



March 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 9 July 2020 (to be confirmed)
10:15 am - 12 noon
Weston Creek Labor Club
Teesdale Close, Stirling ACT 2611

April, May & June meetings have been cancelled.

Cancellations and postponements owing to COVID-19

- Monthly Lung Life meetings for April, May and June have been cancelled.
- Visits to UC to meet with the physiotherapy students have been cancelled.
- Seniors Expo has been postponed, possibly to September.

On a more cheerful note, on Thursday 12th March...

We celebrated

22 years of support, education and friendship for those in the community with chronic lung conditions.

The 22 Year Celebration

After months of planning by a dedicated committee the celebration went ahead just a few days before the decision was made to cease all group activities for three months. So, we were very lucky with the timing.

Close to fifty people attended and these included present and past members, as well as specially invited guests. Geoff Cox, acting as MC on the day, opened proceedings at 11:05 am with an acknowledgement to the Ngunnawal people, the traditional custodians of the Canberra region. Geoff then outlined the plan for the day and introduced the invited guests to everyone. Unfortunately, some of the guests were unable to attend owing to illness or work commitments, but it was very pleasing to have in attendance those that could make it on the day. Some of the special guests' work and their connection to Lung Life are highlighted in this edition of the newsletter and in coming editions you can read about other important guests.



Marina

It was then time for Marina Siemionow to give a Power Point presentation to the group. This presentation gave everyone in attendance a very thorough understanding of the history of Lung Life from its beginnings to today.

Following Marina's walk through the history of Lung Life, which was very warmly received, two important presentations were made. Firstly, Esther Fitton spoke to the group about the helpful work Barry Thom had done over the years and then she presented him with a memento on behalf of the organisation. Next, to Esther's surprise, she was also honoured. Laurelle Ellis came forward and told all present about the work Esther had done to get the group up and running, and keep it going ever since.

A dedicated group was responsible for the organisation of the celebration and a number of them were thanked for their work. They included: Lyn, Pam, Helen C, Chris, Esther and Marina. John, acting as photographer, also did a wonderful job ensuring the day was recorded in picture format.

Dr Mark Hurwitz

Mark was unable to attend on the day, but he has been a very important supporter of Lung Life from the beginning. Many Lung Life members know Mark as he is a well-respected respiratory specialist in Canberra. He was responsible for obtaining financial support from the pharmaceutical company Boehringer, which helped start the group twenty-two years ago. Since that time Mark has talked at Lung Life meetings on numerous occasions, as well as the Lung Foundation's Education Days at the Southern Cross Club. His talks have always been substantial without being too medical.

Mark Brooke

Mark is the CEO of the Lung Foundation Australia (LFA) and was very keen to attend the celebration. However, he was unable to make it when the LFA stopped all non-essential flying owing to the coronavirus.

LFA has been involved with Lung Life right from the beginning. They assisted in the setting up of the organisation and have overseen Education Days and COPD Days which Lung Life has been involved with.

The LFA and Lung Life have participated in launches and Parliamentary visits; most recently they were involved in the launch of the National Strategic Action Plan for Lung Conditions. Lung Life members have also participated in their consumer advisory group. The LFA advocates for lung conditions Australia wide, and we were very sorry that Mark was not able to attend on their behalf.



Barry Thom



The Cake

Barry was thanked for the many years he has been involved with Lung Life as a caring helper to those who need it. Thank you, Barry.

Darlene Cox and Claudia Creswell

Darlene was unfortunately unable to attend owing to illness, while Claudia was in attendance. Darlene is the Executive Director of the Health Care Consumers Association (HCCA), and Claudia is the Health Literacy Officer at HCCA.

Lung life has been a member of HCCA for many years and some members have done the consumer rep course that they hold. We have had their speakers at our regular monthly meetings and some of our members have attended their information sessions and discussions. HCCA does tremendous work for consumers in the area of health care, especially chronic care and is, therefore, a great support for Lung Life and others with chronic conditions.

It was great to have Claudia attend as she has been very important for hands-on consumer education; organising talks and discussions and distributing information.

