

The New Link

St George Association

For People with Physical Disabilities Incorporated

"Capabilities Conquer Disabilities"

Vol. 29 No.5

March 2005

Future Programmes

Mar 9	Wed	10.30 am	Wednesday Group	Belgreen
Mar 12	Sat	12.30 pm	The Avenue Café	Oatley
Mar 15	Tues	7.30 pm	Management Committee	Belgreen
Mar 22	Tues	7.30 pm	Patricia Skehan	Belgreen
Mar 26	Sat	10.00 am	Embroidery Group	Belgreen
Apr 2	Sat	10.30 am	Book Club	Belgreen
Apr 13	Wed	10.30 am	Wednesday Group	Belgreen
Apr 19	Tues	7.30 pm	Management Committee	Belgreen
Apr 23	Sat	10.00 am	Embroidery Group	Belgreen
			followed by Afternoon Tea for members/ friends to join in and celebrate St. Georges Day!	
Apr 26	Tues	7.30 pm	Mr. Cesare Stefanato	Belgreen

MEMBERSHIP FEES DUE 1st April – fully employed \$11.00 not employed \$5.50

SEND to Jenny Chin (Treasurer)

Some News That Affects Many of Our Members - PAt DcP

PADP (Programme of Appliances for Disabled People) affects many of our members in a variety of ways. The Association (along with many other organisations) is offering its support to the Physical Disability Council of NSW (PDCN) in their campaign, directed to the NSW Government, on issues surrounding this Programme. They wish to draw attention to the inadequate funding and unacceptable waiting times for essential equipment.

Representatives gathered in the NSW Parliament on 22nd February – Pat Davies represented St. George Association, along with many others from their respective organisations. Ann-Mason Furmage (President of PDCN and member of the St. George Association's Management Committee) has reported people gathered around noon and she spoke to the Manager of Facilities to the Lower House, who advised there were too many people to go into the Parliament. After some lengthy discussion those in wheelchairs were allowed to go in one at a time and sit behind the Speakers Chair, others were able to get into the Gallery.

All of the Parliamentarians were given a Paper prepared by PDCN outlining the need for increased funding for PADP and were given a flower to wear to show their support. The flowers were worn by several of the Opposition and Independent Members.

So the battle goes on! For far too long the disability sector has been trying to seek some realistic funding, appropriate assessments and delivery of equipment within a reasonable timeframe. We hear the same old story "lack of funding". There are huge discrepancies in the way equipment is distributed. Such equipment is vital to peoples' mobility, well being, and their ability to participate in the community. We encourage you to contact your Local Member and raise this issue. Alternatively you may wish to relate any thoughts or difficulties you have experienced to PDCN – telephone 9552 1606.

Future Programmes

**10.30 am Wednesday, March 9 and
10.30 am Wednesday, April 13
Wednesday Group
Belgreen 40–42 Chalmers St., Belmore**

This is a good opportunity to get together, bring along your lunch and enjoy a cup of tea/coffee with friends. A great time to catch up and have a chat. Give Daphne Berger a call on **9718 3678** if you need any other information.

**12.30 pm Saturday March 12
The Avenue Café
32 Oatley Avenue, Oatley**

Food is always a popular attraction. Let's have lunch – it should be a pleasant time of the year weather wise. I did mention in the last newsletter, it would be helpful to advise the Café that we are coming. Please give me a call and make a booking. The Café is right near Oatley shopping centre.

The premises do have an accessible toilet.

Hope you can join us on the day. Look forward to hearing from you. **Please ring me on 9150 5512.**

**7.30 pm Tuesday, March 15 and
7.30 pm Tuesday, April 19
Management Committee
40 - 42 Chalmers St., Belmore**

**7.30 pm Tuesday, March 22
40 - 42 Chalmers St., Belmore**

The guest speaker will be Patricia Skehan (Founding Executive Member of Concord Heritage Society) who will talk about "The Walkers of Yaralla". Who, were "The Walkers" and why was their significant suburban Edwardian Estate left to the people of NSW?

There will also be a bonus viewing of an old Charlie Chaplain movie, which was among the Walker family possessions.

