

Arthritis

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

**Incorporating
Osteoporosis
ACT**

NEWSLETTER June 2009

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Move it or lose it !

Arthritis ACT Board 2008-09

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From the CEO

As I write this column, we are in the middle of our involvement in the four day National Science Festival, during which some 12,000 children plus adults will file through the doors. This is a great opportunity for us to raise awareness of building healthy bones. We try so hard to get this message out into the community to educate about the importance of children getting adequate levels of calcium and vitamin D, to ensure they build a strong healthy bone mass into their adult years. Unfortunately it is not an easy message to deliver, due to the fact that the payout for this effort comes some 40 to 60 years later in life. For those of you, who are parents or grandparents of young children, please encourage their carers to take this message seriously, because Osteoporosis is something we want our young people to understand and prevent by sensible diet and healthy lifestyle choices. For more information please check the information on our website or go to the Osteoporosis Australia site www.osteoporosis.org.au

You will note by referring to Monte's column that we have been actively engaged in a whole lot of things in the past few months, quite tiring even reading about it actually. On this note I would like to thank all of the staff and volunteers who have worked so very hard recently to help us deliver some outstanding events and activities. Well above and beyond the call.

Into the future we leap with vigor and excitement, and I would like to raise with you some of the major items on the boil.

We have just received some sponsorship to run a seminar for people recently diagnosed with inflammatory arthritis. This seminar will combine medical and lay speakers and will aim to assist participants to find out the facts from the experts and to understand the opportunities available for self management. More information will be made available on the website and in our next newsletter, although we anticipate this will be conducted sometime in November.

World Osteoporosis Day this year is on Tuesday 20 October and plans are well underway for a first rate seminar for the public and allied health professions. The venue is yet to be determined and exact topics to be refined; the seminar will be held from 2pm to 4.30pm on this day.

This next item is also a very exciting and potentially bold new step for our organization. We have set the date of Friday 16 October 2009 for our first annual Arthritis ACT Ball. Please mark your diaries, talk to your friends and get ready for the night of your life. We would love to have an understanding of those who may be interested in attending and in this respect it would be greatly appreciated if you would

send your expression of interest, without obligation, either by mail to me at the office or via email to events@arthritisact.org.au

Finally, I would draw your attention to my letter which is attached to the 2009/10 membership renewals, which highlights some exciting news

about our new Arthritis Data Management System (ADMS), an innovative membership drive and details of the new fees and charges for the upcoming year.

As always, if you have suggestions, comments or just want to have a

chat please feel free to contact me at any time via my mobile 0417 575 537.or email tony.holland@arthritisact.org.au

Best wishes
Tony Holland

Education News

Arthritis Awareness Week

We had a very active Arthritis Awareness Week, capped off by a well-received 7 April launch event at the Croquet Club which was attended by some prominent ACT politicians.

We held an information table and display at Woden Plaza Shopping Centre on 8 April. I fronted an information table at Ainslie and Mawson Bluebell Pharmacies on 31 March and 1 April respectively and I presented talks on arthritis to the Department of FaCSIA, ACT Health, the ACT Legislative Assembly and the Southern Cross Health Club.



Warm Water Exercise Program

Four "Strength and Balance" workshops were conducted in April as part of a Falls and Balance Grant from ACT Health. These workshops were run by an

exercise physiologist and were aimed as a preview to what we hope will be ongoing workshops.

Looking to continue the Strength and Balance workshops, a couple of volunteers were trained by the exercise physiologist to be trial Strength and Balance session leaders. Some trial sessions are being run by our trained volunteers in May and June, after which the program policies and procedures will be reviewed to see whether the workshops can be continued.

As usual, we need more WWX members who would be willing to fill a supervisor's or backup supervisor role. Please contact Shirley Syme at 6288 4244.

Community Talks

Volunteers and staff have presented 23 community talks to the end of May. These include 9 on arthritis, 9 on 'Keeping Mobile with Arthritis and Osteoporosis' and 5 on osteoporosis.

The audiences have been diverse – from government departments to nursing homes. Sizes have varied from an intimate few to audiences of more than 50.

Presentations are usually done with the assistance of a laptop and projector but some groups prefer

a talk without the slides. The questions and feedback presenters receive indicate that Arthritis ACT is providing a very useful service.

If you would like to be a community talk presenter or have a suggestion as to an organisation or group that may be interested in a presentation, please contact Barbara Gillies at 6288 4244.

Retirement Expo

We had a community stall at the 15-17 May Retirement Expo sponsored by Volunteering ACT. The stall offered information about arthritis, osteoporosis and about Arthritis ACT for potential volunteers.

Living Life @ 55+

This event, aimed at the older population, was held at the Tuggeranong Community Centre on 17 March, I presented a short talk about arthritis as part of the program. Thanks to the volunteers who helped staff the stall.

