

June 2020 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 13 August 2020 (to be confirmed)
10:15 am - 12 noon
Weston Creek Labor Club
Teesdale Close, Stirling ACT 2611

Note: there will be no meeting in July.

Vale Nasri Gholam

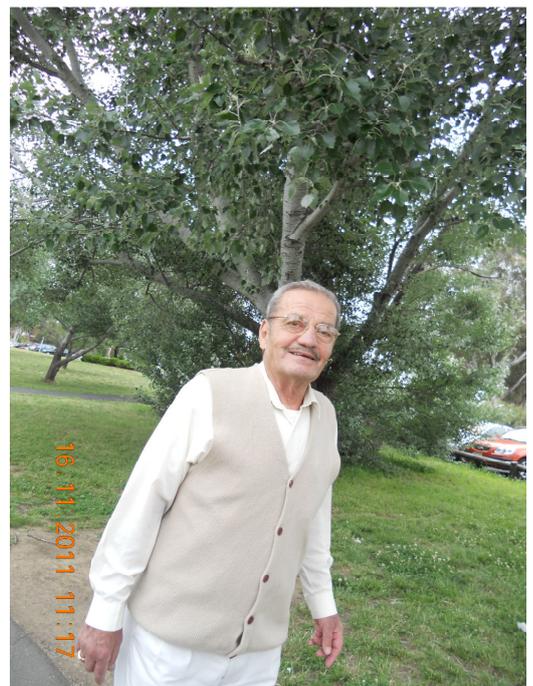
In early March, after several recent visits to hospital, Nasri died in his sleep at home.

Nasri was born in Lebanon. At one time he commenced an aircraft engineering degree but gave that away to run a laundromat in Weston. He worked there for many years, often taking a smoking break outside his shop.

After retirement he joined our group, unfortunately suffering from emphysema and bronchiectasis.

Nasri was a committed Antioch Orthodox Christian and a cantor at his church. This church was considered to be one of the first Christian churches. Acts 11:26 in the Bible states that Jesus' disciples were first called Christians in Antioch - which is in modern day Turkey.

Nasri was a lovely, gentle man and will be missed.



Nasri at the World COPD Day Walk in November 2011.

An Interesting Perspective

From Esther Fitton

For a small amount of perspective at this moment, imagine you were born in 1900. When you are 14, World War I starts, and ends on your 18th birthday with 22 million people killed. Later in the year, a Spanish Flu epidemic hits the planet and runs until you are 20. 50 million people die from it in those two years. Yes, 50 million.

When you're 29, the Great Depression begins. Unemployment hits 25% and global GDP drops 27%. That runs until you are 33. The country nearly collapses along with the world economy. When you turn 39, World War II starts. You aren't even over the hill yet.

Between your 39th and 45th birthday, 75 million people perish in the war and the Holocaust kills six million. At 52, the Korean War starts and five million perish.

At 64 the Vietnam War begins, and it doesn't end for many years. Four million people die in that conflict. Approaching your 62nd birthday you have the Cuban Missile Crisis, a tipping point in the Cold War. Life on our planet, as we know it, could well have ended. Great leaders prevented that from happening.

As you turn 75, the Vietnam War finally ends. Think of everyone on the planet born in 1900. How do you survive all of that? A kid in 1985 didn't think their 85 year old grandparent understood how hard school was. Yet those grandparents survived through everything listed above.

Perspective is an amazing art. Let's try and keep things in perspective. Let's be smart, help each other out, and we will get through all of this. In the history of the world, there has never been a storm that lasted. This too, shall pass.

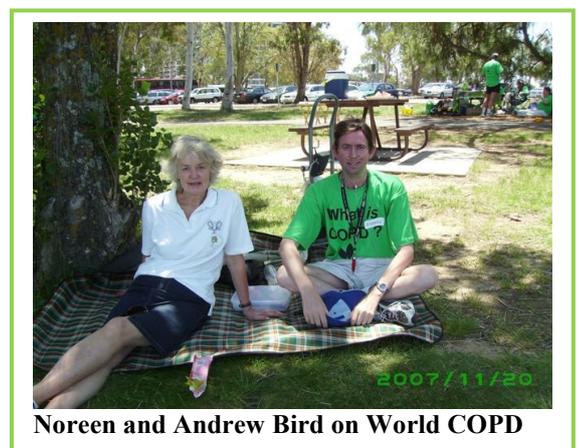
Previously posted by a variety of sources including: <https://www.villages-news.com/>.

Editor's Note: Interestingly one of my grandmothers was born in 1900 and died in 1986.

Remembering Past Members - Andrew Bird

By Chris Moyle

Andrew Bird was a moderate smoker but gave up when he was diagnosed with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), also known as emphysema. For the next three years he struggled with the disease, working to keep fit in readiness for a transplant. At the Canberra Hospital gym, after doing the Pulmonary Rehabilitation Course, he encouraged other patients to attend the YMCA Gym at Chifley, where he'd volunteered.



