

What do we want, do we really, really want?

SENIORS WEEK has always featured a special message: positive ageing. It was born as a result of Commonwealth Government research into ageing. This found that more than 80% of seniors felt they were marginalised – and often ignored – by both government and community.

This came as a shock to government, if not to seniors. One of the consequences was that governments began appointing key seniors to government advisory committees.

Seniors Week was also established, with its own special message of ‘ageing positively’. In Queensland, seniors were determined to showcase this message. They opened Seniors Week with a parade through Brisbane city streets. Each year the parade had its own special positive-ageing message with its own ‘Wow’ factor, drawing positive attention to seniors as a part of

the community – but doing so with typical light-hearted fun. When scooters were the popular exercise gadget of the day for all ages, we seniors led the parade with our scooters.

Another year we were the Spice Girls leading the parade. The Spice Girls had taken the world by storm – maybe we hoped to do the same.

Another year the parade featured seniors on the back of a truck taking their role in a variety of workplaces, paid or volunteers.

In those days we woke up the community. Seniors must have their own voice, and this year we will celebrate during 17–25 August. Funded by government over the years, Senior’s Week has become a two-way promise: Don’t just watch – get involved! (See story on page 3 for details.)

– Val French AM



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Years of Service

with Maida Lilley

IF OUR DENTAL HEALTH is good, it certainly helps us to keep well. Attending the same dental clinic for almost 40 years has distinct advantages. Teachers' Union Health private health fund has its own dental clinic along with ancillary health services, e.g. physiotherapy, podiatry, acupuncture, optometry, etc. in Fortitude Valley, across a laneway from Teachers' Mutual Bank. These comprehensive services have a friendly, helpful, in-the-family feel to them.

City clients understand that dental treatment over the six weeks of Christmas school holidays, except for emergency services, is reserved for country members and their families, many of whom may have no local access to a dentist. That's fair enough, isn't it?

A couple of days before Christmas, I had a crown come off a lower side tooth. All I'd done was accept a liquorice allsort. "Help!" I phoned. "Come on in," I was told. The elderly specialist dentist who had fitted me with a metal plate with a front top tooth a year ago, just happened to be free. I gave him the rescued crown. "Yes," he said, "That was a crown, but I can't put it back, so I'll just cover over the remains of the tooth, rather than dig it out, so you can enjoy Christmas. Then, if it plays up, give me a call and we'll deal with it then." All that with a charming smile and the accompaniment of some great music.

I attempted to pay at the front desk, but he'd sent a 'no charge' through by computer – a most acceptable Christmas gesture.

A day or two after New Year, I found the false front tooth on the metal plate mentioned earlier, was chipped. How? I'd avoided nuts over Christmas and become used to eating apples with the help of a paring knife – and who can afford to bite into a steak these days? Within a couple of days, the dental service found me two appointments four hours apart. I had to have new moulds taken top and bottom and return later. A new tooth was made, colour-matched to my remaining ageing teeth and fitted – all in one afternoon. I'm able to face life again.

I took advantage of being there to look in for my complimentary six-monthly check and clean. No wait for that as the holidays were over. All clear. I'm crumbling. I can't go back so soon, can I?

Well, yes. Each day I could feel that front tooth disintegrating – or so it seemed to me. I was given a 40-minute emergency time and now it has been capped and feels whole again. I'm all set for 2013.

The particular dentist who 'fitted me in' said: "Your tongue would have made you feel that tooth was badly broken but, actually, that was an easy job." She walked be out to the waiting room while we discussed state politics. Doesn't everyone?

Yes, of course, I presented myself at the front counter only to have a smiling receptionist say: "That's it – no charge."

Some people hate going to the dentist, but it's become my second home. □



With a record like this, I'll just have to find the funds to meet the just-announced private health cost rise. At least one of my advanced years and low fixed income is entitled to a 40% rebate. I'm pleased that I took out cover when I received my first pay cheque over 60 years ago.

Understanding the differences about funeral services

A LACK OF UNDERSTANDING about prepaid funerals, funeral insurance, and how each works, could be costing Queensland residents tens of thousands of dollars.

