to complete the workplace project.

Wen will also be working one day a week in a previous Board members' accountancy firm to gain experience in taxation accountancy to complete her CPA qualification.

The final change I want to mention will take place in mid June when I will leave the Foundation after 5 very enjoyable years as CEO.

I really appreciated the opportunity that the 2002-03 Board gave me to try to develop this organisation from its grass roots base. However, I was only able to do that because so many magnificent volunteers, with gifts and talents in so many areas, worked tirelessly with me. That community spirit has enabled us to bring this organisation to where it is today.

So ... it is with some sadness and a great deal of agonising over the decision, that I have resigned.

I believe the tremendous wealth of talent on our Board, and the structures and programs we now have across the organisation, will enable Arthritis ACT to continue to grow and meet the needs of this community into the future.

With very best wishes,

Elizabeth Scrivener

**Chief Executive Officer**

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## Education News

### Arthritis Awareness Week

This year's Arthritis Awareness Week activities in April kept us all very busy. After upgrading the Community Talks arthritis and osteoporosis presentations, and developing a new Community Talks presentation called "Exercise – Move It or Lose It", we launched the arthritis and exercise presentations during the week at a public seminar.

We had a good turn out, indicating fervent interest in physical activity related to musculoskeletal conditions. My thanks to Carol MacKay and Barbara Gillies for their assistance in the presentation improvements and development.

### Warm Water Exercise

A workshop or possibly an ongoing WWX session aimed at providing a guided exercise program or workout for members is now in the development stage. We are working with an interested volunteer to compile exercises and a program suitable for people with arthritis. The next

stage will be to trial an exercise session and we will soon thereafter be able to incorporate the sessions into the WWX program.

Roger Killeen and Shirley Syme have been busily running pool rescue demonstrations at all of the WWX sessions. This initiative by them is intended to enhance safety by expanding attendee awareness of the pool rescue procedures.

We will also be opening the future pool rescue procedure and cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training that the pool supervisors are currently required to attend, to all WWX members. This is intended to enhance the safety of all WWX members in case the supervisor becomes disabled, so other members would be able to provide emergency rescue. Members will be advised when the next training sessions will be held. There is no charge for the training.

### Workplace Project

This is the second phase of an ACT Health grant project aimed at assisting in the education of employers and employees about ways to delay the onset of arthritis and ameliorate the effects of arthritis and musculoskeletal condition in the workplace.

The first phase was completed in 2007 and resulted in setting the stage for conducting the second phase pilot projects in two different types of workplaces. This is a challenging project that is intended to convince employers of the benefits of this training for their business and also to inform employees about arthritis prevention with respect to their personal lifestyle as well their work.

**Monte Scharbow**

**Health Educator & Coordinator**

## Arthritis Week

In past years we have not run activities that have been sustained beyond the initial event, however it was pleasing that this year's Arthritis Awareness Week provided the opportunity to kick start new initiatives that will continue past the week itself.

Media coverage included an article in Sunday's *Canberra Times* supplement, along with an ad for our Arthritis Week activities, several Fridge Door ads over the four weeks beforehand and one radio interview. Our Patron, Annette Ellis, is circulating a report to constituents in her Newsletter, and Mary Porter MLA spoke about Arthritis ACT in the Assembly on the Wednesday evening. She was also submitting some photos and an article to the *Chronicle*.

**Sunday's Fyshwick Market Stall:** We had 14 volunteers who enjoyed working on the stall during the day. I am grateful to Dave Roberts who collected the left over donations and took them to Revolve. The quality of the goods we received was not as good as in past years. We have probably exhausted all our members' "good" junk. We made around \$700 on the day.

**Tuesday's Healthy Lifestyle Seminar:** We didn't know what to expect with this newly created seminar, and were really pleased that we had in excess of 60 people attending.

The seminar was in two parts, the first part being a general overview of arthritis, its diagnosis, prevention and management and the second part, 'Exercise –

Move It Or Lose It', provided guidelines for developing an exercise program for improving stamina, strength and suppleness, with particular emphasis on establishing a home exercise program.

