



Below the Belt!

Vol. 11 No. 4

Sept – Nov, 2012

Newsletter of The Nepean / Blue Mountains Prostate Cancer Support Group Inc.
(ABN No. 35 871 442 176)

Succession

During discussions at a recent Board meeting of the group, the topic of 'succession' came up. That is, who is going to keep up the work that the group has achieved over the past eleven years. Many members of the Board have held positions since the formation of the group and are looking to handing over the reins to the next generation.

President Alan Moran has indicated that this coming year will be the last time he will stand for President of the Group. (He has said that he would be prepared to become Vice President the following year to offer his experienced guidance to the new incumbent.) We are always trying to get more members involved in the group's activities, have YOU ever considered becoming involved in the functioning of the group? (Refer to the item on page 3 about 'Volunteering' and AGM details on Page 8)

As part of the same discussions the fact that we see or hear little from the vast majority of members was also raised. We have over 350 members "on the books" yet we only ever get about 35 – 40 attending our monthly meetings. Obviously there a myriad of reasons that people cannot attend meetings but have you ever considered coming along?

We also participate in community events where we hand out information and speak with men and their partners about prostate cancer. We hold fund raising events such as the recent BBQ at Bunnings (see page 2) all designed to help promote awareness of this disease that affects us.

Continued Page 2

VALE - ROB DOWTHWAITE

As this newsletter was being finalised, we received news that Rob Dowthwaite, the inaugural Chairman of the Group was gravely ill.

Sadly Rob passed away on Saturday, 1st of September.

We extend our condolences and sympathy to Ruth, his wife, and all his family and friends.

A comprehensive item on Rob's life will appear in the next newsletter . *Alan Howard*

What's to Come

Group Meeting – Monday September 17th

Dr. David Malouf

Developments in Brachytherapy

Group Meeting – Monday October 15th

Group Annual General Meeting

Refer Page 8

Group Meeting – Monday Month 19th

To Be Advised

Refer to local press in the week prior to the meeting

All meetings :- Gather at 6-30pm for a 7-00pm start.

VOLUNTEERS

At our recent July Group meeting, Vice President, Gabrielle Moran, gave a talk on 'Volunteering'. Here is a transcript of Gabrielle's talk.

Volunteers are people just like you and me, juggling our various daily activities in order to make time available to help others. We are ordinary, everyday people from all walks of life who in Australia alone, donate many thousands of hours of their time annually to areas where there is a need for assistance.

The reality is that it is often a struggle to obtain sufficient Government funding to enable the many worthwhile organisations (staffed by paid personnel) in our community to operate at maximum efficiency, and this is where volunteers come in. We can, and do help these organisations to both provide, and offer the wide range of services that they do.

Volunteers give from the heart because they care enough to want to make a difference in the communities, in which we live, work and play. People have been volunteering in one form or another since the inception of mankind, and although during the past few years volunteer numbers have suffered a decline due to changes in both social and economic climates, within every community a hard-working, reliable, committed group of men, women and often children as well can be found generously giving of their time for the benefit of others. Volunteers are the glue which holds the fabric of our community together. They donate their time, energies and effort without seeking monetary reward, or recognition. For volunteers the fact that they are able to make a contribution for the benefit of others is more than sufficient payment.

People need to be encouraged to volunteer, helping others can be challenging, satisfying, sometimes extremely frustrating, but it can also be fun. Networks are established, friendships made, our communities are strengthened by the knowledge that we have additional support to call on as, and when the need arises. In a crisis, call on a volunteer for assistance and they will immediately rise to the challenge.

In the case of mature-age people no longer in the paid work-force (like myself), volunteering provides us with an opportunity to 'put back' something into the community.

Between us we volunteers have a solid broad-range skills base which we can call on and use for the benefit of others i.e. we can teach and train, but more importantly, we have learned through life's own experiences. Volunteers aren't that fussy about what they do, they have willing hearts, minds and hands, ready to jump in and help with whatever tasks need to be done, and if we wish to, there are free programmes for volunteers where we can learn new skills which in turn, will again help us help others in the community.