Senior's Day

This annual event was held at the Old Bus Depot. Our stall was represented by Board members and staff and the public interest was brisk. I gave a public presentation on *Keeping Mobile with Arthritis and Osteoporosis* at the

Education news continued

Southern Cross Club in Woden on 17 March in conjunction with Senior's Week.

Joint Replacement Seminar

A very informative shoulder, wrist and hand surgery seminar was presented by two surgeons on 31 March in Charnwood. A physiotherapist also discussed preparation for surgery and how to have a successful recovery.



National Science Festival

With support from Osteoporosis Australia and Arthritis NSW, we held a display booth and delivered cooking demonstrations at the National Science Festival 27-30 May at the National Conference Centre.

The focus was on easy-to-make calcium-rich healthy diet for bone strength and development. The



dieticians delivered three cooking workshops daily and we ran a competition that required students to answer a brief quiz to test their knowledge of healthy bones and diet.

Several attractive prizes were awarded from a drawing of entrants. Congratulation to Lachlan, St Benedicts, Narrabundah; Andrew, St Josephs, O'Conner; Isabelle, Red Hill Primary; and Jessie, St Francis Xavier, Higgins.

Thank you Katrina, Joe and Helen for your involvement.

Falls Prevention Project

The ACT Health "Stay on Your Feet – Falls Prevention" Promotion Grant project, aimed at incorporating a falls prevention message into all of our member and outreach services, is nearing completion. In addition to incorporating the falls prevention message into our standard Arthritis and Osteoporosis Community Talks, we developed a new Community Talk called *Keeping Mobile with Arthritis and Osteoporosis*. We also developed an information sheet on *Arthritis and Falls* had falls prevention as the topic of our support groups.

With the aim to expand our WWX program by the addition of volunteer-facilitated *Strength and Balance* workshops, we ran professionally led workshops as a lead up to the volunteer led workshops as discussed in the WWX section above. Continuance

of the workshops may depend on procedure and policy reviews that are currently underway throughout AACT.

With materials and training provided by Adult Learning Australia, Barbara Gillies is facilitating our first "Learning Circle" titled *Healthy Ageing* and focusing on preventing falls. Learning circles are small groups who meet a number of times to discuss, learn about and consider action on an issue of concern to them.

Learning Circle discussion centres on concise written information facilitated by a group leader whose role is to assist in lively but focused discussion. The leader is not expected to be a teacher or subject expert. Participants may undertake 'homework' or research on specific topics between meetings.

Following an evaluation of this trial circle, further circles may be offered. If you might be interested in forming or participating in a Learning Circle, please contact Barbara at 6288 4244.

Support Groups

A combined support group meeting was held on 14 May at the Hellenic Club in Woden. Dr David Graham, AACT Board member and former head of the Therapeutic Goods Administration delivered a very interesting talk titled *Understanding Medicines and How They are Approved*.

Monte Scharbow
Educator & Support Coordinator

Fundraising & Social News

The Committee is engaged in or planning the following projects:

VARIETY CONCERT at Austrian-Australian Club, Heard Street, Mawson on 21 June. See notice below.

CARD DAY - 11th September. See notice below. We require craft goods for the trading table. If you can help, please contact Maureen on 6281 1967.

FYSHWICK STALL - Sunday 18th October

We need items such as books, bric a brac, jewellery, crockery etc in good condition for the stall. Maureen on 6281 1967 is able to provide limited storage of goods, if you are doing a winter/early spring clean up.

We are unable to accept the following: plants, shoes, clothing and electrical goods.

WINE & CHEESE EVENING on 6 November

MEMBERS CHRISTMAS LUNCH and Raffle on 9 December

John Martin, Chair of the Committee invites any interested members or family to attend the meetings of the committee. These are held on the 1st Monday of each month at 2.00pm at the Arthritis Office. Please contact John Martin on 6251 5132 or Tony in the office if you would like to attend.

VARIETY CONCERT

Austrian-Australian Club,
Heard Street, Mawson

Sunday 21 June. 1.30 pm

Admission \$10

Featuring The Austrian Choir, "Con Brio" Women's Choir and the Canberra Hungarian Dancers

Raffle - great prizes and Lucky Door Prize.

Delicious afternoon tea will be available at a small cost.

Bookings: Arthritis Office on 6288 4244, Austrian Club on 6286 5793 or at the door prior to concert.

CARD & GAMES DAY

Canberra Bowling Club

Hobart Ave, Forrest

Friday 11 September

11am-3 pm

\$20 per person

Sandwich lunch, glass of wine, tea/coffee & petit fours included.

Gather a group of friends to play bridge, mahjong, scrabble or any game of your choice. There will be a trading table, lucky door prizes and raffles.

