



Switched on Seniors

*Newsletter of ComputerPals for Seniors – Newcastle
A Member of ASCCA*

VOLUME 12

ISSUE 11

DECEMBER 2011



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

As we come up to Christmas, the end of yet another year and reflecting on ComputerPals activities, I think 2011 has been a very good year for us. All our activities seem to have been well supported and successful. Remembering our club runs entirely on volunteers and we are self funded, except for the Microsoft support through Donotec, the club must once again be regarded as an outstanding success. This success does not happen accidentally, all members contribute, without students we have no purpose, without tutors we cannot run classes, without technical support our equipment would be a shambles and without a committee we would not be organised. Thank you one and all.

Besides our lessons our Groups, DigiPals, GeneaPals and WriterPals provided members with activities in which somewhere around one quarter of our members participated and if not mistaken derived a great deal of enjoyment. Our Members morning Teas were well supported and provided very worthwhile information to members. Our midyear lunch combined with the Annual General Meeting seemed to be well enjoyed.

Our clubroom has half the computers replaced and most recently new student chairs, I think we all know how hard the Technical Team work. The Roster girls are on the job all the time, they keep it all sorted. Newsletter and Website keep us informed, Class notes and TTT keep the tutors well equipped for that most important job.

You all know about ASCCA right? Well the Australian Seniors Computer Clubs Association run an annual competition with categories for Creative Writing, Photo Slide Story, Digital Photography, Club Website and Club Newsletter. Our club received 11 awards in all, 7 in Creative Writing, 2 in Digital Photography and one in Club Website, that's 10, so what was the 11th? Champion Club in Creative Writing. Now this is an Australia wide competition and of our 11 members who entered 6 received awards, are we the CHAMPION CLUB!!. Oh you want to know who won what? Have a look on our Website, our results are there. Thank you everyone who entered and congratulations to the winners.

Don't forget our Christmas Lunch, at last report there was still room for quite a few, you never know it might just be you who wins one of our Lucky Door prizes. They are worth having.

I hope to see many of you at our Christmas Lunch, to those who cannot make the lunch have a Very Happy Christmas, enjoy the New Year and the break until the end of January. See you all back next year.

Lindsay Threadgate

President Computerpals Newcastle Inc.

Committee Members

President: Lindsay Threadgate

Secretary : Maura Rainbow

Treasurer : Maree Field

Vice President : Rob Golledge

Ass. Treasurer : Michael Pitt

Education Officer: Bruce Deitz

Technical : Neville Clifton

Rosters : Denise Brandon

DigiPals : Carolyn Keane

Newsletter / Webmaster:
Bruce Carter

Tutor Roster : Mitzi Gordon

Social Organiser : Barry Keen

Committee : Elaine Butler

Teams

- Technical
- Rostering/Enrolment
- Education
- Web Page

Contact Us

Committee members listed above may be contacted by following the instructions on the CONTACT US page on the club website.

Committee Report



Technical Team

Neville (pictured) wants to send a ho-ho-ho to his team who have done a magnificent job this year. At present their workload is less because of the fine job done in setting up the computers so well throughout the year.

The new (ergonomically friendly) chairs in the computer room are a great improvement. Students will be able to do lessons more comfortably and more safely.

Domayne Lessons

Bruce Deitz is to be commended for a fine job with the workshops. Preparing and presenting them weekly has been an enormous job. And fortunately for Bruce and Domayne, one which has been rewarded with regular attendances of 30 students.

The club has been given a great donation of surge protectors. Our club's individual members were also rewarded with special membership at Domayne, allowing discounts in areas such as photo prints.

Bruce will continue in 2012 with lessons. This time they will be monthly. Stay tuned for details.

Credits For Courses

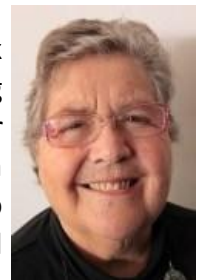
Sometimes members have to postpone lessons because of unforeseen circumstances. The club tries to help in these situations by extending credit for doing lessons at a later date.

Unfortunately some of these credits go on for some time, some forget about them, others delay. As you would understand the treasurer has to account for lingering amounts.

The committee have decided that when credits are approved they will remain in place only for 12 months. After that credits will be withdrawn. The 12 months will be taken from the date of the original course that was postponed.

Seniors Week 2012

Mitzi is our representative on the Senior's Week committee. She reported to us that our normal morning tea date of 19th March, 2012 could be an Open Day for Seniors Week. The committee agreed this would be an excellent opportunity for other people outside the club to come and see "what we do". We hope our members will come to welcome them



2011 enrolment day 2nd Dec, 2011 - 10am to 11:30

2012 enrolment day 3rd Feb, 2012 - 10am to 11:30



Report by Graham



A long year has come and almost gone, but it has been a very productive one. Classes have been well attended and our outdoor shoots have been very well popular. The venues have been varied and most enjoyable, our last for the year being the Hunter River cruise, was completed in magnificent weather with mind boggling photo opportunities. Barry Keen's social report covers this day out.