A survey by Newspoll of Australians aged 50 years and over* found that only 32% of respondents were aware of both prepaid funerals and funeral insurance, and also understood how they both work.

Based on these figures, and on Rice Warner Actuaries' September 2010 financial modelling of the Guardian Plan prepaid funeral and the Insurance Line Funeral Plan (a leading funeral insurance policy), people who don't understand how they work could be left significantly out of pocket if they make the wrong decision about funding their funeral.

"Almost everyone has seen the daytime television advertising for funeral insurance 'for about the cost of a cup of coffee a week,'" said Stephen Crow, Simplicity Funerals Manager, Brisbane. "But it's vital that you read the small print as funeral insurance premiums increase significantly as you age."

Case studies revealed that after as little as seven years for a 75-year-old and 15 years for a 60-year-old, a funeral insurance policyholder will have paid more in premiums than the cost of the funeral they are trying to cover.

"I strongly advise OPSO members, in fact all folk, especially those aged 50-plus, to read the Rice Warner report at www.simplicityfunerals.com.au and ensure they're fully informed about how best to plan for their future funeral costs," said Mr Crow.

"All of our funeral directors pride themselves on being there for the families they're privileged to serve, before, during and long after the funeral service is over."

* The Newspoll survey was conducted, by telephone, among a sample of 341 people aged 50 years and over who live in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth. □

Help commemorate our first ship-to-shore wireless message

by Tony Townsend

HOW OFTEN do you use a radio? Do you realise that every time you use a mobile, or a remote to turn on your TV, or a GPS you are relying on radio communications? Imagine living in a world without radio communication.

This is the challenge that faced everyone at sea until the turn of the 20th Century. Marconi's experiments in the late 1890s were taken up by the Royal Navy in the UK and, in turn, the Queensland Marine Defence Force became the first Australian Navy to trial wireless telegraphy between ships and from ship-to-shore.

Trials began on 9 April 1903 culminating in the first Australian Naval message from *HMQS Gayundah* off Moreton Island to a receiving station in the gardens of St Mary's Anglican Church, Kangaroo Point.

Radio revolutionised contemporary naval warfare and this first for Queensland soon spread to merchant shipping and safety of life at sea, let alone our daily life.

The 110th anniversary of that first signal has been

chosen for the dedication of a memorial to all who have served in the Navy, especially those who paid the supreme sacrifice.

This memorial is being built on the site of that receiving station. Another milestone in the long relationship between the 'Naval Church' in Brisbane and the Navy, started when the Queensland Marine Naval Base began operations in what is now the Naval Stores Depot, on the Brisbane River under the cliffs on which St Mary's stands.

The dedication starts at 10.15 on Tuesday 9 April and will be performed by His Excellency the Governor of Queensland assisted by His Grace the Archbishop and Anglican Primate of Australia.

We welcome anyone interested in the Navy or who has served or is related to a sailor to come along – there will be a march along River Terrace before the dedication and already we anticipate up to 500 participants. □

Seniors Week (17–25 August): 'Respect and Social Inclusion'

COTA QUEENSLAND has been appointed by the Queensland Government to run and subsidise Seniors Week events and activities over the next three years.

Communities Minister Tracy Davis said that despite the tough fiscal environment it was important for Queenslanders to support Seniors Week and celebrate the contributions of older people.

"COTA Queensland has a strong track record of promoting the rights, needs and interests of older people across the state, which makes it ideally placed to work with partners across Queensland to deliver this important event," Ms Davis said.

COTA Queensland Chief Executive Mark Tucker-Evans said: "We are delighted to partner with the Queensland Government on Seniors Week.

"Seniors Week is an opportunity to raise awareness



of the issues that older people are facing and also to celebrate the diversity and strengths of Queensland seniors.

"We will use our networks across the state to partner with organisations and groups to engage seniors and other generations in events and activities throughout Queensland," he said.

Seniors Week will run from 17 to 25 August 2013.

To encourage community groups, clubs and organisations to hold events and celebrations during Seniors Week 2013, a limited number of subsidies of up to \$1000 are available.

