NEWSLETTER No 3

Spring 2011

Christophorus House
retirement village

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Editor's Letter

Dear Members and Friends

By the way the temperature has been fluctuating lately between 17 and 23 and with the fragrance of flowers one can notice that spring is just around the corner! Azaleas and camellias have made their appearance in glorious colour, along with the fragrant and pretty jonquils and jasmine. In that sense, it feels like the beginning of a new year, radiating with hope and feelings of joy. A poem *The Seed Shop* expresses this wonderful turning point of the year.

We remember our resident and friend, Bill Harris, who passed away in early July. Bill had a full and active life and this continued when he and wife Elizabeth came to Christophorus House to retire. Bill was a caring and thoughtful man and along with Elizabeth, took an active interest in Village life and those residents needing help and support. Daughter Wendy writes a loving tribute to him.

Hidden talents have come to light in our Hostel resident, Rosa, who shares some of her sensitive poetry. Featured in this issue is an article on conflict and communication and *The History of the Apron* makes for some light hearted reflections on the past.

I take this opportunity to remind readers that our library stocks many books by Rudolf Steiner and other significant philosophical writers which are available for borrowing. If you have a request, please don't hesitate to phone me and I will check on availability. Also, we welcome stories and news you wish to share for our next newsletter. Please contact me in time for the summer edition before the end of November. Until next time, warmest greetings to you.

Monika Bebb
Self Care Liaison Co-ordinator

Maintenance Matters

The Independent Living Units are looking great now with the exterior painted woodwork on Units 1 to 16, with Units 17 to 23 to commence in a couple of months. All Units have had their gutters cleaned and are ready for the coming summer. Hostel renovations are taking shape with the major concrete pour taking place soon and the new ramp and main entrance will have tiles laid shortly. All hand rails on the upper level of the Hostel building have now been finished as well. Quotes have been received for returfing of the main lawn and a retaining wall will be constructed. We have a great team of trades-men and contractors on board who are doing a good job of ensuring all our needs are met. With the co-operation of all the staff, CHRV continues to grow and improve. Thanks to all!

Hayden Ibbett
Maintenance Supervisor

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If you have some information, an event or an item you wish published, please contact Monika on (02)9476 3161 ext 2 or email mbebb@christophorushouse.com.au

From the Desk of the CEO

In the last Newsletter it was reported that capital works around the Hostel, including an extension to the dining/living room area would be completed by 3rd August 2011. Unfortunately we experienced delays due to a couple of factors one being the constant and consistent rain during the autumn/winter months, and secondly, as with most construction work, additional work was found that needed to be done before the extension structure could be raised. Some structural work has needed to be done on columns of the existing building and more work has also needed to be done on the balustrade strengthening project. It has also been decided to erect a railing safety barrier on the driveway in front of the Hostel extension, which will have a three tonne impact capacity.

It is pleasing to report that we have had some gifts towards our Piano Fundraising fund. The October concert, which was to be a brass band affair, has been cancelled at this time due to some logistical issues. It is planned to run a smaller classical musical event early next year, and then to reassess possibilities for future fund raising events. A further appeal letter is included with this Newsletter.

Our 'Planning Committee' has continued to meet regularly in relation to the option to purchase 15 Mildred Avenue, and future development of that site. The timetable is for the Committee to have recommendations to the Board, regarding questions in relation to the Terms of Reference for the Committee, by the October Board meeting.

The Productivity Commission Report (PCR) into the aged care industry was released in August. The ACS, our peak employer association has welcomed the reforms recommended in the Report. ***Jill Pretty CEO ACS***, states;

"Assistance to live independently as we age, and access to the support and accommodation we need in the event of complex health problems should be an entitlement. That entitlement will be elusive without dramatic reform. A system of fair and equitable options for funding a range of services will be a key factor in delivering more quality care and support."

