

December 2014 Newsletter

**Providing a supportive and informative environment for people
with a variety of lung conditions and their carers.**

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Next Meeting: Thursday 8 January 2015
10.15 am - 12 noon
The Burns Club
8 Kett Street, Kambah
ACT 2902

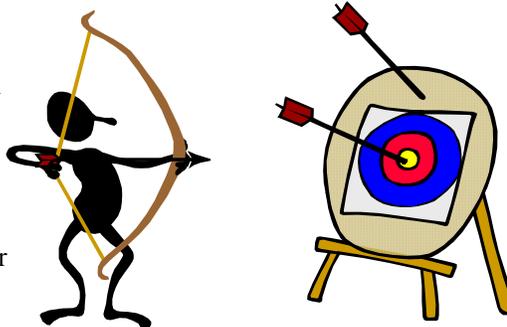
Get together for the new year, catching up with friends, dealing with the question of "Who will follow in Helen Cotter's footsteps?" plus some other business and a lighter program.

Dates for your diary

Thursday 11 December 2014 Christmas Luncheon

November meeting Helen Cotter

This was the last meeting for the year. Next month, we have our Christmas lunch instead of the meeting. Today, we spent some time organising our World COPD Day event and the Christmas lunch, both of which are reported on later in this newsletter.



Chris presented our finances for the year, reminding us about where our money comes from and how we spend it. It's a good reminder of the costs involved in running the group but we are managing well. We thanked Chris for the work she does looking after the finances. Pam Gaston most efficiently ran the meeting and passed the baton on to Chris for the next meeting in January.

We then moved into the second part of the meeting. We had some entertaining games of housie and then we reminded everyone of our events during the past year.

What we did in 2014

The Meetings: We stayed at the Burns Club, Kambah where we've had eleven meetings - some with speakers; some without.

The Speakers:

February: Suzanne from HCCA on understanding PBS and medical entitlements
March: Michael Reid, Pegasus Healthcare - on strokes
May: Wayne Shaw - ACT Fire and Rescue
June: Judy McKenzie - home oxygen care
July: Bernie Bissett, UC Physio on Inspirational Muscle Training
September: Virginia Rasheed - Living life with a chronic condition program

For some meetings, we didn't have speakers.

January: a get together for the New Year.

April: general discussion: what we did when we weren't at the meeting; what was available for us to do.

August: talked about writing up our memories.

October: was supposed to have a speaker but he was sick so we continued 'what brought you to Canberra'. Then Marshall O'Brien led us in "Mindfulness".

November: final meeting for the year: summing up the year.

Activities: as well as our monthly meetings, we've had a variety of activities during the year.

Stall at Seniors Expo

mid-winter lunch

Visits to physio and medico students

Christmas lunch

Education Day @ Southern Cross Club

COPD Working Group meetings

Belconnen coffees

DORSS Committee meetings

Flora Bus and Botanic Gardens

SHOUT Expo - Hellenic Club

World COPD Day

Planning Group meeting

And we've had 11 colourful and informative newsletters from Helen Reynolds. We've done a lot!

As I'm finishing as coordinator, I thanked everyone for their support of the group - of its meetings, activities and its people. This is a communal group - an ensemble - everyone helps in the way they can and this is what makes the group work. I especially thanked those who have helped me significantly in keeping things going:

Newsletter Coordinator

Helen Reynolds creates a newsletter every month, (apart from one in December for January, as there is no January newsletter). It features:

- regular items like write ups of the meeting business, the speakers and the activities we have held in the last month.
- other items about lung issues, health issues, over-50-years-of-age-issues. These often have to be researched. The World Wide Web is a font of information.
- interesting tit-bits, jokes, cartoons and colour.

This newsletter goes to about 100 people: about 50 have a chronic illness; the rest work in the health or related fields or are interested supporters.

RECEIVING THIS NEWSLETTER: *Please be aware that if you receive this Newsletter by post and you have an email address and would like to receive it instead by email you may send your request to Helen Cotter at lung.life1@hotmail.com.*

Helen's other roles:

- Helen Reynolds is the Canberra Representative on CPAG, the Lung Foundation's advisory group for COPD. Every two months, representatives from every State and Territory get together to pool information and discuss issues. They have just started to use Skype for the conferencing - it's a learning process for all.
- Helen is our representative on the local COPD Working Group that meets every two months at the hospital under the auspices of Beth Forbes. Its members are people from the Health Industry who deal with chronic lung conditions in the ACT.