Applications for a subsidy close on Friday 19 April 2013. All applicants will be notified by Monday 6 May 2013.

Application forms will be available from the COTA website shortly and in printed format by request.

Your organisation must register as a Seniors Week Partner to apply for a subsidy.

For further information, please contact Lisa Hodgkinson, Information Officer, on 3316 2999 or 1300 738 348 (from a landline only), email: seniorsweek@cotaqlld.org.au

See more at: cotaqlld.org.au/2013/02/seniors-week-17-25-august-2013-respect-and-social-inclusion/#sthash.gCIanuSF.dpuf □

An artist's perspective

by Maida Lilley

FORMER DIRECTOR of Canberra's National Art Gallery, Betty Churcher's interview with ageing artist, John Olsen, was a pleasure to watch. As they chatted in his studio, his brush lightly touched a large, vibrant painting here and there. He was assessing and adding finalising flourishes to his work in progress.

As part of the program, we were shown footage of his reaction to his win for a self-portrait as Janus, the god who looked both ways, in an earlier Archibald Prize Competition.

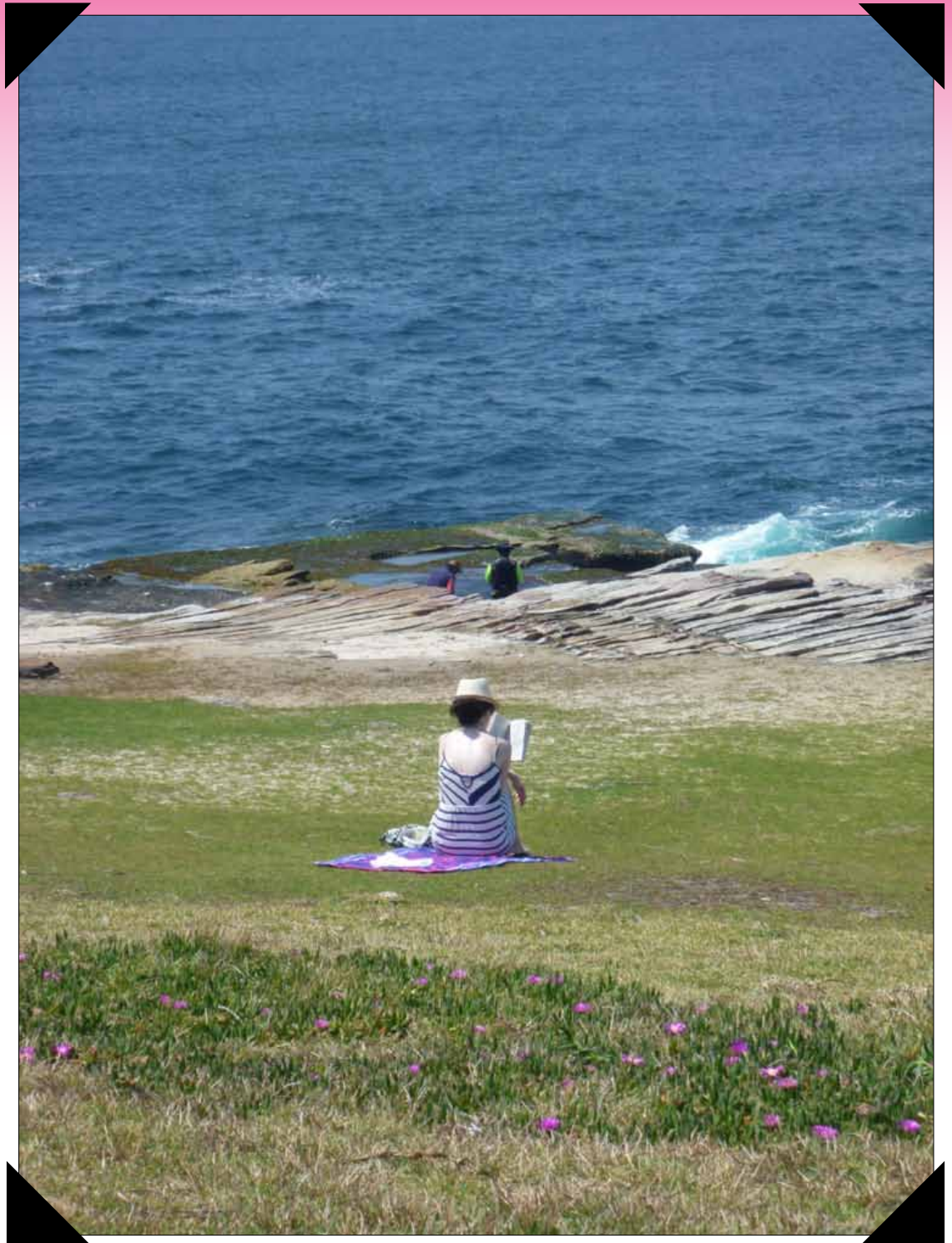
Olsen took the microphone, smiling with delight, as he glanced back at this painting. After a pause, he said wisely: "You've got to be a certain age to look back at the past." □