Now is the time to make sure that batteries are fully charged and equipment is ready for the festive season. Don't miss those never to be forgotten family moments so that in later years one can look back and recall those wonderful moments.

In case you are in a quandary as to what gift to purchase for a family member or friend who is keen on photography, stop worrying, you have a Pandora's Box to choose from; there are numerous items in the \$20/60 range you can select from. Have a look at the online photography companies or visit Domayne (take your membership card for your discount), Camera House or other retailers. Think of an annual subscription to a photo magazine, or a book on photography.

Next year promises to be a big year for Digipals. Shortly you will hear about our new photo project that will run for most of the year, it will be different but it will help us all improve our photographic techniques and it will be fun. So be in it and enjoy the experience.

On behalf of your Digipals committee I would like to wish all our members a very happy Xmas and a healthy 2012.

Happy Xmas Snapping.

Graham



SOCIAL REPORT

Barry Keen (Social
Secretary / DigiPals)



Hunter River Discovery Cruise on 5th November was excellent!

We took over the whole boat for our 55 members who attended. Comments made to me rate this as being another fantastic day and once again the weather was beautiful.



Eight members have put up their photos from the Hunter River Discovery Cruise onto the DigiPals web album and clearly documented the great day out we all enjoyed, what we saw and what we did. Many more folk took photos whilst others simply enjoyed the day. That's what it's all about!

The DigiPals members always take the opportunity of these outings to practise their skills with their cameras. There was plenty to see and wonderful vistas to take photos of including the Newcastle foreshore and skyline from the harbour aspect as we left Lee Wharf in the morning and on our return with different lighting in the afternoon.

All Computerpals members are encouraged to join us at DigiPals meetings on the Third Monday monthly (ex school holidays and January and December) to learn about their digital cameras – how to use it properly; and how to take better pictures. This is supplementary to the specific courses run by the club throughout the year and is free to all financial Computerpals members.

CHRISTMAS LUNCH will be the next outing on 9th December (11:30am for 12 noon) at Kotara Bowling Club. Catering restrictions limit us to 100. Cost is \$26.50 for a 2 course set menu (2 choices of main and 2 choices of dessert will be served to the table alternatively).

Menu and booking information has been circulated by email.

Because of catering limitations everyone wishing to attend is advised to complete the booking form (link in the email) or [\(click on this link\)](#) on the website to ensure you get a seat. **BE QUICK!**

First planned social outing for 2012 will be on **Saturday 4th February to Newcastle Museum and the Maritime Centre.**

Coming up we have Photo Project 2012

This project is aimed at all Computerpals members - to help you learn how to use your digital camera and take better photos. It only needs your desire to learn – we'll help you with the rest! See more about the Project in January/February in the Newsletter and on the club website. There will also be a broadcast email – keep an eye out for it. The Project will operate from the beginning of February through to end of October 2012.



WRITERPALS REPORT

Reports are what I'm told you want but I'm s'posed to keep it short

So now I'll tell you all about the wondrous things I've thought.

I sit each month and think about the things that we could do
And the clever folk in the writers group all write a thing or two

Sometimes the choice is only one, sometimes it's quite a few

And every time I'm just amazed at what they all can do.

Lindsay soon will give their names and say what each has done
'Cause ASCCA put on a writing comp, and CRIKEY! Our group won!

Congratulations, one and all, on the talent you have shown,
And through our president's report, your names will now be known.
My heart swelled up with pride and joy when Lindsay phoned the news,
So Barbara, Fred and Bruce – well done! I'm very proud of you.

Our topic this time is Santa Claus, describe the day he's done

Trying to get all organised to make his Christmas run.

Describe from where you are in life, or set your child-self free

To tell about the Christmas rush that child would like to see.

Now if you have some time to spare and you like to play with words

Come join us in our writers' group and hear the things I've heard.

Our next meet's down at Barry's place, so if it's a sunny day

Come join us under Barry's tree, you just might want to stay.

Next get-together - Monday 12th December @ 1pm

Cheers & blessings

Carmel



GeneaPals Report

GeneaPals group met on 7 November, 12 members attended.

The subject of the day was how to get old photos onto your computer in readiness for putting into your family tree program. This included scanning, using your digital camera to take a photo of an old photo and demonstration of cropping and basic adjustments to brightness and contrast. The ability to do a repair to damage was introduced.

As the first Monday in December is after we finish for the year but we could meet if desired it was communicated to members that if there was enough interest then a meet could be held. There has been almost no interest in a December meeting so the next meeting will be 6 February 2012.

Lindsay

BITS & PIECES



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. To become computer literate at their own pace, in a friendly non-threatening environment and to have fun whilst doing so.

ASCCA's Newsletter and its informative items can be accessed on the web site:

<http://www.ascca.org.au>

So Far

Planning for courses for 2012 are well under way.

Don't forget to regularly check for new courses. Remember our last enrolment day in 2011 is on the 2nd December from 10:30. Failing that you may have to wait until 3rd February, 2012 from 10:30am

To check availability of courses please phone 4961 6576 during office hours.

And the Next Course?