The feedback was good, with a number of people requesting membership details, or further information. There appears to be a real interest in healthy lifestyle messages for those with arthritis, so we have decided to run the seminar again later in the year, perhaps with an emphasis on osteoporosis.

Monte has updated and made some modifications to the arthritis and osteoporosis presentations, and the exercise-focused presentation has been newly developed due to feedback we have received at previous talks. These presentations are also being offered to TAFE and other organisations in Canberra as a Community Talk. The initial response to the mail out for that seminar has been very positive.

**Wednesday's Joint Replacement Seminar:** The joint replacement seminar was well received, with the presentations from the orthopaedic surgeon and the physiotherapist appreciated by those attending. Both presenters were asked many questions and I understand the power point presentations were excellent. We gave out several information packs and had a good response to the other material displayed.

**Conclusion of Self Management Course:** Our 6 week chronic conditions self management course concluded on the Wednesday of Arthri-

tis Week, with the group wanting to continue by forming an ongoing coffee and discussion group. A number of those completing the course also attended our seminars.

**Launch of website:** We had over 40 people attend the launch of our new website and brochure by our Minister for Health, Ms Katy Gallagher MLA. Simon Carroll representing the Australian Pharmacy Group presented us with a cheque to cover the cost of printing the brochure.

**Art for Arthritis:** Annette Ellis joined 16 of our members for a Thursday morning of art, led by one of our long-standing volunteers, Raelene McNamara. Raelene is also a pool supervisor, and fundraises for us.

The attendees were delighted to explore their talents and produced a variety of interpretations of a still-life, confirming that their arthritic conditions do not prevent them from being creative.

Twelve members indicated they would like to continue the program, and Raelene McNamara has agreed to conduct classes on the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of each month in the downstairs meeting room. I am very grateful to Raelene for organising such a fun event, and for her willingness to continue on a regular basis.

Annette presented us with the art work she had created and gave permission for us to raffle or auction the painting.

## Fundraising News

The Committee is engaged in or planning the following projects:

- ◆ Variety Concert on Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> June at the Austrian Club;
- ◆ Card Lunch on 12<sup>th</sup> September;
- ◆ Fyshwick Stall – 19<sup>th</sup> October;
- ◆ Wine and Cheese evening on 7<sup>th</sup> November; and our

◆ Members Christmas Lunch and Raffle in December

Entertainment Books are available for sale in the office. Cost \$50 plus \$10 p&h.

John Martin, Chair of the Committee, invites any interested members or family to attend the meetings of the committee. These are held on the first Monday of each month at 2.00pm at the Arthritis Office.

Please contact John Martin on 6251 5132 or Elizabeth in the office if you would like to attend.

The Committee is in need of craft goods or second hand books for the trading table at the Card Day in September. If you can help, please contact John.

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## Young Adults Group

*A note from Nicky Gray on what they did on Saturday 12 April.*

Nicky, Mel, Vivien, Seona and Tara met at the Bird Aviary at Federation Square. We read a sign before we entered the enclosure to be careful of hearing aids, earrings and necklaces as the birds are very attracted to these items and are likely to try and remove them from you. We needed realise how attracted they were.

A parrot had to be distracted by a piece of apple as it was attracted to Nicky's earrings and kept attempting to remove them. We were given a dish of sliced-up apple to feed to the birds.

There were some other types of birds as well. Each of us took hold of a piece of apple to encourage the birds to come to us. The parrots flew

onto our arms, shoulders and necks trying to take a bite of apple.

We discovered that the parrots were attracted to bright clothes.

Nicky attracted quite a few parrots as she wore bright coloured clothes (not intentionally).

They in turn thanked her for the apple by pooing on her. We all had a lovely time at the Aviary. We would recommend it as a place to go. It is wheelchair friendly. There is an entrance fee.

We were to join up with Sharon at 'Injoy Cafe' for lunch. As Sharon had Lena her Seeing Eye dog she couldn't go in the Aviary obvious reasons. We talked, ate and had a laugh for two or three or more.