by Anne Ring

THIS, FOR SOME reason, is one of my most favourite photos of all time. Perhaps because it embodies the glorious aspects of relaxing in a beautiful setting: just reading a book on a perfect day. True, it's not the last word as a primer of sun protection (though, hopefully, the woman was slathered in sun cream), but it is the quintessential Australian dream.

And it's one that can be lived to the max by older people with the luxury of more time on their hands. It could be looked at as the pictorial equivalent of a phrase from a novel by Virginia Ironside (No! I don't want to join a book club), and spoken by her 60-year-old heroine, Marie, about how she wanted to spend her remaining years: "I can spend my time, as George, the guy across the road always answers when I ask him what he's up to, 'Tekken' it eezee, maan!" □

© Anne Ring 2013



Overlooking the rocks leading to Maroubra Beach, NSW © Anne Ring 2013

THE ORIGINS OF EXPRESSIONS

Sweetheart – In the old days the pumping action of the heart was considered to be the seat of a person's personality. Doctors knew little else about our circulatory system back then. So figurative words often were attached to the heart regarding people's personalities, like hard-hearted, soft-hearted, heavy-hearted, light-hearted, and cold-hearted. Since love makes us all giddy, often our hearts beat faster. So the term 'swete hert' meant a fast beating heart. The term slowly grew into the term 'sweetheart' and is today referred to as someone who

makes your heart beat faster when ever you see, hear or think of them.

Nip it in the Bud – Horticulturists learnt years ago that in order to produce good fruit, a plant had to have a lot of buds snipped off. This improved garden produce, but was disastrous to individual buds. It became proverbial that when a bud was nipped off, it would definitely no longer produce any fruit. Today the word is used to refer to a sudden halt in any plans or project in which no further progress will result. □

Electronic waste: what to do with it

by Dick Bennett

THE LEGAL DISPOSAL of electronic waste has for a long time been inconvenient and, in most cases, non-existent. This has now changed.

The National Television and Computer Recycling Scheme has been set up by the Federal Government to provide a service to dispose of and recycle various items of e-waste totally free to households. 'Dropzone' is a scheme that allows for televisions, personal computers, laptops, computer monitors, computer parts and peripherals to be taken to certain locations for recycling. The Waste Transfer Stations at Chandler, Nudgee, Willawong and Ferny Grove are some of the drop-off facilities where these items can be disposed of for free.

Printer cartridges can be disposed of through PlanetArk. There are many additional drop-off points – all of which can be found through the Dropzone website at www.dropzone.org.au. Certain conditions apply on volume restrictions.

In the case of computers, it is the responsibility of the person disposing of the material to remove or delete any personal data before being taken to a Dropzone recycling point. The non-Brisbane City Council Waste Transfer sites also have some restrictions



on the items they will accept in large volumes. The Dropzone website provides details of the scheme and any conditions. PlanetArk drop-off locations for printer cartridges can be located through their website cartridges.planetark.org/involvement/. If you reside in Brisbane, you can contact the Brisbane City Council call centre on 3403 8888 for more information.