RSVP by Friday 4 September

Table bookings Muriel 6286 2237, Helen 6290 0092

ENTERTAINMENT BOOKS

The brand new 2009/2010 Entertainment™ Book is packed with hundreds of valuable offers from the best restaurants, cafes, takeaway chains, activities and accommodation.

Buying this book is a great way to support Arthritis ACT whilst also helping you to save 25-50% off a variety of things.

Copies can be purchased for \$50 each from the Arthritis Office,

Falls Facts

Did you know?

- Falling is not a normal part of ageing.
- Most falls can be prevented.
- Falls can cause major injuries and reduce your independence.
- Arthritis increases your risk of falling by 2.4 times.

One major risk factor contributing to falls is **dehydration** – not drinking enough water!

Water is vital for:

- Maintaining good kidney function.
- Regulating body temperature.
- Keeping the blood stream moving.
- Aiding digestion and helping to prevent constipation.

We need to drink 6 to 8 glasses of water or some type of fluid every day. You cannot always rely on the feeling of thirst, it diminishes as we age. Each day the body loses about 2.4 litres of water, more is needed in hot weather, when exercising or if you are unwell with a temperature, vomiting or diarrhea.

What happens if you don't drink enough?

Mild dehydration can cause headaches, tiredness, mood changes and slow responses. More severe dehydration can cause low blood pressure and increase the risk of falls, weakness and confusion.

Important tips to remember

- If you have been advised by your doctor to limit your fluid intake,

please check with your GP to establish the correct daily fluid intake for you.

- Drinks with a high caffeine content (coffee, tea, cola drinks) and alcohol can actually dehydrate the body by increasing urination and fluid loss.
- Mineral waters contain various salts. It is advisable to limit or at least choose low sodium varieties (less than 30mg sodium per 100mls). Flavoured and sweetened mineral waters are the same as soft drinks.
- If you are concerned about kilojoules and body weight, it is best to limit fruit juice and juice drinks, soft drinks and cordials.

Source: ACT Health Falls Prevention

Member's Story — Jenny Peaker

I have been a member of the Arthritis Foundation ACT for well over 20 years, and have been asked by Tony Holland to write my story for a new segment in the newsletter. I agreed in the hope that some newly diagnosed young people and their parents reading this may feel more positive about their future.

I was diagnosed with Juvenile Rheumatoid Arthritis (JRA) at the age of 12 years. This was in 1961 and thanks to my parents' care and persistence the diagnosis was made and treatment started in the early stages of the illness.

An adolescent child does not want to be different and often will not

tell friends that he or she has arthritis. Despite the aching and swollen joints you try to keep up with your peers. You feel you are trapped in an old person's body. It is only now at the age of 60 years that I feel I am catching up to my friends as they too have aching joints.

It has been an incredible journey since those early days. My first hip replacement was at the age of 29 (I have had a revision and the other hip done since). Just recently I had a tendon transfer on my right hand. All of these surgeries have been very successful.

I have a very supportive husband of 35 years and we have a son aged 27, a beautiful daughter in law and a

grandchild due in September. I was able to have a career as a travel consultant and have been very fortunate to have travelled extensively overseas and in Australia.

People with arthritis know that it is a constant battle to keep moving especially first thing in the morning. I am still winning the battle with the help of excellent medical practitioners, medications, exercise and a positive attitude, plus a lot of luck. I have also survived a battle with breast cancer in 1998.

My parents were told I could be in a wheelchair by the age of 21. At 60 I am still walking without a stick and enjoying life to the full.

Jenny Peaker

CDSM Leadership Training

Leaders Training in the "Living a Healthy Life with Long Term Conditions" Course was conducted throughout March. The training was a huge success and we now have 14 new, very enthusiastic, committed Leaders.

The course runs for 2.5 hours a week over 6 weeks and teaches people living with long term conditions to better manage physical,

social and emotional symptoms, treatment regimes and lifestyle issues. Courses are held at a number of Health Centres, Arthritis ACT and the SHOUT Offices in Pearce.

For more information about the content of the course, venues or dates please contact Arthritis ACT.



Steel Magnolias

Canberra Theatre Centre is helping local charities to raise funds by allowing them to retain \$10 from each full price (e.g. \$50) ticket sold by the charity to performances of Steel Magnolias. The play runs from Wednesday 8 July to Saturday 18 July. It stars, amongst others, Geraldine Turner, Debra Lawrence and Jacki Weaver in a new version of the play that inspired the hit movie. In the haven of Trudy's beauty salon, six very different women come together to share their secrets and bare their souls.

Ideally, the Theatre would like groups of 10+ but the offer is valid for any amount of seats. As an added bonus, if you book for Thursday 9 July, there is a Post Performance Q&A with the cast.