The PCR, if wholly adopted, will see significant reform in the provision and regulation of aged care. The PCR recommends that the individual cost components of aged care be separated and different policy settings be applied, to each component; that is, 'accommodation costs', 'everyday living expenses' and 'care costs (health and personal)'. Also a new 'Australian Age Pensioners Savings Account Scheme' is being advocated, along with a safety net for those with limited financial means including the retention of the concessional place obligations that providers of aged care services have.

The PCR further recommends that the former home, and accommodation bonds be made part of the assets test for determining 'income tested fees'. The ramifications of this for CHRV and other providers are not clear as yet. There are many more recommendations that have been made, too many to list here; the Report runs into several hundred pages.

Whilst the intentions of the Report are good, it is how the government will implement the Report and what sections of the Report it chooses to adopt or not, that will decide whether it is positive or negative to service providers. The Report is left open to interpretation and the 'devil will be in the detail' of government legislation and regulation. The Report does push for more and more user pays, with accompanying regulation making service providers responsible for accommodation provision; although prospective residents who don't have the financial means may end up suffering as the Report emphasises that accommodation is a personal responsibility. The Report also recognises staffing shortages in the years to come and the need for pro-active policies for the recruitment and retainment of nurses in the aged care sector.

The Annual General Meeting of the Company – Christophorus House Retirement Village, will be held Saturday 29th October at 10.30am in the Cottage and all are invited to attend. The formal notice will be mailed out late in September.

We will again this year be having the Carols by Candlelight, and hope to build on the experiences of prior years. This year, attendees will be treated to a 16 piece brass band playing as well as the singing of carols by all. There will be light refreshments served in the Hostel afterwards and this is usually a fun social gathering. I encourage you all to make the effort to come. The date of the Carols night is Wednesday 14th December at 6.30pm on the back lawn at the southern end of the Hostel.

Milan Telford

News from the Hostel

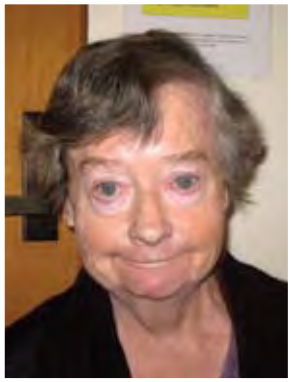
Report by Naomi Douglas, Activities Co-ordinator

Northern Beaches Outing – On the last Monday of each month we take an all day bus trip to places of interest and enjoy lunch together. In July we decided to go over to the glorious Northern Beaches area. Our trip started off with a drive to Manly and then on to North Head with its spectacular views of the city and ocean. It was a sunny, warm day and the sunlight really sparkled on the water. Breathtaking! We followed the coastline around Manly, Freshwater, and eventually finished up at Dee Why RSL club. We made our way to the dining room which had a large selection of food to choose from. Fish and chips were the popular choice and enjoyed by all – especially Allan Clarke! We chatted and ate and savoured our meal. Afterwards we went to the coffee shop located on the other side of the club and had coffee to finish off a wonderful day. Laughter, good food, great company and wonderful views were the order of the day!

Pacific Island Day – On Tuesday, 2 August we celebrated a Pacific Island Day in the lounge room. Jasmine, one of our care staff, provided great music and fantastic dancing. The kitchen spoilt us with wonderful food all day long. Residents worked hard on the decorations to ensure that the right atmosphere was created and the room looked very tropical and worthy of celebrating an Island Day in true style. The tables were particularly pleasing:

simple, yet elegant, and added perfectly to the atmosphere. A short photo tour in the afternoon was shown of some islands with commentary by Naomi, which was well received. Jasmine again enchanted and intrigued us as she danced to some Tongan Island Music with a glass balanced on her head. She is very talented and added a special touch to the day. The Island Day was a great way to inject some summer into the last cool days of winter. The event was thoroughly enjoyed by residents and staff alike. Thanks to all the residents who helped make it so special.

Rosa's Poetry - While sharing some poetry during Happy Hour one Friday, Rosa said she had written some poetry and would we like to hear. She recited the prettiest verse about her newborn grand daughter. It was just lovely! We asked her permission to share two of her poems and she agreed.



