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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

Welcome to the first edition of our Newsletter for 2008. It is shaping up to be quite an exciting year for Arthritis ACT.

In February the Board recruited three new Directors: Dr David Graham, recently retired head of a Commonwealth Government health agency, Ms Anne Messenger the Communications and Marketing Manager for a national health training organisation, and Ms Helen Tyrell the CEO for a national health charity.

We are delighted that these three people have joined our Board and we look forward to working with them as we continue developing our Foundation into the future

Our new brochure and website are almost complete and we are extremely grateful to The Australian Pharmacy Group for their sponsorship of this project.

Check out the website from the beginning of April, at www.arthritisact.com.au and let us have your feedback. A special launch with the Australian Pharmacy Group is being planned.

Arthritis educators from around Australia completed a training program in Melbourne last week to introduce Arthritis Care's **Challenging Pain**

course into Australia. We believe it is a very good tool, and encourage you to get involved if persistent pain is a problem for you. A small grant from the Health Promotion Fund will assist us to promote the program in the ACT.

Our Arthritis Week activities will include a Fyshwick Market Stall on Sunday 6th April, an Arthritis and Exercise seminar at the Hellenic Club on Tuesday 8th, a joint replacement seminar at the Vikings Club in Tuggeranong on Wednesday 9th and an "Art for Arthritis" session run by Raelene McNamara in Holder on Thursday 10th.

We hope that the Art for Arthritis session will develop into an ongoing art class for our members and I am really pleased that Raelene has offered to run this for us.

Bookings are essential for all these activities. Please see the back page for details and call Wen to make your bookings.

I look forward to meeting up with many of you at these events.

Take care,

**Elizabeth Scrivener
Chief Executive Officer**

Education News

Warm Water Exercise

A workshop or possibly an ongoing WWX session aimed at providing a guided exercise program or workout for members is in the initial discussion stage.

A continuing safety issue at TCH involves members ignoring change room rules. Continued disregard for this safety and maintenance issue may result in TCH increasing our fees, or even loss of the venue for our WWX sessions.

To enhance the safety at the WWX sessions, we are encouraging all members to participate in the pool rescue procedure and cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training that the pool supervisors are currently required to attend.

There is no charge for the training and the safety of all members will be enhanced if more members are aware of the rescue procedures. Members will be advised when the next training sessions will be held.

Due to administrative changes at Simply Wellness, the Sunday session is being moved to the same time, 1:30pm, on Saturday commencing 15 March.

The Monday and Thursday sessions at Black Mountain School continue to struggle with attaining the minimum number of attendance and may soon have to be discontinued.

Pool rescue procedure testing at Simply Wellness and Black Mountain School were successfully conducted. St John Ambulance personnel observed and advised. Based on these tests, pool rescue procedures have been prepared.

A WWX supervisor Memorandum was issued in February. Periodic memos will be issued to supervisors with the intention of keeping supervisors updated while holding fewer supervisor meetings in 2008.

We welcome Shirley Syme to the new role of Supervisor and Sessions Coordinator. Shirley will be the primary contact person for supervisors concerning session supervisor scheduling. Shirley is a regular volunteer in the office and we greatly appreciate her willingness to take on this additional responsibility.

Roger Killeen continues with overall management of the WWX program.

Community Talks

Through 2007, 24 Community Talks presentations were delivered to various community groups. All received positive feedback with the quality of presenter's skills being the highlight.

Our presentations on Arthritis and Osteoporosis have been upgraded and revamped. The PowerPoint slides have been made more interesting and, hopefully, more enjoyable to watch.

Many PowerPoint presentations are plagued with excessive wordiness that results in the audience reading the screen instead of listening to the speaker, so the presentation slides have had the wordiness reduced and, in addition, relevant pictures have been added, or have replaced lines of text entirely, to spice up the visual presentation.

A new Community Talks presentation has been developed called *Exercise: Move it or lose it*. It offers guidelines to developing a home exercise program for improving strength, stamina and suppleness.

Thanks to Carol McKay for continuing to manage the Community Talks program and for coming up with the concept for the new exercise presentation. Thanks also to all the volunteer presenters for their capable delivery of this well-received and worthy community service.