Helen does a fabulous job. And we thank her very much.

Coordinator of events:

Pam Harris coordinates many events for the group and she coordinates a worthy group to assist her.

- Pam and friends set up and take down the stands for the Seniors Expo and World COPD Day and other expos - and they stay much of the day, hopefully with breaks by other Lung Life volunteers.
- Pam is the contact person for the visits to Physio and Medico students, ensuring that a sufficient number will be going to provide benefit to the physio and medico students.
- Pam and friends also organise the wonderful special lunches we have every year - the mid-winter lunch and the Christmas lunch: liaising with the club about the meal and the numbers; ensuring they know

who's going; organising hampers for raffling; organising special effects and keeping us entertained throughout the meal.

It's a significant role, most essential for the well-being of our group and we'd be lost without her.

Coordinator of the finances:

Chris Moyle looks after our finances and does it most efficiently. Chris has learnt how to do banking over the internet since she took over the role - something to be proud of.

- She pays our bills through internet transfer.
- When a member passes away, we donate \$50 to the Lung Foundation - through internet transfer.
- Chris looks after 'the bus', which is passed round our meetings to collect what members like to give - a gold coin or your spare cash!
- Chris keeps a close eye on our finances to ensure we have a sound balance.

Chris's other activities:

Speakers

Chris Moyle organises the speakers for our meetings.

- Chris and I (Helen Cotter) get together to discuss the speakers/topics you have suggested in the meetings and decide which ones to follow up.
- Chris then does the follow up, contacting them and organising which month they come.
- She follows up with an email thank you after the meeting.

"There is no pleasure in having nothing to do; the fun is in having lots to do and not doing it."

Mary Wilson Little

Archives

Chris is also our archive keeper and that includes looking after our collection of photos.

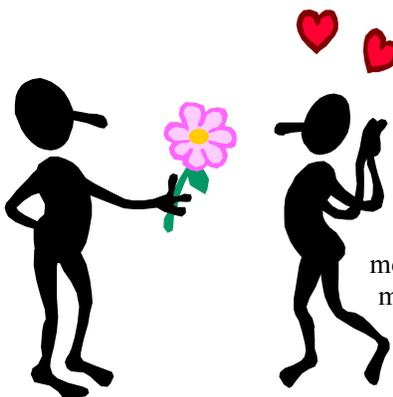
- Whenever we take photos of Lung Life activities and people, we send a copy to Chris to archive.

Chris is a very valuable and much valued member of the group. Her expertise in shorthand is an added and most welcome bonus. To know she is busy taking notes and relieving you of that burden is, to say the least, liberating. Thanks Chris!

Assistance by other members

A general thanks to all those who provide comments and feedback when I ask for them. And a general thanks to those who have come to some extra meetings/ coffee that we've had to discuss something. It's difficult to make all the decisions on one's own so it's good to get the feedback from others.

Thanks to all those who assist in small ways to make everything run smoothly. I have enjoyed my time as coordinator but it's time to move on and let someone else coordinate the group.



Something to consider

Helen Reynolds

As I'm sure you are all aware, Helen Cotter is stepping down from the position of Coordinator of the Canberra Lung Life Support Group.

During her five years in the position she has guided the group through the monthly meetings and kept us all abreast with what's going on in Canberra's medical mine field as well as keeping us up to date with other support groups and what they are doing to assist Canberrans. Helen even introduced the meeting to a physical jerks component, very gentle perhaps but we were moving and that is important.

Here is an e-thank-you but, just be patient; good things come to those who wait and wonder.

With Helen's departure from office but not from the group, we need someone to step up and take on this responsibility. To this end Helen has jotted down her "Statement of Duties" so you will have a better idea as to what the position entails.