Fairy wings so gossamer fine
Caress your hair and make it shine
Like sunbeams on the golden morn
On the day you were born
And when the sun rises in the sky
Open up those little blue eyes
Blue like the sky from above
May your heart be filled with love.

She continued reciting another poem which we also enjoyed:

The XPT goes clickety clack
The XPT winds along the track
It leaves Central Station at 6:41
It must reach Canberra before the sun
It rocks and rolls like a boat on high seas
Fear grips my heart and I tremble at the knees
There's a shop on board if I need fortifying
For my heart is in my mouth and I oft think of dying
There are others on board that must feel like me
And that's reassuring to know
When I reach my destination
Then I'll practice relaxation.

Happy Birthday, Gordon!

Pet Therapy with Gordon

In Memoriam

BILL HARRIS

(24th July 1934 – 4th July 2011)

Bill was a reserved man who showed his care and love for family and friends by offering to do whatever was needed – whether it was fixing or washing a car, helping build a house, repairing furniture or a leaking tap. This continued when he, Elizabeth, and their beloved Schnauchzer Abbie moved to Christophorus House Retirement Village.

Bill was named after his father and grandfather, the third generation to be named William Robert. An ability to figure how things fit together, to build and create structures, was a strong family trait. Bill's great grandfather, William Henry, was a master builder who emigrated from Nottingham to Australia in 1913 with his wife Annie and three sons. Their occupations were to include master carpenter and builder, metal rigger, engineer and mechanic. Several generations also served in the Royal Australian Air Force.

Bill's father met Verna Leonie Callaghan in 1933. Bill was born on 24 July 1934 in Williamstown, Victoria, near the air base. Bill and Leonie's marriage only lasted two years. Both were young, only twenty years of age. Life for Leonie as a single mother was challenging. To earn money, Leonie set up her own dressmaking business in Williamstown then waited on tables at the Scots College in Melbourne during the early years of the Second World War. Meanwhile, Bill went to live with his grandmother, Blanche Callaghan, in Bayswater. She paid for him to have piano lessons, and Elizabeth recalls Bill sitting at Blanche's piano playing and singing Goodnight Sweetheart to her when he was about to leave for National Service.

As an only child, Bill's happiest memories were visiting his Aunty Vera in Warrnambool. We had a lovely holiday together there last year. Bill recalled being allowed to climb up to the top of the water tank and float a small boat. He also enjoyed long walks to the beach where he would spend hours fishing.

Fortunately, Leonie married Eric Wilkie about ten years later and it was a very happy marriage. Eric was a champion blade shearer who won the Australian title. He was a wonderful father to Bill and grandfather to Bill and Elizabeth's children.

Bill attended Bayswater State School to eighth grade. From there he went to Box Hill Technical College at around 14 years of age, achieved Intermediate Certificate and was offered an apprenticeship with Watson Victor, at Nunawading. Watson Victor was at the cutting edge of design and installation of radiology equipment during this period.

Bill met his future wife Elizabeth when they were both working at Watson Victor. He told us he was smitten at first sight. The story goes he asked a mate Bob Staley "who's that red head?" Their first date was a bike ride to Olinda, a challenging test of grit and determination, given the steep Dandenong hills.

In 1956, Bill and Elizabeth married then moved to 22 Cullis Parade, Bayswater. Bill drew up the plans then he and Elizabeth, with the help of tradesmen, built their first home. Four children followed not long after: Wendy, David, Suzanne and Peter.

This was an extremely busy period for Bill and his young family. From 1958 to 1963 Bill worked during the day and studied electrical engineering at Melbourne and Swinburne Technical Colleges at night. This was paid for by Watson Victor.