Arthritis Awareness Week 2008

Arthritis Awareness Week 2008 has been set at Sunday 6 April to Saturday 12 April 2008.

Procedures are being implemented to gather information from consumers to measure the effectiveness of the campaign. New Arthritis Information sheets are available to help launch the week's events.

Three seminars are planned:

Arthritis – It's Your Move:

A two-part presentation, the first part is a general overview of arthritis and its management and the second part covers guidelines for exercise for improving stamina, strength and suppleness.

It's Your Move – Joint Replacement:

A presentation by visiting orthopaedic fellow Gawel Kuliscewicz, covering surgical options, mainly for hip and knee; pre-surgery preparation and post-surgery care.

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Ed news continued....

“Art for Arthritis”:

An introduction to art and painting presentation for those with arthritis. I am most grateful to Raelene McNamara for offering to run this session.

Self Management Programs

We continue to offer a range

of self-management programs. I am grateful to Jo Stewart for coordinating this important area of our work. At present we are running a Chronic Conditions Self Management program at Holder, which runs until 2nd week of April.

A training program is also underway to train leaders in the new Challenging Pain course which we plan to offer in the

near future.

We continue to promote the Arthritis NSW Challenging Arthritis on-line course and are planning an Arthritis Self Management Course and Osteoporosis Self Management course later in the year.

Monte Scharbow

Fundraising News

Towards the end of 2007 our Board agreed that the Fundraising Committee would benefit from a change of emphasis, and to reflect this, it will now become **The Fundraising and Social Events Committee.**

Helen Cody has very ably chaired the Fundraising Committee for quite some time, but because of other commitments within the organisation, and her recent appointment as a Director of Osteoporosis Australia, she felt it was time to step

down as chair of the Committee.

At the last Committee meeting John Martin was elected Chair of the new Committee and plans are underway for a great program of events for the year which include:

- ◆ The Bulb drive (copy of the catalogue in this Newsletter)
- ◆ Entertainment Books – will be available in the office in March
- ◆ Austrian concert on Sunday 22 June

- ◆ Fyshwick Stalls - 6 April and 19 October
- ◆ Card Lunch on 12 September
- ◆ Wine and Cheese evening on 7 November.

If any member is interested in joining the committee to help us organise these events for our members and the public, please contact John Martin on 6251 5132 or Elizabeth in the office. We would be happy to give you further information on the great work this group is doing, and how you might be involved.

Scleroderma Support in the ACT

We are trying to gauge the interest in starting up a support group for people with Scleroderma in the ACT.

The Scleroderma Association in NSW understands that there are a few people in our region who might benefit from meeting together on a regular basis for a cuppa and a chat. If you have Scleroderma, or know someone who does, please make contact and we will see what we can do.

Pre-Conception, Pregnancy, Parenting and Arthritis Research

Research is being conducted examining the experiences of women and men with arthritis who have faced challenges associated with pre-conception, pregnancy and parenting.

Women and men who have ceased arthritis medications in order to fall pregnant as well as people who have faced arthritis related issues associated with pre-conception, pregnancy, post-birth and caring for young children are encouraged to be involved.

I am asking others who have experienced these issues to share their challenges and their coping strategies with me, through a confidential survey, so that I can produce a publication that will assist men and women feel less alone when embarking on the journey from chronic illness to fulfilling parenting.

This research is conducted in accordance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research, produced by the National Health and Medical Research Council of Australia.

If you are a woman who has stopped medication to fall pregnant; if you are a man who has stopped medication in order for your partner to fall pregnant; if you have experienced a post-birth flare; faced breastfeeding and medication issues; or have overcome challenges caring for your baby alongside the management of your arthritis, your experiences could greatly encourage others.

If you wish to be involved in this exciting and important research, please contact Suzie May at suziemay@prma.com.au or by mail at

PO Box 542 Floreat Forum, Perth Western Australia 6014.

Reminders.....

Bulb Drive

The Bulb Drive is an opportunity to beautify your gardens for spring using drought tolerant Tesselaar bulbs and at the same time help us raise funds for the Foundation.

The catalogue is enclosed. **Orders due** back in the office by **28 March** and will be available for collection from the 2nd week of April. Payment to be made out to Arthritis ACT.