Coralie Lewin has heard Patricia speak on this subject and seen the movie and

says Patricia is a most enthusiastic speaker and well worth hearing.

It sound like this is a night not to be missed, so come along – bring your family and/or friends.

**10.00 am Saturday, March 26
Embroidery Group
40 - 42 Chalmers St., Belmore**

Our regular day falls on the Easter week-end, however the "stitchers" have decided to still go ahead with the day. You are most welcome to come along.

Coralie Lewin (our leader) is always happy to assist and it's a great opportunity to learn more about the craft of embroidery.

Please give me a call on **9150 5512** if you would like any further information.

**10.30 am Saturday, April 2
Book Club
40-42 Chalmers St., Belmore**

This will be the first meeting of the Book Club – Maura Outterside is the Convenor.

"Price & Prejudice" has been suggested for the first discussion. Bring along any of your ideas for future topics and bring your lunch – tea/coffee is available at Belgreen.

If you would like to talk with Maura before attending, please telephone 9718 5803.

**10.00 am Saturday, April 23
Embroidery Group
40 - 42 Chalmers St., Belmore**

This is **St. Georges Day**, so it has been suggested we have an afternoon tea at the conclusion of our embroidery and dress for the occasion in something red/white. Members/friends are invited to come along and join in the fun.

We will have scones/jam/cream, which will carry on the red/white theme.

If you have any other red/white ideas bring them along.

If members wish to stay on we can always order some "dial in food" and have dinner.

**7.30 pm Tuesday, April 26
40 - 42 Chalmers St., Belmore**

Mr. Cesare Stefanato (World War II hero) has agreed to come and speak to us about his war experience when he served in the Italian Army. He has written a book on the subject and apparently was highly decorated for his service.

As this day follows Anzac Day, it seems rather appropriate that we have the opportunity to hear this gentleman's story.

So do come along and perhaps you may be able to bring a friend.

Other Dates

Elizabeth McDonald has advised that to celebrate **International Womens Day March 8** – PDCN Womens Network have arranged a luncheon at the Novotel, Darling Harbour 10.00am – 2.00pm.

For any further information please call Sharon at PDCN – 9552 1606.

I received the following information from Bryan Pirie (Secretary, Lions Club of Oatley) – he wished to advise members and friends are most welcome to attend the following events.

**"Music in the Park" 11.00am – 3.30pm
Sunday March 13** Oatley Memorial Gardens (opposite Oatley Hotel). Free stage entertainment.

**Lions Club Changeover Dinner
June 25 7.00 pm** Roslyn Gardens, Peakhurst.

**Oatley Festival Saturday October 15
8.30 am – 3.30 pm** Frederick Street, Oatley.

Rosemary Gray has advised me there is a **Daily Living Expo Incorporating Aged & Home Care at Rose Hill Race Course on Tues 8th, Wed 9th & Thurs 10 March.**

If you require any further information please ring Greg (Independent Rehab Supplied) on 9620 9177.

Program Report

The barbeque held at Belgreen on 22nd January was a good gathering and members had an enjoyable time together - fun with the cooking, and lots of chatter.

Visit to Vaucluse House

Only 6 members attended, but it was a lovely day – lunch was enjoyed in the Tea Rooms and then we visited the house. Negotiating the gravel pathways from the Tea Rooms to the house was a bit of an effort, but we got there. There is such a lot to absorb when visiting such an historic venue and the documented history makes very interesting reading.

Wednesday Group

Jack Nolan brought along the Award he received from Canada Bay for Australia Day Citizen of the Year, which members enjoyed seeing. Once again, congratulations Jack.

Unfortunately, the guest speaker from the **Laughter Club** was unable to attend the February meeting – so we hope to be able to arrange this for another date. However members enjoyed a chat and then started work on a **jigsaw puzzle**. Member, Maura Outterside recently suggested members may be interested in doing jigsaw puzzles. The puzzle has been started and laid out on one of the small tables in the meeting room. So the idea is, whenever you visit Belgreen you may care to add a few pieces to the puzzle!

Fund Raising – Betty Alwin and her team of helpers are busy gathering stock for stalls to be held during the year.