Bill, Elizabeth and their young family then moved to 24 Janet Ave, Thornleigh, New South Wales, on Melbourne Cup Day, 1966 when Watson Victor's manufacturing division moved to North Ryde. The family had many happy years in Thornleigh. Bill enjoyed family life and his friends at St Lukes, then St Marks Anglican Church. He and Elizabeth gave their four children the most precious gift – a stable, happy childhood. Highlights included beach holidays each year and delicious picnics on the sandy beaches of the Colo River with even the Labrador squashed in the car.

Bill's career continued to progress. From 1970-72, he was Chief Development Engineer of Medical Instrument Company, attached to Watson Victor. Then for the next seven years Bill was employed as their National Service Manager. His responsibilities included troubleshooting faults in x-ray equipment, with numerous trips interstate and to New Guinea. A period in sales as NSW Branch Manager for Toshiba then followed. A highlight for both Bill and Elizabeth was a working holiday to Japan.

Bill's final working years were as a technical specialist with NSW Public Works department from 1984 to 1996. Typical projects included the John Hunter Hospital, New Fairfield Hospital, and the Royal North Shore Angio/Cardiac upgrade. Bill also provided photos for Australasian Radiology: A History, published in 1996. This was the first book published on the subject of the history of Australian radiology and equipment manufacturers. His contribution and that of other early pioneers in electro-medical technology continues to saves lives.

While working at Shimadzu at Westmead Hospital, Bill suffered a stroke. He realised what was happening, walked to emergency and was admitted. I can still recall how worried he was when he studied his tracings from the cardiac machine, then how cross he was when he realised staff had hooked him up incorrectly. I had to gently encourage him to refrain from reattaching the various tubes himself.

In 2001 Bill retired. He enjoyed being a grandfather and was always a great help as a father-in-law to Ian, Daryl and Karen. In 2004 Bill and Elizabeth moved to Christophorus House at Hornsby, where he continued to do whatever he could to help family, friends and neighbours. Bill was loved and respected. In turn, the residents and staff welcomed Bill and Elizabeth into their community. One of Bill's greatest pleasures was to water the gardens, chat to neighbours and staff, carry Mum's meals to those recovering from illness and offer to help with whatever he thought was needed (although ladders did need to be hidden!). Happy memories will be a great comfort to us.

Wendy Paterson, Bill's daughter

The Seed Shop

Here in a quiet and dusty room they lie,
Faded as crumbled stone or shifting sand,
Forlorn as ashes, shrivelled, scentless, dry –
Meadows and gardens running through my hand.
In this brown husk a dale of hawthorn dreams;
A cedar in this narrow cell is thrust,
That will drink deeply of a century's streams;
These lilies shall make summer on my dust.
Here in their safe and simple house of death,
Sealed in their shells, a million roses leap:
Here I can blow a garden with my breath,
And in my hand a forest lies asleep.

Muriel Stuart

Friendship

Friendship buds and blossoms, like a summer in full dress,
Friendship brings a harvest of joy and happiness.
Friendship is sustaining, through winter winds and snow,
Friendship can't be hoarded – by being shared, it grows.

Supplied by Jan Garland

The Pencil

1. Everything you do will always leave a mark.
2. You can always correct the mistakes you make.
3. What is important is what is inside of you.
4. In life, you will undergo painful sharpenings which will only make you better.
5. To be the best pencil, you must allow yourself to be held and guided by the hand that holds you.

This parable tells us we all need constant sharpening. We all have unique God-given talents and abilities and only *we ourselves* can fulfil the purpose to which we were born to accomplish. Like the pencil, it is important to know that that which is important lies within and to allow that inner being to be guided by the hand of God.

The History of 'APRONS'

The humble apron has had a revival recently particularly with the many cooking shows on TV. New South Wales farmer David Taylor circulated this email:

"The principle use of Grandma's apron was to protect the dress underneath, because she only had a few. It was easier to wash aprons than dresses and they used less material, but along with that, it served as a potholder for removing hot pans from the oven. It was wonderful for drying children's tears, and on occasion was even used for cleaning out dirty ears. From the chook house, the apron was used for carrying eggs, fussy chicks, and sometimes half-hatched eggs to be finished in the warming oven. When company came, those aprons were ideal hiding places for shy kids. When the weather was cold grandma wrapped it around her arms. Those big old aprons wiped many a sweaty brow, bent over the hot wood stove. Chips and kindling were brought into the kitchen in that apron. From the garden, it carried all sorts of vegetables. After the peas had been shelled, it carried out the hulls. In the autumn, the apron was used to bring in apples that had fallen from the trees.