If you are interested in seeing this show and helping Arthritis ACT, please contact the office.

THANK YOU....

To Alison Kendall for her kind donation to Arthritis ACT.

Griffith University Well-being and Chronic Illness Survey

New research is currently being undertaken to investigate links between positive actions, wellbeing and chronic illness. This PhD research, conducted by Rebecca Eaton (r.eaton@griffith.edu.au), examines the impact that 'accentuating the positive' can have for those living with illness.

If you are 18 or over and are currently living with Osteoarthritis or Rheumatoid Arthritis and would like to participate, please go to the Arthritis ACT website (www.arthritisact.org.au) to access the survey. The online survey takes approximately 20-30 minutes to complete and participation is anonymous and confidential.

As an incentive, all participants can choose to enter a draw to win one of four \$50 shopping vouchers.



Dates to Remember

- ✓ 16 Oct - Arthritis ACT Ball
- ✓ 20 Oct - World Osteoporosis Day
- ✓ Nov - Wyeth Early Arthritis Seminar

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Drug cuts hip fractures

Researchers at Canberra Hospital believe a new type of drug has contributed to a significant decline in hip fractures among older ACT women.

In a study to be published in the journal *Bone*, Alexander Fisher, Eddie O'Brien and Michael Davies examined the rate of hip fractures among elderly people in the ACT. They found that from 2001 to 2007, hip fractures declined by 36% in women aged 60. There was also a decline in hip fractures among elderly men but it was not statistically significant.

They say the lower hip fracture rates have come about because of a decline in hormone replacement therapy and a higher uptake of bisphosphonate drugs, which combat osteoporosis. Bisphosphonates help prevent bone loss by inhibiting osteoclasts, or cells that "eat" into an digest bone.

Dr Eddie O'Brien, a senior specialist in population health at Canberra Hospital, said the study "...really reinforces the fact that it is important for people, particularly women, in these age

groups to have adequate anti-osteoporotic treatment."

Dr Fisher said "This is, I think, strong evidence for the public, for GPs, for specialists, to take [osteoporosis treatment] seriously." He said osteoporosis in men was increasing, but a recent study showed women were 10 times more likely than men to fill a prescription for an anti-osteoporosis drug.

Condensed from "The Canberra Times", 16 May 2009

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

June 2009

- Monday 1 Arthritis Support Group**
Time: 10.30am –12noon
Venue: Hellenic Club , Phillip
- Monday 1 Fundraising Meeting**
Time: 2.00pm
Venue: Arthritis office
All Welcome
- Thursday 11 RA & Sjogren's Interest Group**
Time: 10.30am –12noon
Venue: Hellenic Club, Phillip
- Saturday 13 Young Adults Group**
Time: 11.30 am
Venue: Belconnen Ten Pin Bowling
Enquiries: Melany at brandi5@bigpond.com
or 62380674 (leave a message
during work hours0
- Sunday 21 Variety Concert**
Venue: Austrian Club, Heard St Mawson
Time: 1.30pm
Cost: \$10
Bookings essential
- Tuesday 30 Membership Renewals due**
- Tuesday 30 WWX Supervisors Meeting**
Time: 3.30pm
Venue: Arthritis office

July

- Monday 6 Arthritis Support Group**
Time: 10.30am –12noon
Venue: Hellenic Club , Phillip
- Monday 6 Fundraising Meeting**
Time: 2.00pm
Venue: Arthritis office
All Welcome
- Thursday 9 RA & Sjogren's Interest Group**
Time: 10.30am –12noon
Venue: Hellenic Club, Phillip

- Saturday 11 Young Adults Group**
Time: 12.30 pm
Venue: Southern Cross Club Phillip

August

- Monday 3 Arthritis Support Group**
Time: 10.30am –12noon
Venue: Hellenic Club , Phillip
- Monday 3 Fundraising Meeting**
Time: 2.00pm
Venue: Arthritis office
All Welcome
- Saturday 8 Young Adults Group**
Time: 2.00pm
Venue: Questacon
- Thursday 13 RA & Sjogren's Interest Group**
Time: 10.30am –12noon
Venue: Hellenic Club, Phillip

September

- Monday 7 Arthritis Support Group**
Time: 10.30am –12noon
Venue: Hellenic Club , Phillip
- Monday 7 Fundraising Meeting**
Time: 2.00pm
Venue: Arthritis office
All Welcome
- Thursday 10 RA & Sjogren's Interest Group**
Time: 10.30am –12noon
Venue: Hellenic Club, Phillip
- Friday 11 Card Lunch**
Time: 11.00am –3.00pm
Venue: Canberra Bowling Club
Hobart Ave Forrest
Cost: \$20
Bookings Essential
- Saturday 19 Young Adults Group**
Time: 11.30am
Venue: Floriade (meet at Regatta Point)