The Dropzone website is at www.dropzone.org.au □

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Brisbane Seniors Online (BSOL) is a not-for-profit incorporated organisation that provides affordable computer training for seniors and over-50s in their own home, at community centres and libraries, as well as small classes in some areas using unpaid volunteer mentors. Contact BSOL on 3210 6983 or see www.bsol.asn.au

GranFriends

**Attention seniors in Cairns and
Townsville –
enjoy a new experience:
become a Granfriend**

OPSO GranFriends will be visiting Cairns on Monday 4, Tuesday 5 and Wednesday 6 of March followed by Townsville on the Thursday and Friday to give you an opportunity to enrol in this fun program.

GranFriends go into the schools to help children with their reading and to teach crafts, sewing, crochet and knitting. The children enjoy learning these skills and are so proud of all the things they make.

Be a part of this great initiative!

**You can contact coordinator
Blanche O'Connor on 0412 524 564.**

THE ORIGINS OF EXPRESSIONS

Spill the Beans – In ancient Greece, voting for membership into some of their organisations was done via beans. White beans were dropped into a container who favoured the candidate and brown or black beans if you didn't. Apparently the jar was not clear and when you went to vote you kept your hands folded so no one knew if you dropped a white or black bean? Only the officials knew the actual vote results of black vs. white beans. However, on a few occasions a clumsy voter would knock over the jar and revealed all the beans! This is how the phrase got to refer to someone who reveals the truth or hidden secrets.

The Life of Riley – This is not just an old television show from the 1950s – back in the 1880s an Irish comic/singer Patrick Rooney created a song about a Mr Reilly, who imagined what his life would be like if he hit it rich in California. The song describes his wonderful life of leisure. Soon, many who heard it identified with how nice it would be and would repeat the song, making the phrase represent having a really easy life. □

After so long, we get a title

by Maida Lilley

OUR WORLD HAS BECOME accustomed to the reporting of our community according to age groups, such as generations X or Y, and especially the largest group – baby boomers (born 1943–1964), who began to reach 65 years by 2011 – the age at which they might become eligible for the age pension.

Some years before this, a Federal Treasurer, when delivering his Budget, had termed the expected surge in number of older Australians as a 'burden'. This was rejected by seniors who considered that they had spent a lifetime contributing to their families and communities in the days before universal superannuation was available.



About this time, COTAQ, which represents seniors, had as the keynote address at their annual conference 'What baby boomers expect of their retirement' which was presented by a very young PhD student. During the question time that followed, a representative of Australian Independent Retirees asked: "Do retiring baby boomers realise that they will probably have to live on half of what they had been used to when they were working. Then, identifying as the mother of three baby boomers, I asked: "Did you think to ask baby boomers interviewed what kind of retirement they expected their parents to enjoy?" Audience reaction was immediate, but the researcher explained that the current problem across the globe was that of an ageing society being a cost to the economy relative to fewer numbers in the workforce to support social security costs.

Researchers have accepted that we are living longer, healthier lives, which we pre-baby boomers are pleased to enjoy. Now, after years of being practically 'invisible', those of us born in the 1920s and early '30s have been granted a title – the 'frugals' – by a commentator on pre-Christmas ABC Radio. At last it is recognised that we exist! Perhaps a generally average early biography of the Frugals is called for. Here goes...