When visitors dropped in unexpectedly, it was surprising how much furniture that old apron could dust in a matter of seconds.

When dinner was ready, grandma walked out onto the porch, waved her apron, and the men knew it was time to come in from the paddocks for dinner. She used to set her hot baked apple pies on the window sill to cool. Her granddaughters now set theirs on the window sill to thaw. They would go crazy now trying to figure out how many germs were on that apron!

It will be a long time before someone invents something that will replace that 'old-time apron' that served so many purposes."

Sourced at http://slowfoodaustralia.com.au/ 2009/02/a-short-history-of-the-apron & viewed 8/8/11

Why Conflict is a Good Thing

By Linda Adams, President of GTI (Gordon Training International)

Conflicts between people are a normal, natural and inevitable part of life–at work, at home and in all our relationships with others. Unfortunately, most of us don't really accept this fact and we still get surprised and distressed when it's clear that a conflict has emerged.

As long as everything is going along smoothly, it's easy to be considerate and respectful of another person's needs. They are in no way interfering with our own. But the emergence of a conflict can change all that–now we can feel threatened, anxious and angry. The same person whom we enjoyed working with yesterday now seems like an adversary. That's because of our vast, past experience with conflict, most of which was negative.

We have a negative attitude toward conflict primarily because we haven't learned constructive ways to deal with it–in fact, the converse is true: we have learned destructive ways of handling conflict. As children, as students and as employees (and too often as spouses) we have experienced losing in a conflict because parents, teachers and bosses use/d their power to win at our expense. Even though we know the feelings of resentment, anger, dislike, even hostility that we experience as a result of losing, the win-lose posture is deeply ingrained and when we get in positions where we have power over people, we often choose to win at their expense.

A great deal of research shows the damaging effects that win-lose conflict resolution has on interpersonal relationships. It creates distance, separation, dislike, even hatred. It's the main reason people leave their jobs for new ones and marriages break up.

Viewing Conflict as Constructive

How conflicts get resolved is the critical factor in any relationship. In fact, it is the most critical factor in determining whether a relationship will be healthy or unhealthy, mutually satisfying or unsatisfying, friendly or unfriendly, deep or shallow, intimate or cold.

As most of us are aware, there is an alternative to the win-lose posture. It's often been called "win-win" or "no-lose" because the goal is to find a solution to the conflict that meets the needs of both people. Resolving conflicts this way requires three important attitudes and behaviors: 1) the attitude that conflict in general presents the opportunity for constructive change; 2) the willingness to engage in the process of mutually searching for a solution that meets the needs of both people; 3) the communication and problem solving skills that it takes to make this win-win method work. Too often, people want to resolve conflicts this way, but either are not truly willing in their heart of hearts to work for a mutually-acceptable solution or do not have the skills required to work together to find one. When this occurs, the win-win method is doomed to failure.

"Let's Keep Talking"

When you're in conflict with another person, you both are usually aware of it at some level. There's a sense of disruption, unease, something is not right. The communication between you might change, perhaps becoming superficial or terse. Or there's silence.

Once you're aware that you're in conflict, what you do next really matters. Acknowledge that a conflict exists. Very often, we decide not to acknowledge this hoping that the conflict will somehow go away or resolve itself. That rarely happens. Only when conflicts are brought out into the open, do they have the chance of being dealt with effectively.

And as I just mentioned, dealing with conflict effectively requires skills–skills that are proven to work, sometimes like magic. When you have these skills, the idea of facing conflicts with others is not nearly so daunting, and in fact can be stimulating and energizing. (There are very few intractable problems to which there are no mutually-acceptable solutions.)