Andrew had a cheeky sense of humour. He always had a job and various girlfriends, and importantly he looked on the bright side of life. In the final three years of his life he became very proactive in promoting organ donor awareness. He was well known in Canberra for this strong advocacy of organ donation and his volunteer work with the YMCA.

Andrew became a popular member at our Lung Life Support Group meetings. He went onto using an oxygen tank 24 hours a day. This changed in May 2008 when he received a double lung transplant. He could then breathe on his own and returned to playing his beloved lawn bowls at Yamba Sports Club, unencumbered by his oxygen tank. He believed he had a second chance at life. He played sport and put on weight and was looking well.

A few months later his mother, Noreen Bird, said, 'Then bells started to ring that things weren't quite right'. His transplant team was really devastated because an extremely low percentage of people have complications in their first 12 months after receiving an organ and it happened to him. They worked so hard for him. And he fought so hard. Andrew Bird, aged 40, died six months after receiving his double lung transplant.

Andrew's father, Des, was always grateful to Andrew's donor family.

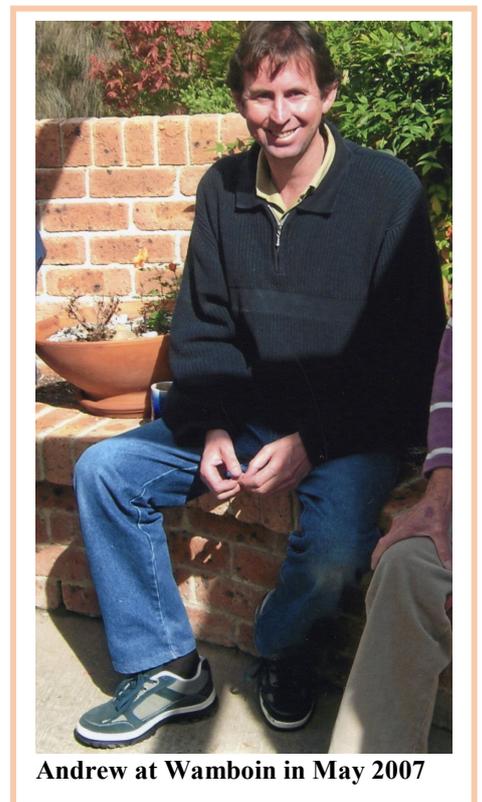
Des rang Ian 'Macca' McNamara on ABC Radio's *Australia All Over* to let him know about Andrew's death and to thank the St Vincent's transplant team. Andrew had been a regular caller to Macca.

'He had a bloody go', Des said.

Among those to offer the Birds their condolences was Chief Minister Jon Stanhope, who wrote a letter of sympathy on behalf of his Government and 'the people of Canberra'.

Our Support Group had a plaque made and installed at the Chifley Gym in a special dedication ceremony.

As a final thought Andrew's wish would no doubt be for everyone to consider the wonderful gift of organ donation.



Andrew at Wamboin in May 2007



The Lung Foundation Australia (LFA) has advised Lung Life that meetings and get togethers should continue to be suspended for the time being.
LFA will be meeting at the end of July to assess the situation going forward.

Pambula Puffers

Helen Cotter

Pambula Puffers is a lung support group down Bega, Merimbula way. Their team leader is Ken Alcock who wrote the following article for us.

Our group is called the Pambula Puffers. We have eight members at this stage, and we have had up to seventeen. As you are quite aware the numbers fluctuate from time to time. We also accept heart patients. The main purpose of the Support Group is getting people out of their houses, and to have a laugh. Once the patients have finished their Rehabilitation Training, which is eight weeks, they then can come across to the Support Group. We meet every Tuesday from 12:30 pm until 2:00 pm. We have a meet and greet first up, then we have our blood pressure and oxygen levels taken. If all is ok, we then use our exercise equipment which includes stationary bikes and treadmills. This will take about 30 minutes. We then do arm and leg weights. After a cool down and stretches we usually have something to talk about. These talks are usually about how crook we are. We always have a question and answer session which could include new medications and stress management. If any question can't be answered I will bring it up with my doctor or specialist. We are governed by both the Lung Foundation and the New South Wales Dept. of Health. We finish with a bit of stress management or meditation.

I personally have had a lot of positive feedback from family members and the Area Manager for Physiotherapy based at Bega Hospital. We have many procedures, but the most important ones are: if you don't feel well you are not forced to exercise, and confidentiality.

Don't hesitate to contact me.

Yours Ken Alcock

Team Leader for the Pambula Puffers.

Ph: 02 6494 4542 Email: kca1@y7mail.com

A little light hearted humour (from the Nepean Men's Shed Notice Board)

The Presbyterian Church called a meeting to decide what to do about their squirrel infestation. After much prayer and consideration, they concluded that the squirrels were predestined to be there, and they shouldn't interfere with God's divine will.

At the Baptist Church, the squirrels had taken an interest in the baptistery. The deacons met and decided to put a water-slide in the baptistery and let the squirrels drown themselves. The squirrels liked the slide and unfortunately knew instinctively how to swim, so twice as many squirrels showed up the following week.