- Born after World War I and the devastating worldwide Spanish flu epidemic that followed, taking a terrible toll (between 50 to 100 million died).
- Lived through the Great Depression (1929–30s), when one third of Australian men were out of work. Women were homemakers.
- Attended school before, during and after WWII – two prep years and Grades 1–7 (scholarship to university set in final exam. Leaving age 13+. By 1954, two years high school introduced for all, leaving age now at 15 years.
- Practised for air raids in trenches in playground wearing hooded capes made by mums from hessian sugar bags.
 - Rationing during the war on basics: food, clothing, homewares and petrol (for the few with cars). One bride I knew made her wedding dress from linen sheets obtained with ration coupons donated by family and friends.
 - Were taught basic life skills (domestic science and manual training in rural/primary schools). Many families grew up without a father there as they were serving overseas for years at a time, with little or no communication. Men were not recognised by their children when they returned home after war's end (1945/6).
 - Most were unable to attend university – full fees were paid up front. By attending Teachers College one was paid a small allowance in return for signing a bond to serve anywhere in the state. Most were sent to country areas, with no state housing provided.
 - A basic bicycle was transport. In my first job, I was the only one of 15 teachers to use a 'vehicle'. People walked. Public transport was restricted to trams, buses and trains in the cities, and trains connected most large cities.
 - Communication was by handwritten letter. Public phones were used only for emergencies (Girl Guides always carried tuppence (two cents) just in case).
 - For full board in a private home, half one's salary was paid.
 - Saving through banking from each fortnight's pay, making one's own clothes, etc., but paying fees to further one's qualifications or to travel abroad meant one needed to be FRUGAL. We all needed to. There were no credit cards in those days, so no debt was experienced until we took out our first home mortgage. Borrowing to buy a home was considered 'good debt', leading to ownership.

Rather a stark contrast to the world of today... □

Yoga twists us all towards better health

by Alison Keane

WHEN YOGA COMES TO MIND many of us tend to think of supple young bodies that have more in common with pretzels than being human.

Ouch you think! How on earth are they going to wriggle out of that?

We may even conjure up images of mysterious Eastern rituals and chanting far removed from the sensibilities of our modern day Australian lifestyle.

The circus-performer-style movements and Hindu cultural influence have both been a part of this ancient system of health for a long while now, but the yoga of today is much more than this.

An energetic and growing preventive health revolution is sweeping the western world, and yoga is up there at the forefront – for all ages.

Increasingly, governments with an eye to budgetary constraints and health care professionals thinking ‘outside the box’ are looking to alternative and holistic ways to help people manage their physical and mental health. Empirical, peer-based research shows that yoga, a form of mindfulness, calms the brain, helping us to quell turbulent thoughts and emotions, and to put life stresses into perspective. On the physical side, yoga benefits the circulatory, lymphatic, digestive, endocrine and nervous systems. The end result? A calm, more uplifted mind and a healthier, more supple body.

But what is yoga exactly?

Yoga is one of the oldest physical disciplines. There are no conclusive records but scholarly thought has it that yoga originated between 10 and five thousand years ago in the Indus Valley in northern India. The term yoga comes from the Sanskrit root *yuj* to unite, or to yoke. Sanskrit is the ancient language used to describe the many postures or *asanas* as they are known. A philosophical science first and foremost, yoga was developed so that practitioners could live into a healthy ripe old age at which time they would hopefully become enlightened, and at the very least very wise. These days, yoga classes are not so focused on the long term but the possibilities for living a long, positive and productive life are no less real. Each class teachers guide students through a mix of slow and considered movement, conscious breathing, and focused attention. Each posture is held for a period of time, usually a fair bit longer than we would like! The resulting extension, flexion or stretching of muscles and particularly the spine releases stiffness, and nervous tension. The effects of mental calm and clarity and physical release can often be felt immediately.

Do yoga classes include chanting or Hindu rituals, or do they tend to be more western?

Many yoga classes these days tend not to use a lot of Sanskrit words. However some teachers may encourage students at the beginning of class to chant the traditional ‘Om’ and again at the end. Others will close the class with a yoga greeting which is also used in the Indian culture of Hinduism. This greeting is ‘*namaste*’ which loosely



means I honour the spirit of goodness in you.

Is yoga for all ages?

A resounding ‘Yes!’ A lifetime of poor postural habits, a low level of physical exercise, and resistance or lethargy in the mind often have more bearing on our ability to perform the poses than factors to do with how old we are. And, like most things some days are easier than others. We are more able to soften into those deeper stretches, or let go of feelings of annoyance or impatience when poses are held longer than we would like!