Angelo Barich and Dick Bell

Dick is the President and Angelo the Treasurer and Acting Secretary of the Sleep Apnoea organisation. Dick was in attendance at our celebration, while Angelo unfortunately couldn't attend. Lung Life member Kaye Powell is the vice-president and many of our members have sleep apnoea ensuring a close relationship between their group and ours.

Esther Fitton

Esther has been a dedicated member of Lung Life right from the beginning. To her surprise, she was presented with a memento for her many years of dedicated service. Thank you, Esther.



Paul Dugdale

Paul was also unable to attend owing to the busy nature of his job, especially at this time. Paul is the Executive Director Medical Services, Canberra Health. He was very supportive of Lung Life when he was Director of Chronic Care Management. He has advocated strongly for patient centred health care, and he spoke at an Education Day a few years ago about chronic care in the ACT. He has supported our efforts to have POCs become part of the oxygen provision scheme. His work in this area has always been appreciated.

How's your memory? The three events listed all occurred in the same year.

Answers on page 6

1. What year did these three events take place?

The Berlin Wall came down.

The Tiananmen Square protests and massacre took place.

The first election for the ACT Legislative Assembly took place.

2. What year did these three events take place?

Apollo 13 successfully returned to Earth.

Scotland hosted the Commonwealth Games in Edinburgh for the first time.

The Captain Cook Memorial, Water Jet and Globe was inaugurated by Queen Elizabeth II.

Remembering the Past...

Caroline Polak-Scowcroft and Bill Scowcroft by Chris Moyle

Caroline Polak-Scowcroft and husband, Bill Scowcroft, joined our Lung Life Support Group in 2006. Caroline had a background in teaching while Bill had worked as a scientist for 20 years and later in management. He studied and worked overseas and in Australia.

On a journey back to Australia in 1995 Bill gave up smoking while their young daughter, Jane, stopped sucking her thumb; however, as Caroline said, the damage for Bill had been done, as they were to discover over the next 14 years. He was on oxygen 24/7 from 2001 and was compulsorily retired at age 66 in 2005.

After Bill spent fifty nights at Canberra Hospital in early 2007, his health was then stabilised and he and Caroline resumed travel to Scrabble tournaments, plus gardening, exercising and attending the theatre, which they loved. Their quality of life was very acceptable until 2009 when Bill was unable to pull up again from a chronic infection and passed away.

Bill had become a passionate advocate for the Lung Foundation Australia (LFA), making a tremendous and lasting impression. In 2008 he helped launch LFA's report on the *Economic Impact of COPD and Cost-Effective Solutions* at Parliament House, where he spoke of his personal experience. Bill also pushed for free oxygen to be supplied to lung patients, resulting in Anne Cahill Lambert successfully lobbying for oxygen to

be provided free of charge to all who needed it, on the basis that it was their medication. So, he made a difference, and would urge those who had ever smoked to have spirometry tests and take positive action to slow the progression of lung disease.

Caroline took over from Laurelle Ellis as co-ordinator of our Group and became the representative on the Lung Foundation's Task Force called the COPD Patient Advisory Group (CPAG) which had phone link ups with representatives around Australia to discuss COPD issues. She became Vice President of the Health Care Consumers' Association (HCCA), an advocacy group for consumers on health issues, and also was community representative on the Domiciliary Oxygen and Respiratory Support Scheme (DORSS) committee.

Bill and Caroline organised outings to such places as the Art Gallery and the War Memorial; and a boat trip to look at the Governor General's gardens. They were actively involved in attending relevant meetings to spread the word about chronic lung conditions and to influence decisions. At election time they attended political meetings to find out the parties' approaches to chronic lung conditions.

By emphasising the need to increase community advocacy and community awareness of chronic lung conditions Bill and Caroline changed the dynamic of our Support Group.



Caroline accepting a community advocacy award in 2017.



Caroline and Bill at Black Mountain Peninsular in 2008.

Quiz Answers: (1) 1989 and (2) 1970. How did you go?

Stay safe everyone.