Is there a downside to volunteering? No, there is not. However there is one aspect that we all need to be mindful of, and that is not to take on so much that it leads to the detriment of our own health and family responsibilities. One of the hardest things to learn in volunteering is to say 'No' but sometimes unfortunately we really do have to, and don't feel guilty about saying it, we are after all, volunteers, who in determining our priorities endeavour to provide 'quality' not 'quantity' of service to the community, and this can only be effectively carried out after we have fulfilled our own personal commitments.

Gabrielle Moran

Union for International Cancer Control (UICC)

The PCFA has recently become a member of this organisation. It is the largest cancer fighting organisation of its kind, with more than 400 member organisations across 120 countries.

With its headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland it is the leading non-governmental, non-profit, non-political and non-sectarian cancer organisation. UICC's mission is to eliminate cancer as a life-threatening disease for future generations. To check out their web site go to 'www.uicc.org'

PSA Testing – The Debate goes on.....

We recently received the following information from Dr Anthony Lowe (CEO of the Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia)

“You may have heard or seen in the press reports of comments made by Associate Professor Ian Haines against PSA testing e.g. www.theage.com.au/national/cancer-specialist-slams-prostate-spin-for-cash-20120731-23d6y.html. For those who do not know, Associate Professor Haines is a medical oncologist at Monash University and an outspoken critic of PSA testing.

The article followed a debate between Associate Professor Declan Murphy, a urologist at Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre, and Associate Professor Haines at the recent Australasian Prostate Cancer Conference. David Sandoe, Graeme Johnson, I and others from PCFA were at the debate and challenged many of the remarks made by Associate Professor Haines as inaccurate and a misrepresentation of the best available evidence which shows that PSA testing saves lives. We are pleased to report that Declan won the debate hands down.

Declan and Associate Professor Mark Frydenberg did a sterling job countering Associate Professor Haines’ comments on radio and in the press over the subsequent few days. PCFA also played our part in the media in correcting inaccuracies in Associate Professor Haines’ comments.

As mentioned by Declan in The Age article, active surveillance for men with low risk prostate cancer is becoming an increasingly important aspect of the PSA testing debate. PCFA is proud to support the Urological Society of Australia and New Zealand’s participation in the international PRIAS study of active surveillance “

MEDIA RELEASE FROM THE UROLOGICAL SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND - 10th August, 2012

Almost half of Australian men diagnosed with low risk prostate cancer avoid surgery

Australian men diagnosed with low-risk prostate cancer are increasingly avoiding or delaying surgery as Australian urologists adopt ‘active surveillance’ as a legitimate treatment option. New figures from the Victorian Prostate Cancer Registry, which records the care of Victorian men following diagnoses of prostate cancer, shows almost half (42%) of men diagnosed with low-risk prostate cancer are managed with active surveillance – that is, the tumour is not treated, but monitored via blood tests and biopsies.

The peak body for urological surgeons, the Urological Society of Australia and New Zealand has promoted active surveillance for the management of low-risk prostate cancers for several years and recently signed up to an important international study on the practice.

“While we don’t yet have figures for the other states we believe the Victorian statistics would reflect a national trend, which means many thousands of Australian men with prostate cancer are being managed without having an operation or other aggressive forms of treatment such as radiation,” said the Urological Society’s spokesperson on urological cancers, Associate Professor Mark Frydenberg.

Around 20,000 Australian men are diagnosed with prostate cancer each year, with more than 3000 dying from the disease.

“Not all prostate cancer tumours are the same – we know there are some that are very aggressive that require immediate treatment, but others can be very slow growing and can be

PROSTATE CANCER SURVIVORS

Join us at the Dragons Abreast Australia DRAGON BOAT FESTIVAL



Come and paddle
With
The Prostate Dragons
Proudly supported by
The Prostate Cancer
Foundation of Australia

When: Sunday October 28, 2012

Time: 8 am to approx. 3 pm

Where: Darling Harbor, Sydney

Be part of our 5th celebration at this great event.
We invite all prostate cancer survivors or family
members of survivors to come and have a great
day in support of a wonderful cause.

