

Newsletter July 2010

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Christmas in July Lunch

Tuesday 6 July Noon

**The Weston Club,
1 Liardet St
Weston**

cost: \$25

RSVP: Pat 6288 5209

Maddie 6288 6935

**next meeting: Thursday 8 July
coffee morning**

The June Meeting

Our speaker at the last minute was unable to come so we had a more relaxed meeting during which we talked about various issues in more detail.

- Thanks to Lorna, we are raffling a signed Brumbies shirt, to be drawn at our Christmas lunch. Thanks to Pat, Maddie, Pam and Jenny for organising both the raffle and the Christmas lunch.
- Thanks also to Lorna for our lovely new name labels that we wear at meetings.
- Shirley is encouraging members to write a piece about themselves for the memory book. It would be nice to add to the ones we have.
- Caroline spoke about her activities: she is Vice President of Health Care Consumers Association (HCCA) of which our group is a member. HCCA is an umbrella group for health care in ACT, speaking on behalf of the consumer ie us. Consumers want a voice and need some feed-back and we need to look at a social model rather than a medical model. Where is the support for people to keep well rather than patching us up when we get sick?
- Caroline is a community representative on the Domiciliary Oxygen and Respiratory Advisory Group which

is currently reviewing its policy. With the changes from AirLiquide to BOC for most people and a government contact intervening, Caroline would like feedback on how you are finding the new system. The Committee needs to ensure we are getting the best service.

- Caroline is also a community representative on the Intensive Care Unit Clinical Information and would like feedback from those who have dealt with Intensive Care.
- Caroline is a member of the COPD Patient Task Force, a part of ALF. She would like to see a liaison officer between ALF and the local group as the other states have to enable us to hold more lung awareness activities. Caroline would also like another Canberra member on the Task Force to provide back-up and support. Meetings are once a month by teleconference, to talk about planning for future events, such as the Year of the Lung, and discuss what is happening at ALF HQ.
- Helen and Caroline met with Margaret and Clare from AsthmaACT to talk about closer liaison between the two groups.
- Thursday 14 October is World Spirometry Day – or Test Your Lungs Day. We are hoping it will be set up in a place like a shopping centre to enable passers-by to stop and test their lungs. We will support this activity with our presence and our handouts.

Comments from the meeting

- Have somebody talk to pulmonary rehab groups about our group
- the meetings have been informative and helpful eg meeting others with the same complaint
- reinforcing rehab through organised exercise eg 'gym at Y'
- advertising – need new members
- maybe somebody from pulmonary rehab represent ACT on ALF
- older person's mental health doctor visited me – had not heard of Lung Life
- being an original carer, I have carried on with the club because of the friendship and hope my being a member can help
- apart from a lot of useful information at meetings, it is a friendly enjoyable outing
- come to meetings for friendship and support. A social outing.
- Esther to give demonstration on squats

Physio visit

In April, we visited the Canberra Uni Physiotherapy Department to be practice patients for the students. Ten of us took part – Clive, Ray, Ebba, Val Reid, Pam, the two Robyns, Judy all from Lung Life plus Keith and Brian from the YMCA gym sessions, encouraged by Pam. Wendy was delighted with the turnout. Our next “gig” should be mid August, four weeks after the new intake start on 19th July but that has to be confirmed of course.



For more information, see www.lungfoundation.com.au
More information on European *Year of the Lung* activities, see: <http://www.ersnet.org/yearofthelung>
More information on worldwide *Year of the Lung* activities, see: www.2010yearofthelung.org

Happy Birthday to Ebba: 90 and going well

This month we are celebrating the 90th birthday of Ebba, one of Lung Life's long term members. Ebba was born in Canada to Norwegian parents who moved there with three children during WW1 – her father was away fighting and her mother felt that conditions would be better for them away from Norway. Ebba, the fourth child, was born and grew up in Montreal, Canada with her two brothers and one sister.



Ebba at picnic at Black Mountain Peninsula

During WW2, she worked for Montreal Office of the Norwegian Shipping and Trade Mission keeping track of the merchant vessels sailing all the seas for the war effort, then moved over to the Norwegian Legation. Later, she joined the Canadian Foreign Service, being posted to Norway as she was fluent in Norwegian because of her family background.

After that, Ebba worked in Ottawa, then Washington, then in 1955, Canberra. This was Canberra before the Lake! A big adjustment: from knee deep snow to hot summer. It was in Canberra that Ebba met and married her husband Geoffrey. Originally from England, Geoffrey was a Quantity Surveyor who opened the Canberra Office for Rider Hunt & Partners and engaged Ebba to work in the office. During this time, she took up golf, having a thoughtful and generous boss. Geoffrey unfortunately died of an asthma attack in 1980.

Ebba and Geoffrey had two children, both of whom attended the Grammar schools. They are now married, with daughter and family living in Canberra and son and his family living on Thursday Island.

Like many who have migrated from one country to another, Ebba is torn between Canada, where she grew up with her family, and Canberra, where she has lived for many years and made many good friends. She does however feel that Canberra is 'home' and plans to spend many more years enjoying it. We plan to spend many more years enjoying it with her. Congratulations, Ebba.

Woodsmoke Policy Review Workshop Wed 19 May 2010

Representing Lung Life Support Group, I attended a workshop at the Department of Environment, Climate Change, Energy and Water with 12 others, including representatives from the heating industry; the building industry; the Department of Health; ActewAGL; the Environment Protection Agency and Community Councils as part of the Government review into woodsmoke. We first had a brief history of dealing with woodsmoke in ACT; then a discussion of the next steps in improving air quality.