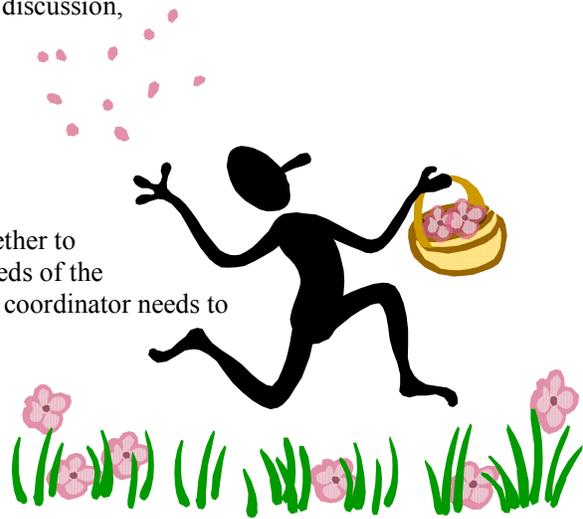
Come the January meeting we will all discuss this and decide how best to go about finding Helen's replacement. Do we have more than one person as coordinator, each with specific roles and responsibilities or break up the responsibilities among a number of people but with a coordinator overseeing.

Please give this your attention in order to assist with the discussion, brain storming is a most worthwhile exercise in matters such as this. Who will bring the butchers' paper?

Coordinator's Role Helen Cotter

The main role of the coordinator is to tie everything together to ensure we function well - meeting and promoting the needs of the group in all its varied ways - support and advocacy. The coordinator needs to keep an overview of:

- Newsletter - currently edited by Helen Reynolds; ensuring past information and future information is included; and articles on health issues etc., keeping in mind that the newsletter goes to people with a lung condition as well as to interested others, predominantly those in health.
- Social and other events: lunches; Expos; physio and medico visits - currently organised by Pam Harris.
- Finances, speakers, archives, photos - currently organised by Chris.
- Meetings - providing, if necessary, follow-up information about a past event; or information about a future event; or allowing time for members to talk about various issues or problems; or catching up on how members are and what they are doing - especially members we haven't seen for a while.



Another role of the coordinator is a computer one:

- to keep a record of membership.
- send out the newsletter every month once Helen Reynolds has completed it.
- attend to emails, maybe forwarding them on to members: eg about events such as meetings, awareness days etc that are on; newsletters from other organisations; people seeking information about/from Lung Life.

A third role is forward planning. To be a viable group, we need to provide what the members want but also be relevant in the ACT world of chronic conditions. We need to be part of the decision making process and ensure that our needs are being met in the best way.

The A-Z of Preventative Medicine Chris Moyle

Incontinence is the number one condition that affects women at any age. Muscles get weaker around the bladder and nerves don't work. It is important to do Kegel (pelvic floor exercises) to strengthen muscles. Incontinence and other complaints of a weak pelvic floor are common for many people who have COPD and other chronic lung conditions. The pelvic floor muscles can be weak from chronic coughing. Learn how to do the tightening pelvic floor exercises and also learn how to tighten these muscles before coughing. Practise these techniques regularly to ensure they become a lifelong habit. (*Better Living with COPD - A Patient Guide*)

In hospital:

- Make sure doctors, nurses and visitors wash hands and use hand sanitiser before and after handling you.
- Flowers can cause allergic reactions and are the worst thing to bring into hospital.
- Don't be afraid to ask for a second (or even a third) opinion. (*Dr Oz*)

Labelling of food: These words appear on many food items: Fat Free, 93% fat free (or whatever percentage), No fat, Cholesterol Free, No added sugar, All natural, Light. These terminologies do not necessarily mean that these foods are low in calories. For example a product that has no fat may contain a high percentage of sugar (or vice versa) and therefore be high in calories. An item labelled 'No added sugar' can still have a high percentage of sugar and therefore be high in calories e.g., fruit juice or dried fruit. Read the food labels for the number of kilojoules or calories per serve and use that information to assist you in balancing your food intake to prevent weight gain. (*From Australian Bone Density Testing Centre*)

