

# Switched On Seniors

Newsletter of ComputerPals for Seniors – Newcastle Inc.

Volume 13 December, 2013

## President's Report



A joyous holiday. Celebrate with family and friends, or if not able to, enjoy yourself anyway. The last of the classes have been done for the year. We hope that you have enjoyed the classes that you attended this year and your comfort with computing has increased.

We do have an Education Team: Rob Golledge, Ray Hinton, Sandra Keen, Merv. Pope, Col Rizzoli, Lindsay Threadgate and Fred Schinkle as Editor.

They are still slowly finding their way, but are working on Windows 8 Courses. We will be teaching Windows 8 till the end of the 2nd Session, then changing to Windows 8.1. We will put in a short course on how to download Windows 8.1 during the 1st and 2nd Sessions so that those who have Windows 8 will have the skills to download the update onto their computers.

We will not be teaching Windows XP or Vista after April as the call for them has substantially diminished. Also the support for them from Microsoft will be ceasing and they will be vulnerable to security threats.

Session 1 2014 - Some courses are filling very rapidly. The Roster Team and the Education Team will get together to look at those courses that are not proving popular and try to put in courses that you want. Remember the Suggestion Box. If you want a course taught let us know.

**PRIVACY STATEMENT :** Information contained in this Newsletter is only for members of ComputerPals Newcastle.

The other big news is that we are setting in motion the plumbing for the building we are renting. This has not been an easy decision and not taken lightly. After much thought, discussion, emails and looking at our financial responsibilities to our club members we voted unanimously at the committee meeting on the 25th November to start the process of putting in the plumbing (toilet, wash basin, sink and running water). The school has approved our application and with their recommendation it now goes to the Dept. Of Education Asset Management. If they agree then I'll get in touch with Transfield to begin the work.

Some are surprised that our 5 Week courses are \$30 and the Short Courses are \$12. Our rent is doubling next year, from \$4,000 to \$8,000. Just look at the prices that WEA or the community colleges charge and you will realise that we still give quality teaching for a lower price. This can only happen because ALL of our Tutors give freely of their time and expertise.

Our last outing for the year is our Christmas Party to be held on the 4th December at East Maitland Bowling Club. There are now only limited places in the Room we have booked, but if there is an overflow we will have a table for them just outside the room.

Thank you all for support and friendship that you have extended to the Tutors, Roster Team, Tech Team, Education Team and the Committee. Hopefully we are all working to improve our club.

I wish you all best wishes for the coming season and have a rest and come back next year full of enthusiasm to learn more about computing

Agapé Elaine Butler.

## Social Report - November

Brenton Elsey (Social Secretary)

On Saturday 2nd November we had 11 participants for a picnic in Lambton Park.

With the prospect of a possible very warm day, it was decided to meet at 11.30am for a lunch time outing. A couple of early arrivals were able to secure a covered picnic table near lovely shady trees, and this, together with a few fold up chairs ensured we all had a place 'to roost'.



Remember our social activities also involve bringing your camera and submitting your photos to our DigiPals site. Some samples are included on this page.



An animated discussion over topics ranging from computers and cameras to grandchildren and 'saving the world' ensured we all had an appetite for our individual and shared tucker. With a welcome cooling breeze and clear skies, a very enjoyable time was had by all present.

As mentioned earlier, our excursion to Garden Island has had to be postponed until April next year.

However, we have one last event on the social calendar – the Christmas Lunch, which will be held on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> December at the East Maitland Bowling Club, commencing at 11.30am.





## WriterPals Report

Carmel Smith (Organiser)



Our group numbers were almost back to normal for this month, and some interesting and lively yarns resulted from the topics set which were small things that matter and changes I would have made if I could at the time.

We have decided to vary our strategy starting next year. So far I have been setting the monthly topics, but now everybody is going to get a turn at it which relieves the brain-strain for me. It is Lindsay's turn in December to set the topics for February.

Now for the big news! A couple of us were invited to the ASCCA conference in Sydney to receive presentations for the stories and poems we submitted. With the competition being Australia wide, it is quite an achievement to get that far.

I received a third place for a short story "The Hat", but the big one went to Fred Shinkel with Highly Commended for his story "Out of the Blue", another for his poem 1914, First Place and top accolade for his poem "Glencoe" which was named as Best Poem of the Competition. Well done, Fred, and well deserved congratulations!

Digipals also did well, but those results will come in their own report. Congratulations to all who entered.