The Craft Table set up in the meeting room, has proven a constant source of income. Members and friends often make a purchase when visiting Belgreen – so thanks to everyone for assisting in this way.

Betty mentioned to me that “face washers” would be gladly accepted, as they are a popular item on our stalls. If you have any “spare” or even wish to purchase and donate it would be greatly appreciated.

Personal Parts

Congratulations to :

Kris Darbon, who received a Trophy and Certificate at Fairfield Council’s Award Night on 26th November 2004. She had been nominated for an Award and received Winner Category 1 for excellent contribution to the community.

Apparently there were four Councils involved. It was a thrill for her.

Rosemary Gray, who received 3rd place in South Western Regional Tenants Association Inc. Social Housing Volunteer of the Year 2004/05 Awards. The Hon. Joseph Tripodi (Minister for Housing) presented the Awards and read out details as to why she had been chosen. There was a cheque for \$100.00 to add to the occasion.

Well done to you both.

Stan Brierley, who married Valerie on the 11th December. Many members would know Stan – he had been a member of the Association and also served as Vice President. Apparently they had a lovely day for the wedding and everything went off well.

Morrie & Bert Foster are grandparents once again. Son, Grahame and his wife Jennifer now have a daughter born 17th February – Catherine Elizabeth, sister to Jackson. We send lots of goods wishes to you all and look forward to meeting Catherine in the not too distant future!

Some sad news to report – I recently heard from Fred Meads that his wife, Elizabeth died on the 11th November last.

Fred/Elizabeth were great supporters of the Association and Fred was the “caller” for our wheelchair square dancing group “The Square Wheelers” for many years and great times were had over that

period. Our thoughts are with you, Fred.

Our thoughts are also with Daphne Berger, as her long time friend Monica Gallagher died on the 21st February. Many would know Monica, as she used to join in our week-ends away for many years and again, we have good memories of the times we shared.

You will recall Janet Malone had a trip to Iceland a few months ago, so I asked if she would write a story for the newsletter, and she did!

“Christmas In Iceland With Janet Malone”

I had visited my daughter 4 times before but always in summer or autumn. Carolyn has lived in Iceland for 11 years so it has been a wonderful opportunity to explore the country and develop friendships. For a long time I’ve wanted to experience a Christmas in Iceland so at long last I was able to indulge myself for Christmas 2004.

I must admit I was more nervous on this trip as I had not travelled alone for several years and I was more able-bodied than I am now, used a walking stick whereas now I use two Canadian crutches. It is a long 35 hours from Sydney to Keflavik – not an enjoyable trip but one to be endured. However, all aircraft crew and airport staff were very polite, pleasant and most helpful and hence made the flights both ways as comfortable as possible for me.

I landed at Keflavik International Airport (which is attached to the US Nato Base and 40 minutes drive from Reykjavik the capital) at about 2.30pm. The weather was cold, wet and windy as expected. By the time I got to Carolyn’s apartment it was already dark. Cloud cover was thick and low and there was a light covering of snow on the ground.

Carolyn lives in Gardur (pronounced GAR-THUR which means garden) 10 minutes drive from the airport. It is a small fishing village in the south-west of Iceland, set on a peninsula, treeless with a flat terrain covered in lava.

There is little light during winter (3-4 hours) and sometimes because of heavy cloud cover even less. In the two months I was there I only saw the sun 5-6 times. So as you can imagine at times it was very grim, depressing and claustrophobic. There was no popping out for a breath of fresh air. Instead it was a major operation – warm outer clothes (coat, hat, scarf, gloves and boots) and then the worry of slipping on the icy ground. I had expected all this but still found it difficult to cope with at times.

The opposite side of the coin was the wonder of watching or driving through a snowstorm. Seeing the sunset turn the snow pink (not often as I've said), watching the "Northern Lights" dance across the night sky, trudging through snow or 'skating' on ice-covered paths with my crutches.

One day we found the door on my side of the car was frozen shut and couldn't be opened so I had to climb from the driver's seat to my seat and across the gear-stick, etc. – quite an effort I can assure you (especially with a hip replacement) but I made it.