Reasons for coming to Canberra

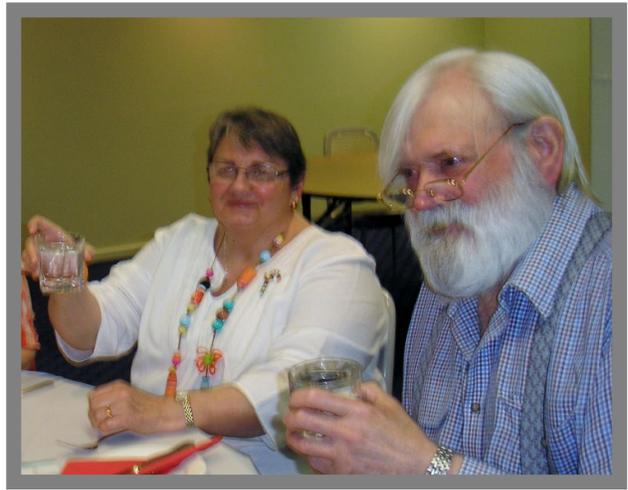
Carmel and David Jarvis were living in Baulkham Hills, Sydney with their daughter when David was asked by his then employer if he would consider a promotion which entailed a move from the Parramatta to the Canberra Office.

When David first told Carmel she asked why, she didn't want to move to "that sterile place", but in July 1976 David made the long journey along the old Hume Highway to take up residence in the nation's capital. On board was furniture including a cot and bed and 2 cats.

Carmel was pregnant and came by air with their 10 month old daughter. Their son was born at Woden Valley Hospital later in the year. Family were left behind in Sydney, although Carmel's mother later moved into Mirinjani Aged Care.

Their children loved the outdoors and they'd often drive to nearby Cotter from Duffy for a barbeque. Carmel says the move to Canberra for work and family has meant "a wonderful life".

David worked as a chartered accountant and Carmel was in charge of neo-natal intensive care. For Carmel the midwifery part of health care has been a lovely experience.



A Guide to Getting Around

Ever had trouble working out your options for getting out and about as an older person in Canberra? A **Guide to Getting Around in Canberra, for older Canberra residents**, provides information about all the transport options available to older people who don't drive or who are getting towards the close of their driving career.

The booklet has phone numbers, web sites and tips on a range of things from accessible travel to social and recreational opportunities, to getting good taxi service. And - wouldn't you know it - it also has a few minor mistakes, so we've enclosed a corrections slip letting you know what those are (or you can look at the online version at <http://cotaact.org.au/policy/a-guide-to-getting-around-in-canberra-for-older-canberra-residents/>).

If you'd like a copy of the Guide, please call COTA ACT on 02 6282 3777 or email Jane (jthomson@cotaact.org.au)

World COPD Day 2014 Helen Cotter

As we did last year, our group had a stand at the Canberra Centre where we talked to passers-by about lung awareness and gave free Piko 6 lung screening to those who wanted it. Esther and Marilyn set up the stand and looked after it for the day. Caroline Scowcroft also assisted during the day as did Beth and Wendy from the Chronic Care Program. Beth performed Piko 6 screening on almost 40 people. Most had good results. Only about 7 were advised to see their doctor.

This year, we were limited in our movements and had to stay at the 'point of sale'.

Beth Forbes, our Chronic Care Nurse and Helen Cotter manning the stand for the Canberra Lung Life Support Group.

We've had two years at the Canberra Centre so perhaps it may be time to hold our event in a different place.



Overall, it seemed a very successful day. We must give our combined “thanks” to Esther, Marilyn, Caroline, Beth and Wendy for their hard work.



Things are hopping at the Canberra Lung Life Support Groups' World COPD Day information stall.



Esther and Marilyn have a welcome break but always on the lookout for an interested passer-by to educate on the question “How healthy are your lungs?”

It was good to see that there were other events in the Canberra/Queanbeyan area:

- Queanbeyan GP SuperClinic held a static display
- Fernwood Gym at Belconnen held a treadmill challenge
- Fernwood Gym at Gungahlin held a ‘Walk for COPD’ and
- Health Hub at the University of Canberra held a morning tea.

There was also a walk and BBQ in the Southern Highlands organised by the LungNet Southern Highlands Group.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to you and your family. The next meeting will be on 8 January 2015 and the next newsletter will be the February 2015 Newsletter. Please give some thought and consideration to the position of Coordinator. Helen Cotter has done her stint. It is time for someone else to take up the mantle.

Christmas Luncheon at the Burns Club



**Thursday 11 December 2014
12 pm for 12.30 pm
Cost \$28**

If you are yet to put your name down contact Pam Harris on 02 6288 2053 or bapjh@live.com.au.

Don't forget if you are unable to attend let Pam know by the Friday 5 December 2014 or you will be liable for the cost of your meal.