The Lutheran Church decided that they were not in a position to harm any of God's creatures. So, they humanely trapped their squirrels and set them free near the Baptist church. Two weeks later the squirrels were back when the Baptists took down the water-slide.

But the Catholic Church came up with a very creative strategy! They baptised all the squirrels and made them members of the Church. Now they only see them at Christmas and Easter.

Not much was heard from the Jewish synagogue. They took the first squirrel and circumcised him. They haven't seen a squirrel since ...

Future developments: Allogeneic Cell Therapy

Helen Cotter

Researchers are exploring many different ways to develop treatments for all sorts of diseases and conditions. One of the ways is through **allogeneic cell therapy**. That simply means using cells from a donor – friend, acquaintance, or someone you don't know – to improve or cure your condition. At the moment, allogeneic cell therapy is still in its research stage but there are hopes for the future – although maybe not yours or mine. However, there are hopeful signs.

Cell therapy has improved a lot over the years. First of all, cells had to be taken from embryos. Researchers then learnt how they could use your bone marrow cells, and later, cells from your blood or fat tissue. Now they are using cells from a donor – allogeneic cells. These allogeneic cells can be used to replace damaged tissue, or they can release an ingredient which aids self-healing of an organ or region – for instance facilitating anti-inflammation. Researchers are hoping that this could lead to 'off-the-shelf' products.

Mesoblast, one of the companies that research and develop allogeneic cellular medicines for inflammatory diseases, has recently released information that its allogeneic stem cell product has produced good results in patients with COPD with elevated inflammation. These results come from a small trial but do show that there is potential for treating inflammatory lung diseases. The participants' lung function tests showed good results, and there were improvements in their six minute walking test.

While this sounds all lovely (and wouldn't it be good to get rid of the six minute walking test), we're not going to see it tomorrow. There's a lot more research and trialling to be done – but there's hope for the future.

Source: Mesoblast, ASX Announcement, June 1, 2020

How is your memory? Use the three clues to guess the year. (Answers on page 6)

1. In this year:

South Africa had their first ever fully democratic election and Nelson Mandela was elected President.

The movie *Forrest Gump* was released.

The Canberra Raiders won the last of their three premierships.

2. In this year:

On Boxing Day, a tsunami and earthquake wreaked havoc in southern and eastern Asia.

Ian Thorpe became Australia's most successful Olympian when he won his fifth Olympic Gold Medal.

The Brumbies won their second Super Rugby title, beating the Crusaders at Canberra Stadium.

3. In this year:

John F Kennedy was shot and killed in Dallas Texas.

The Rolling Stones released their first single, a cover of Chuck Berry's 'Come On'.

The construction of Lake Burley Griffin was completed.

USEFUL NUMBERS AND WEBSITES

Health Support

Lung Foundation Australia is the national non-government body for lung health information and has a variety of useful information ph: 1800 654 301 or www.lungfoundation.com.au

Travel information:

ACTION: Phone 13 17 10 Web site www.action.act.gov.au

Flexible bus service: a free service that picks up from your home and takes you to places in your zone: call: 02 6205 3555 or email: flexiblebusservice@act.gov.au

Taxi Subsidy Scheme: 02 6205 1012

Interstate Patient Travel Assistance Scheme: for those who need to travel interstate for medical treatment: **Phone:** 5124 9082 or email: IPTAS@act.gov.au

Incidents and complaints: phone the Office of Regulatory Services (Public Transport Regulation) on 02 6205 4585 or email taxiservices@act.gov.au.

Seniors Moving Safely: road safety for older people, at www.seniorsmovingsafely.org.au.

ACT Engine Immobiliser Scheme: aims to reduce motor vehicle theft in the ACT by discounting the fitting of engine immobilisers to seniors' cars. For more information call Canberra Connect on 13 22 81.

Service Stations Providing Driveway Service: service stations where staff will (sometimes or always) provide driveway service for people with disabilities (call Access City Hotline 02 6257 3077).

Oxygen and life support information

Oxygen provision: Provided free to those identified as needing oxygen by a respiratory specialist. Ph: 5124 1063; email: oxygen@act.gov.au ; CPAP provision also available for CPAP clients who meet the criteria.

Essential Medical Equipment Payment: provided annually to those who use oxygen, CPAP, or other life support equipment. For more details, type in: *essential medical equipment payment* or check with Centrelink.

ACT Electricity Rebate: The ACT Government provides a rebate for users of life support equipment such as oxygen or CPAP. For more details, contact: type in *ACT life support rebate* or www.revenue.act.gov.au/community-assistance/life-support-rebate

General information

COTA ACT Seniors Information Line: Phone 02 6282 3777 (business hours Monday to Friday) or www.seniors.act.gov.au

Information and Support for People with Disabilities: NICAN provides information about accommodation, travel, recreation, and support services for people of all ages with disabilities. You can check their website (www.nican.com.au) or call them on 02 6241 1220.

National Toilet Map: You can find a map showing the location of all Canberra's public toilets at www.toiletmap.gov.au.

Answers to the Quiz: (1) 1994 (2) 2004 (3) 1963