Benefits of Yoga

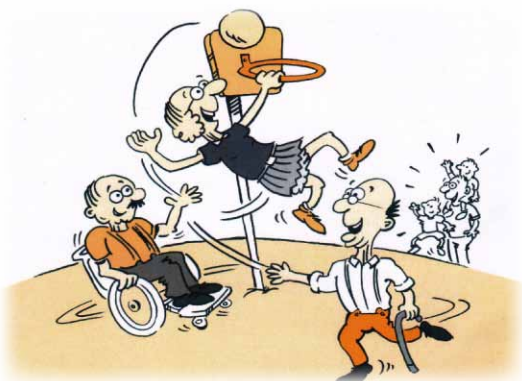
- improve musculoskeletal flexibility, strength and stability
- assist in injury recovery and chronic pain management
- boost daily vitality and positively effect emotional well-being
- sharpen mental focus and creativity

Tips for finding and enjoying a suitable yoga class

- Ensure that your teacher is registered with Yoga Australia (YA), the peak Australian body which ensures that members are professionally trained, have current First Aid training and commit to on-going practice, professional development and study.
- A good teacher will always enquire about any health matters which may affect your enjoyment and/or safety in the class before you begin. For instance whether you have high or low blood pressure or a chronic back or neck ache.
- During the class it’s important to listen to your body so if the teacher tells the class to do something and it doesn’t feel right for you, don’t do it!
- If in any doubt about whether yoga is going to be beneficial for you consider consulting your trusted health care professional. □

Alison Keane is a psychotherapist, mindfulness educator and hatha yoga teacher based in Brisbane’s northwest suburbs. She facilitates Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) an eight-week course teaching the accessible and progressive acquisition of mindfulness, meditation and yoga as a way of managing stress in everyday life. For more information please go to www.alisonkeane.com.au

Fun for the Frail & Frisky



Cartoon © John Danalis

Ball Games

Baseball Rounders

Players: Two teams of at least six players each.

Equipment: Four bases and a home base

Have one player as fielder at each base, one on home base as keeper, and a pitcher. The pitcher throws the ball at the striker, who plays from the home base. The striker is allowed three attempts to hit a run. Whether strikers hit the ball or not, they must move to first base after the third attempt, continuing on, if safe, to the other bases. The fielders on the base aim to retrieve the ball, or catch it if thrown by another player, and hit the base mark the player is running to, before the player reaches it. Players who fail to reach a base in time are out. If they do reach it in time, they remain there until the next striker hits a ball, then run again. Only one person at a time can occupy a base.

Winner: Team with the highest total of completed 'rounds' after all the players have batted.

* * * * *

Golf (putting)

Players: Two or more players.

Equipment: Putters, plastic mugs, ping-pong ball.

Arrange plastic mugs around a described 'course' within the room or park area. Pairs tee off from a starting point and play the course as in real golf, counting the shots to make each 'hole' (mug). The ball must enter each mug to complete the hole.

Winner: The first to complete the course.

* * * * *

Cricket

Players: Two or more players.

Equipment: Make or buy stumps attached to a base so they stand on the floor, or draw stumps on a box. Use a foam or child's indoor ball, (or tennis ball for outside).

Use either two wickets and walk or run between, counting each run, or mark out boundaries to count as runs, e.g. four

to base of wall, six if it hits up the wall, one every time the ball is hit and two if it goes halfway to the wall. Have two teams, eight balls an over and 12 (or whatever) overs an innings.

Winner: Highest scoring team.

* * * * *

French Cricket

Players: Two or more players, divided into teams, (can be played with teams of two or more).

Equipment: Bat and ball (use a soft one if indoors).

There is only one batsman, whose job is to stop the ball from hitting the body below the knees. If the ball does hit below the knees the player is out. Feet must be kept together and never moved. Moving feet mean out! A caught ball is also out. The ball is bowled by the person who fielded the last ball from whatever position the ball was picked up.

Winner: Score one for each ball hit, highest scoring team wins. □



"HOME BY A WALKING-STICK!!!"

Cartoon © John Danalis

Want more?

This is an excerpt from *Fun for the Frail & Frisky* (48 pages) – available for \$12 (incl. P&P) – send your address and cheque or money order to:

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