At the same time bring awareness of prostate
cancer to a wider community and let the world
know we are just a bunch of normal people and
still know how to enjoy life!

For further information contact:

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NEPEAN/BLEUE MOUNTAINS PROSTATE CANCER SUPPORT GROUP INC.

IT'S ON AG and this year TH YEAR OF OUR PARTICIPATI
So we would like this to be a really big turnout of Members.

THE HAWKESBURY CANOE CLASSIC ----- OCTOBER 27th, 2012

This is a canoe race over 111 kms from Windsor Bridge to Brooklyn Bridge, nonstop and most of it at night. The event has been running for over 30 years..

The event attracts over 430 canoes and kayaks and 600 + paddlers to get them to Brooklyn.

This will be the eleventh year that our Group have provided volunteers to assist in the running of this event.

The HCC is not only a race but also a major fund raising effort for worthy causes and ours is one of them. Over the length of our involvement we have raised over \$10,000.00 by providing volunteers to assist with the preparation stages of the event, in particular, the boat scrutineering. The funding this year will again be directed to NBMPCSG

The HCC committee have once again asked if we would assist with this year's race.

So.....what's involved?

We are asked to be at Macquarie Park Windsor by about 08-30 on Saturday morning October 22 and we are needed until about 2-3 pm, depending on the arrival of the boats for scrutineering.

The work is not arduous, not complicated, and there is a very social aspect to the day.

Bring a chair, any extra food or drink you might need and the usual outdoor stuff like sunblock etc.

Lunch is provided for the volunteers and they receive also a T shirt and a few other extraneous goodies.

Those who have participated in previous years have enjoyed the day and it puts forward the presence of our cause to a large gathering in one location.

I hope you will join us again for this interesting and worthwhile day. If you can, would you please complete the section below and return to me as soon as possible

Many thanks

P O Box 153
Springwood, NSW, 2777

Brett Sowerby
(Minister in Charge of Boating)

Email waxtech@bigpond.com

How to beat the Grim Reaper..... Just walk away!!

A recent item on the "Catalyst" program on ABC television discussed how to beat the "Grim Reaper"

Apparently researchers at the University of Sydney wanted to find out how fast you'd have to walk to get away from the Grim Reaper. They tracked the walking speed and survival rates of 1700 men over seventy. Over the course of the study, 266 men met with death.

The researchers found that men who walked faster than three kilometres per hour were one point two-three times less likely to die than slower walkers.

While all the men who walked faster than five kilometres per hour had no contact with death.

The scientists concluded that the Grim Reaper walks at about three kilometres per hour, and if you want to stay away from him, walk faster. So if you want to cheat death, make sure you've got comfy shoes.

So get up out of that chair and get walking (quickly!)

2012 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING MONDAY, OCTOBER 17th

Our Annual General Meeting will be held on Monday, October 15th, 2012, so here is an overview of what is involved and how you go about nominating for election to the Board of our Association .

Our Board has 10 members, with four of these members forming an Executive, These four members are President, Vice -President, Secretary (who is also the Public Officer) and the Treasurer. The other positions on the board are; Assistant Secretary, Librarian, Newsletter Editor and Committee Member (3 positions).

If you want to re-nominate for the Board or nominate as a new member for the Board, you will need to fill out and sign the nomination form below, (or you may nominate in writing) and have two other members endorse and sign your nomination, which, when completed, will need to be handed to Alan Moran, our President or Ross Baker our Secretary no later than seven days before the date of the AGM . (i.e. Monday, October 8th, 2012)

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**NOMINATION FORM
For
ELECTION TO THE BOARD OF
NEPEAN / BLUE MOUNTAINS PROSTATE CANCER SUPPORT GROUP INC.**

To The Secretary
Nepean / Blue Mountains Prostate Cancer Support Group Inc.,

I. Wish to nominate for election to the

position of On Board of the

Nepean / Blue Mountains Prostate Cancer Support Group Inc.

Signed.....

We endorse this nomination.

Name..... Signed.....

Name..... Signed.....