- From 1991, increased legislation has been used to improve air quality – on the licencing of firewood merchants, on the type of wood that can be sold; on the type of heater that can be sold and its installation; on the amount of emissions given off.
- In 2001, A *Don't burn tonight* voluntary campaign was begun, targetting those with woodheaters, with some promotion through the media, and running during June, July and August each year.
- In 2004, the wood heater replacement scheme was begun, funded solely by ActewAGL. Currently, there are 5 000 heaters in ACT and 807 heaters have been removed since 2004. These are then destroyed. Less than 4% of heating in ACT is now by woodheating (compared with about 25% in Tasmania and about 10% in NSW). A survey will be conducted soon to see why some people are still use woodheating.

We know that woodsmoke is a complex mixture of gases and particles, the main pollutants being carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides, air toxics and particulate matter. These can irritate the lungs and affect people's health. People affected by neighbouring woodsmoke can phone *Canberra Connect (13 22 81)* to complain. First a letter is sent to the address, saying a complaint has been made and including some information material. This is then followed up if another complaint is received.

With all of these steps in place, air quality has improved markedly in ACT. The meeting discussed how to improve it further.

- Much of the discussion turned around better education of the public on the dangers of the woodsmoke, on the current legislation, and on the ways to lessen the amount of woodsmoke.
- Co-existing with this is the need to ensure the monitoring of emissions is effective to make sure that woodfire heaters are not emitting at dangerous levels, particularly in the Tuggeranong Valley where the woodsmoke hangs around as a consequence of the inversion effect.
- We also said that we would like to see an expansion of the rebate to include suitable electric and renewable heating to enable more people to participate.

The final report is to be tabled by last sitting day of the Government in September (23 September). We look forward to the future action as a result of the review and to further improvement in the air quality in Canberra.

Correction

- Last month's article about *Living a healthy Life with long term conditions* had an incorrect phone number. If you want to know more about the course or book in for the next one, phone: 6207 9977.

This course is organised by the *Community Health Intake* (CHI) which offers a single point of entry for ACT residents who wish to use ACT Government health services in the community. If you phone the number above, staff can give you information about their services, make appointments or co-ordinate ongoing health needs. It offers services in Acute Support Program; Aged Care and Rehabilitation; Child, Youth and Women's Health Program; Continuing Care; and Drug and Alcohol Program. For further information, phone 6207 9977 or see the ACT Health website:

www.health.act.gov.au

- Apologies to Richard White, Convenor – Australian Dust Diseases Coalition, for writing his surname incorrectly in the last issue – a mental glitch.

Richard has received news that the Federal Government is slowly attending to some of the recommendations of the Senate's *Inquiry into Workplace Exposure to Toxic Dust*. The SAFE Work Australia (SWA) Council has commissioned a review looking at establishing nationally consistent workers' compensation arrangements for asbestos-related diseases. The review is expected mid-year. Richard's pleased with this action but is wondering why it's limited to asbestos-related diseases and is not including other dust diseases as well.

Coincidentally, the Canberra Times reported on 5 June that the ACT Supreme Court had awarded Leonard Parkinson half a million dollars damages after developing mesothelioma from working in asbestos-filled roof cavities between 1969 and 1976 at Monaro Mall, now Canberra Centre. As there is no Dust Diseases Board in the ACT, this case sets a precedent as to how entitlements will be assessed in cases against employers.

Pied Piper of tobacco marketing breathes his last (CT 14 May)

- World wide, tobacco claims 5 million deaths a year; half of long term users die from a tobacco caused disease.
- Lung cancer rarely seen before 1930. Now it's the world's leading cause of cancer death, leading prostate and all other cancers. In Australia, lung cancer rates are now falling since 1973 when health warnings first appeared.
- Australia is a leader in global tobacco control and its initiatives have dominoed around the world. The recent initiative for plain packaging is the latest significant decision.

Snippets

Article in Canberra Times 16 May: Almost two thirds of women have trouble sleeping because their partner snores..The Breathing Right Survey found that breathing problems, especially snoring, are experienced more by men. Women endure the consequences. Of those with partners who snore, 57 percent said that it was the cause of arguments and 29 per cent had decided to sleep in separate rooms.

May Woman's Day: a recent US study found that asthma sufferers had a six-fold greater risk of colds if their vitamin D levels were low.

From Dr Jonathan Wright's USA newsletter (March 2010): an interesting placebo study enlisting 92 patients found that standardised ginseng (300mg per day for 3 months) significantly improved lung functions and exercise capacity in patients with moderately severe chronic pulmonary disease. The degree of improvements was quite striking. For example, maximum oxygen consumption increased by 37.5% compared to the placebo group.

From CT 23 May

a US woman whose husband died of chronic pulmonary disease has won \$US29 million in damages against the tobacco company she blames for his illness.

Information available for loan

contact Chris on 6288 8463

- Passive Smoking info sheet
- A guide to preventing falls for older people - booklet
- Beyondblue Guide for Carers - supporting people with depression etc.
- Older People and Depression - booklet
- Time to take some healthy measures - booklet
- Podiatry info.

Dates for your diary

Friday 27 August National Tree Planting Day to commemorate those who have passed away from lung cancer (of which there are more than 7000 a year (also Daffodil Day)

1-8 September Asthma week

Wednesday 8 September National Self Help & Support Group Awareness Day

Thursday 14 October World Spirometry Day – part of **2010 Year of the Lung** activities - involving public lung testing in hospitals and clinics around the world

18-24 October Carers Week

November lung awareness month

Wednesday 17 November World COPD Day

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