An outline of the courses is available on the website and on notices in the Clubroom. If you need further explanation, the Tutors will be more than happy to advise which course is the most suitable for you to take.

Demand for the courses is high so it is imperative to enrol early and confirm your position by forwarding your payment.



Please check that a vacancy exists in the course before sending payment.

Most Courses are repeated in later sessions.

Best Wishes

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

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.

Condolences

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

Our Constitution

Our club's constitution, as amended at the 2008 AGM, is available to be downloaded and read via the link on the Member's page on the website.

Don't forget to print the calendar that is available on the Club website

HINTS & TIPS

Our Website



www.computerpals.org.au

Important Contacts

Neville Clifton

Technical Support



Desktop Or Notebook?

When buying a computer do I purchase a desktop PC or a laptop? This will depend on your needs and your budget.

A desktop PC is one that is placed in a fixed position, typically on a desk in your office or bedroom. It will come with separate parts — a tower or computer that sits flatter on your desk. It contains the main working components of the PC as well as the DVD drive. Additionally you will need a monitor, keyboard and mouse.

A laptop (or notebook) is an all-in-one device that is portable. You carry this with you from room to room, between home and work. Laptops have a built-in monitor, built-in keyboard and built-in mouse. Screen sizes are usually around 15". Anything with around 10" with a smaller keyboard is usually deemed a netbook or sometimes called an eeePC.

Speed

Performance of desktops and laptops are more similar than in the past and, in some cases, equal. To get equal speed you usually have to pay more for the laptop.

The main area in which desktop PCs and laptops differ greatly is their ability to play games; laptops tend to be less powerful in this area than desktop PCs.

If you want to buy a computer just so that you can view photos, use the Internet or type up documents and spreadsheets, then a laptop is a good choice.

Specifications

The key specifications to look for when buying a desktop PC or a laptop are the CPU, RAM (memory), graphics adapter and hard drive.

The CPU is the brains; the RAM is where all your programs will be loaded (the more RAM you have, the more programs you can load); a dedicated or separate the graphics card is always better than one that uses the RAM to help it display graphics.

Cheaper laptops often have lower specifications than desktop PCs, perhaps with less RAM and a smaller hard drive and less powerful graphics adapter.

The CPU makes a big difference in performance. Look for Intel's Core i3, Core i5 or Core i7 CPUs, or AMD's Phenom II CPUs. Some retailers are still selling older processors, which often look impressive price wise but may be much less efficient.

Screen size

When buying a laptop, what size screen will be suitable for your needs. A 15in (measured diagonally) screen is heavy, but you will be able to view a lot more programs on the screen at once, A 14.1in screen is a good balance.

A desktop PC, could easily use a 22in widescreen monitor or higher.

MORE HINTS & TIPS



Burning CDs and DVDs

Most desktop PCs and laptops come with a DVD burner. Smaller 10" Netbooks do not and rely mainly on using internet and USB drives, although you can buy plug in external drives.

Do new laptops and desktop PCs come with software?

Most laptops and desktop PCs come with Microsoft Windows 7 preinstalled. Some older ones may still have XP, although this would generally be "run out" stock.

Some come with "freebies" but many come with 30 day trials for Microsoft Office and Antivirus Software.

Why buy a laptop?

If you want a computer that to use at home, take to work, or want more freedom to roam you will probably need a laptop. A fully charged laptop can give you a few hours of use.

Why buy a desktop PC?

If you want a computer that can store a large amount of music files or photos or you play serious games, then a desktop PC may be for you. A powerful desktop PC often is less expensive than a powerful notebook. Desktops also may be more easily expanded if your needs change.

Main source : <http://www.pcworld.idg.com.au/>

First Aid Videos

Visit www.secta.com.au to watch some excellent free short First Aid videos on a number of different topics :

On the home page click on U-tube and a list of the videos appear on the right hand side of the website page.



ASCCA 2011 Competition Winners

Today I attended the ASCCA Annual General Meeting and Announcement of the winners of the ASCCA 2011 Competitions.

Our club did very well with winners in order of announcement (If I remember correctly)

Club Website:

3rd Prize, **Bruce Carter**, Webmaster

Creative Writing:

Poetry:

Highly Commended,	Bruce Deitz ,	"Big City Life"
2nd Place,	Bruce Deitz ,	"Wave Riding"
1st Place,	Barbara Bartlett ,	"The Keyhole"

Courage:

2nd Place,	Fred Schinkel ,	"Quite Courage"
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The Door:

Highly Commended,	Bruce Deitz ,	"The Door to..."
2nd Place,	Fred Schinkel ,	"The Opened Door"

A Travel Tale:

Highly Commended,	Fred Schinkel ,	"That Word - "Travel"'"
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Champion Creative Writing Club"

ComputerPals for Seniors - Newcastle Inc.

5 Members entered Creative Writing

Digital Photography:

General Non Enhanced:

Highly Commended,	Barry Keen ,	"Fish Anyone"
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General Enhanced:

Highly Commended,	Lindsay Threadgate ,	"Drying Mud"
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8 Members entered Digital Photography

That's not bad from our 11 members who entered the competition.