After lunch we walked down to Ginnindera Village to look for a special shop for dogs that some of the group wanted to visit.

We didn't find the shop, but instead we discovered a good second-hand book and music shop.

We all had a lovely time looking at the books. Then some of us went home while the others stopped for a drink before heading home. A good day out was had by all who came.

I hope this encourages other people to join our group. We do have a good time. We certainly don't sit around whingeing - we get out there a have a good time.

We would love to welcome new members to our group. You never know, you might have a good time with people who understand.

On Sat 10 May we are meeting for lunch at 12 noon onwards at Wests Rugby Club, Catchpole St Macquarie.

**Nicky Grey**



## VARIETY CONCERT

With Austrian Choir, The Canberra Hungarian Dancers,  
Canberra Men's Choir, Warrani Ensemble

at

Austrian-Australian Club, Heard Street, Mawson

1.30pm Sunday, 22nd June 2008

Admission \$10

Tickets available from Arthritis ACT or Austrian Australian Club 6286 5793

## Preventing colds Tips from Japan

### 1. Keep your guts warm

The Japanese, like many other cultures, believe that keeping the solar plexus warm at all times is crucial to staying healthy. They take particular notice of whether or not their stomach "feels" cold as this is a first sign that your immune system might be weakened. They wear a special under-garment, even in summer, called a "haramaki" to keep this core at a stable, warm temperature. With the aid of using portable heat pads and drinking endless cups of hot tea, the Japanese really do work hard keep warm for their health.

### 2. Keep your feet warm

Second to keeping the solar plexus warm is to keep the feet warm at all times. The feet are referred to

as the "second heart" which if kept warm, will pump energy throughout the whole body boosting your immune system.

### 3. Keep your nose moist

If you've ever travelled to Japan, you will notice at various times of the year many people from all walks of life wearing surgical masks! This can be because they have bad hay fever but in the winter months it is to keep their nasal passages humid to avoid catching a cold. Your schnozz is your first line of defence in protecting you from catching a cold as your healthy moist nose uses mucous to trap and destroy germs. If your nose dries up you can more easily catch a cold. We might view face masks as an odd sight in Australia

but we can still keep our nasal passages moist by regularly using nasal sprays easily obtainable from pharmacies.

### 4. Wash your hands frequently

We are not exposed to the same high population as you would be if you lived in Tokyo, but we still come in contact with a large number of people and are exposed to millions of germs every day. Washing your hands with good old soap and water actually works brilliantly in killing germs before you have a chance to scratch your nose or touch your mouth.

## JUVENILE ARTHRITIS SUPPORT IN THE ACT AND REGION

- \* Monthly Support Meetings
- \* Alternative months for 6-12's and 13-18 years
- \* Children from 6-12 year olds and their families
- \* Youth from 13-18 years (option available to bring someone)



**Support meetings will be social activities, sharing information, meeting new people and having fun!!!!!!**

Contact Roz at Arthritis ACT to find out more information and to register your interest. 62884244. Email: [roz.lawrence@arthritisact.org.au](mailto:roz.lawrence@arthritisact.org.au)

## WANTED !

### Volunteers for hip research

I am looking for 20 women who do not have hip pain to act as a comparison group in a project evaluating Clinical, Ultra-sound and MRI assessment.

Can you help?

Call or email Angie on 6244 3638 or 0401 506 341

[Angie.fearon@anu.edu.au](mailto:Angie.fearon@anu.edu.au)

**Trauma and Orthopaedic Research Unit**

Building 6, level 1

ANU.

## Challenging pain

### The High Price of Pain: The Economic Impact of Persistent Pain in Australia

The first study of Australia's high cost of pain, commissioned by the Pain Management Research Institute, based at the University of Sydney, and the Royal North Shore Hospital, in collaboration with Access Economics, reveals the massive annual cost of pain in Australia as over \$34 billion – nearly \$11,000 for each of the estimated 3.2 million people grappling with pain. This amount reflects both the financial and loss of healthy life costs. The study was funded by the MBF Foundation and published in November 2007.