Fyshwick Stall - Sunday 6th April

Items such as books, bric a brac, etc in good condition are required for the stall. Please no plants, shoes, clothing or electrical goods. **We desperately require some space in a garage to store these goods prior to the stall. We also need people to help out at the stall on the day. Can you help us with either? If so, please contact the Office.**

Entertainment Books

We will again have the ever popular Entertainment Book for sale. Pre-order your copy now as they sell fast. A good gift for a birthday, or other special occasions.

Austrian Concert

The Austrian Concert will again be held at the Austrian Australia Club, Heard Street, Mawson at 1.30pm on Sunday June 22. **Mark** this in your diary now!

Mountain Goal

Melanie Brocklehurst contacted me in November last year. She is a wonderful young lass originally from the UK, who is now living and working in Australia. Melanie wanted to raise funds for us over the Christmas holidays by getting her friends and relatives to sponsor her on her hike to Everest Base Camp.

I will let her tell some of her story, as recorded in an email to her friends who were sponsoring her ...

Elizabeth Scrivener

As some of you know, I am heading to Nepal on 16 December to trek to Everest Base Camp. Part of the reason for my trek is because I was keen to use it as an opportunity to raise money and awareness for osteopenia.

Osteopenia is when you have some bone loss and your risk of breaking a bone is increased. One way of maintaining bone strength and preventing fractures is to do regular physical activity, including walking, weight bearing exercises and exercises for balance, strength and posture.

Osteopenia and osteoporosis are not well known conditions, yet 2 million Australians are affected by osteoporosis and there are 20,000 hip fractures per year in Australia (increasing by 40% each decade).

The total costs relating to osteoporosis in Australia are



\$7.4 billion per year, of which \$1.9 billion are direct costs.

In order to try and raise awareness and funds for osteopenia and osteoporosis, I am seeking your sponsorship for my taking part and hopefully successfully concluding, the 20 day trek to the Base Camp at Mt Everest ...

As many people will know (having been dragged up a hill with me) I have been preparing for the trek by walking Mt Ainslie and the other hills around Canberra. Unfortunately there is little I can do to prepare for the altitude in Nepal, so I am keeping my fingers and toes crossed that I have no problems on that front!

In an email I received from Melanie on her return she says ...

I wanted to let you know that I successfully completed my trip! Although none of my group went to Everest Base Camp because of the weather, we actually went higher than that to Kala Pattar on New Years Day, reaching 5545 m.

What a wonderful inspiration to us all. Melanie has raised approximately \$1,500 from her family and friends for us to continue our work with those with osteopenia/osteoporosis. A magnificent effort.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

March

Thursday 13 RA & Sjogren's Interest Group
Time: 10.30am –12noon
Venue: Hellenic Club, Phillip

Friday 28 Bulb Orders in

April

Sunday 6 Fyshwick Market Stall

National Arthritis Week April 6 –12

Tuesday 8 Arthritis - It's Your Move Seminar
Time: 9.30 am for 10 – 12 noon
Venue: Hellenic Club , Phillip

Wednesday 9 It's Your Move - Joint Replacement Seminar
Time 9.30 am for 10-12 noon
Venue: Vikings Club, Tuggeranong

Thursday 10 Art for Arthritis
Time: 10 am for 10.30 –12 noon
Venue: Grant Cameron Community Centre
27 Mulley St, Holder

Saturday 12 Young Adults Group
Time: 11 am
Venue Walk in bird aviary
Federation Square

May

Monday 5 Arthritis Support Group
Time: 10.30am –12noon
Venue: Hellenic Club , Phillip

Thursday 8 RA & Sjogren's Interest Group
Time 10.30 am—12 noon
Venue Hellenic Club, Phillip

Saturday 10 Young Adults Group
Time: 12 noon onwards
Venue: Wests Rugby Club

June

Monday 2 Arthritis Support Group
Time: 10.30am –12noon
Venue: Hellenic Club , Phillip

Thursday 12 RA & Sjogren's Interest Group
Time 10.30 am—12 noon
Venue Hellenic Club, Phillip

Saturday 14 Young Adults Group
Time: 11 am
Venue: National Museum

Sunday 22 Austrian Concert
Venue: Austrian Club, Heard St Mawson
Time: 1.30pm

Monday 30 Membership Renewals due