Iceland is a mass of twinkling lights at Christmas (unlike summer when there is almost 24 hours of daylight). Most houses have the roof and windows outlined in lights. Apartment buildings are either decorated as a whole or each apartment individually. Every house, apartment and public building has advent candles (electrical) in a street-facing window – this consists of seven candles set on an inverted 'V' frame. Each village, town and city (Reykjavik being the only one) has decorated street lights and Christmas trees. Some have lights in leafless trees and/or hedges. Public buildings are lit with coloured lights and Christmas trees, e.g., banks, petrol stations, fire stations, police stations etc. All cemeteries (kirkjagardur or church garden) have Christmas lights and families outline the crosses with lights on the family graves. The cemetery lights are left on for the 12 days of Christmas

and all other lights from December 1 to January 6.

Christmas is celebrated on Christmas Eve. Traditionally, the church bells ring at 6.00 pm and then it is time for dinner followed by the opening of presents and Christmas cards (bit of a worry if you have forgotten somebody).

Carolyn and I dined with friends (an Icelandic family) Dinner was as follows:

Entrée - lobster soup

Dinner - smoked park, caramelized potatoes, peas, corn niblets, pickled beetroot cabbage cucumber, potato salad, diced pineapple & peaches in mayonnaise mixed with cream

Dessert - chocolate mousse & ice-cream

(NO fruit, nuts, Christmas pudding or cake).

One day when the weather was good (only – 4 deg.C and sun peaking through the clouds) we decided to drive to Thingvellir (2 hours east of Reykjavid). This is an historic site where the first parliament (The Althing) in Iceland was held in AD930, the oldest parliament in the world. To get there we drove past ski-fields where we saw skiers, snow-boarders, tobogganers and jet-skiers. The road had been cleared so we had a relatively easy drive. We stopped at the information centre for a pit-stop only to find it feet deep in snow with snowdrifts everywhere. The toilets were outside and deep in snow. It was hard going on my crutches but with the help of Carolyn (she pushed, pulled and dragged me along accompanied with lots of giggles) to the disabled toilet only to find, because of the thick ice under the snow, two steps had been carved into the ice (nice and slippery). With much trepidation I managed to get down the ice-steps to the door where I found a large well-appointed and beautifully heated W.C. Needless to say I was just as nervous returned to the car – what an experience!!

Three great things about Iceland are –

- The temperature doesn't get as low as Europe and North America
- It is a dry cold which doesn't get into the bones like the damp cold of the U.K.
- Once you step inside a door it is warm. Hot water from the underground geothermal springs heat ALL buildings and water is in abundance, unlike Australia.

New Year was an event I certainly won't forget. There were fireworks everywhere and I mean everywhere. It didn't matter which way I turned there were explosions of colour. Luckily, the clouds had moved away and provided a wonderful sight. Not organised like Sydney (for obvious reasons) but more colourful. It was great to watch the children out in the snow, wearing snowsuits and waving sparklers. It is interesting to note that Iceland lets off more fireworks per capita than anywhere else in the world on New Year's Eve. It really is an amazing sight.

The day I left the weather was cold, wet and windy (again) with low cloud cover and before my plane could take off the wings had to be de-iced.

In all, I had a wonderful time – both good and bad aspects. It was all well worth the experience.”

Janet, you really painted us a word picture of a most interesting part of the world. Thanks for sharing your holiday with us.

For Sale I have been advised of a motorised scooter, which is for sale. Very good condition with a new battery pack.

Price \$2500.00 – please contact Cath, telephone 9718 2149.

People with Disability Australia Inc..

advise in a recent edition of their E-Bulletin “Using disability discrimination law” is a booklet that explains what is and what is not disability discrimination under the law. It outlines options available to people with disability and explains what happens when legal action is taken.

There are two versions of the booklet, one dealing with NSW and federal laws, and the other with Victorian and federal laws. The booklet is available from the following organisations.

NSW version:

NSW Disability Discrimination Legal Centre tel. 9310 7722
free call 1800 644 419

Victorian version:

Disability Discrimination Legal Service tel. 03 9602 4877 free call 1800 651 275

Management Committee 2004 –2005

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