Dialogue is the key element in constructive conflict resolution. Dialogue is made up of two very different communication skills, both of which are essential–listening with empathy and non-blameful self-disclosure. As Reuel Howe states in his book, The Miracle of Dialogue: "…it must be mutual and proceed from both sides, and the parties to it must persist relentlessly…when two persons undertake it and accept their fear of doing so, the miracle-working power of dialogue may be released."

The importance of listening with empathy to the other person's needs, feelings and beliefs cannot be overstated. This means experiencing what it feels like to be in the other person's shoes at that moment and then reflecting what you hear back to them to check whether you understood correctly. This can be very difficult to do especially when you have strong opposing viewpoints or feelings, but it's possible when you're truly intent on understanding. Something amazing happens when people feel understood and accepted at a deep level. Their need to hold onto their preconceived solution to the conflict often dissipates. And often their strong emotional feelings subside.

The other essential part of dialogue is non-blameful self-disclosure. Now it's your turn to talk about your needs and disclose your feelings without blaming the other person. Ideally, they will be committed to listening empathically to you, to put themselves in your shoes, to experience your reality. When that happens, you too can feel catharsis, and be more open to finding a mutually-satisfying solution. Once the basic needs of each person are clearly defined and understood, moving through the other steps needed to find a solution can be done in a climate of mutual consideration and respect.

Having positive conflict resolution experiences like these are both rewarding and reinforcing. And that's a great thing.

". . . when the flow of blood stops, the body dies. When dialogue stops, love dies and resentment and hate are born. But dialogue can restore a dead relationship. Indeed, this is the miracle of dialogue . . . there are no winners and losers in dialogues – only winners. Neither partner is ever required to give up or to give in, but only to give: to give of oneself. In dialogue, we can never end up with less than we were but only more. To live in dialogue with another is to live twice. Joys are doubled by exchange and burdens are cut in half by sharing. . . The listening and the speaking of dialogue, each with its own particular set of consequences, are each directed to the other. Dialogue is essentially other-centred. Dialogue is essentially an act of the purest love and the secret of staying in love."

Reuel Howe, "The Miracle of Dialogue

Article sourced at http://www.gordontraining.com/free-workplace-articles/why-conflict-is-a-good-thing/ on 29/8/11

Calendar of Events in the Cottage for 2011

2011	Day	Event
SEPTEMBER	19	**Monday Movies in the Cottage** at 10.30am and 2pm. All welcome. No fee. Movie "Departures".
OCTOBER	2	Daylight Saving starts.
	17	**Monday Movies in the Cottage** at 10.30am and 2pm. All welcome. No fee. Movie to be advised.
	20	**Barbeque Lunch** for Self Care residents at 12noon in the Cottage.
	27	**Lyre performance** – Coral Paterson and students from the Glenaeon Rudolf Steiner School at **11am** in the Hostel lounge. **BOOKINGS ONLY as there are limited seats**. Tel Monika 9476 3161 ext 2.
	27	**Self Care Residents' Meeting** at 2pm.
	29	**Annual General Meeting** at 10am in the Cottage. All welcome.
NOVEMBER	7	**Social Group Meeting** at 2pm. All welcome. Come help plan future events (please note change of day to Monday).

The above events are held in The Cottage unless otherwise indicated. Please contact Monika on 9476 3161 ext 2 beforehand to confirm times and dates as changes may occur due to unforeseen circumstances.

REGULAR EVENTS IN THE COTTAGE

Bridge is taking a break at present. For enquiries, contact Monika.
First Class is held from February to November on the third Sunday of every month.
The Christian Community holds Services for *The Act of Consecration of Man*. Phone Monika for details.
Board Meetings are held on the third Monday of every month.
Self Care Residents' Meetings are held every two months on a Thursday.
Social Group Meetings are held every three months on a Thursday.
Footbath/Leg Massage Therapy is fortnightly on Fridays in the Hostel.