Our topics for December are

1. A favourite memory
2. Hilarious catastrophe
3. 'twasn't my fault! The devil made me do it!

As always, turn your imagination loose and see where it leads you.

If you have a couple of spare hours on the 9th December at 1pm, please come and join us. You would be made very welcome.

## Christmas Lunch

Our Christmas Lunch this year will be held at the Billabong Restaurant, East Maitland Bowling Club.

This will be a buffet lunch. Cost is \$15.50 per person - pay at the restaurant reception.



Start time is 11:30am for a brief Welcome and Update on Club News. Then we'll all enjoy lunch and socialising.

For the usual reasons of insurance and a full muster check, it would be appreciated if you could fill out the form on the website. Thank you those who have already responded.

Looking forward to seeing you there.

## Windows 8 or 8.1 - Resizing Desktop Icons

Thanks to Lindsay for this useful tip for those Windows 8 users.

In the **Desktop Mode** of Windows 8 or 8.1, Icons on the desktop can be incrementally resized, bigger or smaller. Hover in vacant space of the Desktop, hold down the **Ctrl Key** and move the **Scroll Wheel forwards** or **backwards**.

This will incrementally increase or decrease the size of every icon on the desktop – a much nicer solution than the Small, Medium and Large (otherwise available).

## ComputerPals Mission

Our mission is to educate seniors in the use of computers as a way of enriching their lives and making them more self-reliant.

We bridge the generation gap and assist seniors to find ways to benefit the community through their collective experience and knowledge.

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## Tutors

The Tutors and their assistants are also Seniors and conduct the courses in a relaxed atmosphere. Your questions are welcome during the classes and there is no need to feel embarrassed if you need to ask for something to be repeated. The classroom is fitted with a hearing loop for those people who wear hearing aids.

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## Best Wishes

For our members who are celebrating birthdays and anniversaries - congratulations! To those who are ill our best wishes for a speedy recovery

## Condolences

To all of our members who have lost loved ones recently, please accept our condolences.



ASCCA is the Australian Seniors Computer Club Association.

ASCCA exists to support and encourage seniors to take advantage of modern information technology to meet their individual needs and to provide further challenges. ASCCA's Newsletter and its informative items can be accessed on the web site at [www.ascca.org.au](http://www.ascca.org.au)

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### *Important Committee Members of Your Club*

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**Immediate Past President :**  
Lindsay Threadgate.



**Tutor Roster :** Mitzi Gordon



**Technical Officer :** Neville Clifton



**Rosters :** Judy Wallace





## “Cloud” Computing

The advent of the “Cloud Computing” provides many positive avenues for us to store and retrieve information.

Microsoft, Apple, Adobe, Google all provide “cloud space” for users free of charge for small amounts of data. Additional space is charged.

Why would I use “cloud” space?

1. **PHOTOS** - people who travel upload their photos on this space. It can show others their adventures or retrieved when they return home. In countries where wi-fi is free this works particularly well.
2. **DATA** – if you are working on documents in one place but want access at another time or place they can be retrieved and worked on. For example you could be working on a travel diary entering your experiences whilst on that journey. If your notebook, phone or tablet has limited storage space this provides one solution.
3. **APPS / BOOKS / MUSIC TRANSFER** – those who use iTunes can download songs to all their devices using Apple’s “icloud”. These are available for download from their store whenever you need them – almost. If the song or app is removed from the store it doesn’t appear in the list to be downloaded. My advice is keep a backup of music, apps, books on your computer and another backup on a removable drive

There are many other uses including access to email, contacts etc the list goes on.

However there are disadvantages that may need to be considered. These disadvantages were outlined in a recent ASCCA newsletter and are summarized here.

### Some Disadvantages of Cloud Computing

1. **Possible downtime.** Cloud computing makes you dependent on the reliability of your Internet connection. When it's offline, you're offline.
2. **Security issues.** How safe is your data? Cloud computing means Internet computing. So you should not be using cloud computing applications that involve using or storing data that you are not comfortable having on the Internet. Established, reliable cloud computing vendors will have the latest, most sophisticated data security systems possible as they want your business and realise that data security is a big concern. However when you read that companies such as Sony and Adobe have been "hacked" it provides concerns.
3. **Cost.** At first glance, a cloud computing application may appear to be a lot cheaper than a particular software solution installed and run in-house, but you need to be sure you're comparing apples and apples.

Does the cloud application have all the features that the software does and if not, are the missing features important to you?