Dr Christine Bennett, CMO of MBF and Chair of the MBF Foundation said that establishing the economic cost of pain to Australia was a very significant development for healthcare strategy.

*“This is vital because pain is involved across a number of existing National Health Priority Areas such as cardiovascular disease, cancer, musculoskeletal disease and diabetes”*

*“The study shows that the bottom line of chronic pain is huge, both in human terms and its economic impact. Australians suffering from persistent pain could benefit from approaches that can help them manage or minimise their pain to improve their lives and the health system.”*

The study found that

- 3.2 million people are living with pain and more women than men are affected;
- productivity loss is \$11.7 billion annually, or 34% of total pain-related costs;
- the burden of disease accounts for a further third at \$11.5 billion.

Health system costs account for \$7 billion, around 20 per cent of total pain-related costs.

### What can Arthritis ACT do?

Arthritis ACT is attempting to support those living with chronic pain, with a number of the programs we run, particularly our warm water exercise program, the Arthritis Self Management Program and now introducing the UK developed **Challenging Pain** course.

Arthritis Care in the UK developed this course because arthritis is the most frequent cause of pain; it is often the main reason people visit their GP; and pain is the number one reason people with arthritis contact their Arthritis Foundation.

The course includes a variety of participatory pain management techniques designed to help people deal with their pain. It runs for two consecutive weeks – 2.5 hours each session. It is designed to be a short course as many people with chronic pain find it difficult to commit to at-

tending a six-week course. Two lay leaders who have had personal experience of long-term pain deliver the program.

Week 1 includes –

- What is Pain?
- Know Your Pain
- Why Challenge Pain?
- Conscious Breathing
- Why Exercise?
- Making Changes for the Better – setting goals
- Managing Stress
- Relaxation.

Week 2 includes –

- Getting Through Your Day
- Can Medication & Other Therapies Help?
- Relaxation – Visualisation
- Managing Negative Thoughts
- Can Clear Communication Help?
- We CAN Challenge Our Pain.

If members are interested in participating in this course, please contact Wen in the office, and we will put your name on a list and get back to you as soon as we complete the training of our leaders, and sign the agreement with Arthritis Care.

**Elizabeth**

# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

## May

**Monday 5 Arthritis Support Group**

Time: 10.30am –12noon  
Venue: Hellenic Club , Phillip

**Saturday 10 Young Adults Group**

Time: 12 noon onwards  
Venue: Wests Rugby Club

**Thursday 8 RA & Sjogren's Interest Group**

Time: 10.30am –12noon  
Venue: Hellenic Club, Phillip

**Thursday 15 Art for Arthritis**

Time: 10.30am –12 noon  
Venue: Grant Cameron Community Centre ,  
Mulley St Holder

## June

**Monday 2 Arthritis Support Group**

Time: 10.30am –12noon  
Venue: Hellenic Club , Phillip

**Thursday 12 RA & Sjogren's Interest Group**

Time: 10.30am –12noon  
Venue: Hellenic Club, Phillip

**Saturday 14 Young Adults Group**

Time: 11 am  
Venue: National Museum

**Thursday 19 Art for Arthritis**

Time: 10.30am –12 noon  
Venue: Grant Cameron Community  
Centre , Mulley St Holder

**Sunday 22 Variety Concert**

Venue: Austrian Club, Heard St  
Mawson  
Time: 1.30pm  
Cost; \$10  
Bookings essential

**Monday 30 Membership Renewals due**

## July

**Monday 7 Arthritis Support Group**

Time: 10.30am –12noon  
Venue: Hellenic Club , Phillip

**Thursday 10 RA & Sjogren's Interest Group**

Time: 10.30am –12noon  
Venue: Hellenic Club, Phillip

**Saturday 12 Young Adults Group**

Time: TBA  
Venue: TBA

**Thursday 17 Art for Arthritis**

Time: 10.30am –12 noon  
Venue: Grant Cameron Community Centre  
Mulley St Holder