

Australian Seniors Computer Clubs Association **ASCCA**

ABN 47 097 847 642

NEWSLETTER October 2008

Vol 10 No 9 ISSN 1446-862X

LAUNCH OF 2008 ADULT LEARNERS WEEK IN CONDOBOLIN NSW

In the December 2007 edition of our ASCCA Newsletter the lead story was the appointment of ASCCA's President Nan Bosler as the Inaugural APIA Adult Learning Ambassador. Nan has been an inspiring Ambassador, and somehow during the frantic weeks before our successful 10th Annual Conference at the Powerhouse Museum she squeezed in a visit to Condobolin on 13th August. It was there in the NSW central west red-soil plains town that Peter Peterson, CEO of Adult Learning Australia launched Adult Learners Week which was held during the first week in September. One of the many admirable goals of ALA is *"to seek to inform individuals seeking to engage in any form of learning"*.

Apart from representing ALA and supporting the idea that *"you are always young enough to learn"*, and sharing in the excitement of the Wiradjuri Community in 'turning the first sod' for a new learning centre, Nan was as usual, interested in opportunities to promote adult computer learning. "ASCCA is certainly very keen that a computer group for Indigenous elders be established in Condobolin" she reports.

Nan described the warm gathering of members, friends and supporters of the Wiradjuri Community under clear blue skies; with Percy Knight, the CEO of Wiradjuri Condobolin Corporation, explaining how the new Wiradjuri Study Centre would "play an important role in the rejuvenation of local Aboriginal culture and would incorporate a holistic approach to community and personal development". "The Centre will use a culturally appropriate strategy to achieve engagement of local communities leading to improved self esteem, a life-long learning approach and improved employment prospects" he said. He added that this centre would provide a model for other Indigenous communities to adopt as they seek ways to encourage Indigenous participation in the life of their communities.



"The new study centre is an excellent example of adult learning as a vehicle for social inclusion, improved skills and productivity as well as better levels of health and well being" Mr. Knight said.



As part of the ceremony, Wiradjuri dancers led the elders to the centre of the proposed location for the Study Centre and one of the elders used a specially inscribed spade to turn the first sod to mark the beginning of the building which will be constructed with locally made compressed earth bricks. Earlier in the day Nan had been taken to see the Compressed Earth bricks that were being made for the centre. What an exciting and impressive example of local involvement that presented.



Have you visited the ALA Website at <http://www.ala.asn.au/> where you will find an overview of their Ambassador Nan Bosler on <http://www.ala.asn.au/c306/+Learning+Ambassador.aspx>

ASCCA Notice Board

Bookings Ring 02 9286 3871

Email office@ascca.org.au

Every member of every ASCCA Club throughout Australia is invited to attend the

ASCCA Annual General Meeting

to be held on

Level 1, 280 Pitt Street, Sydney, NSW

Thursday 20th November 2008

Winners of the 2008 ASCCA Competitions will be announced

Website www.ascca.org.au

- General Information: office@ascca.org.au
- Member Support: cdo@ascca.org.au
- New Club Support: cdo@ascca.org.au
- Training: training@ascca.org.au
- Webmaster: webmaster@ascca.org.au
- Technical Officer: office@ascca.org.au
- President: ascca@ascca.org.au

HOOVER IS 100 YEARS OLD

Hurry to Enter a Nostalgic Competition which closes 10th October 2008

You are invited to search in your attic, garage, basement, shed, wardrobes, cupboards, family, friends and grandparent's houses (that could be a challenge for us), to be the first to find the oldest and grooviest Hoover vacuum cleaner in Australia and you could win your own personal house cleaner for one year! 10 runners up will also win the new Hoover Freemotion Cylcean bagless (TFS6212) vacuum cleaner valued at \$499.00.

Hoover will be celebrating their birthday by holding the largest ever Retrospective Vacuum Cleaner Exhibition. The Director of Hoover Floorcare Asia Pacific said, "Your vacuum cleaner can be old, glamorous, retro, rusty, dusty, spherical, square, tall and small - just as long as it's a Hoover!" To be eligible to enter this competition, you must submit an image of a Hoover vacuum cleaner and in less than 50 words provide an interesting story about your vacuum cleaner.

For Competition Terms & Conditions visit www.hooverfloorcare.com.au/theoldesthoover Competition closes 10 October 2008 at 11.59pm (AEST)

THE LITTLE BLACK BOOK OF SCAMS

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission has produced an excellent free booklet called "The Little Black Book of Scams. If you attended the ASCCA Conference you will have received a copy in your ASCCA Bag. If you missed out on the Conference, you may order a free copy of the booklet by post or download direct from:

<http://www.accc.gov.au/content/index.phtml/tag/TheLittleBlackBookOfScams08>

You can register for free [SCAMwatch email alerts by clicking on this link](#) to receive helpful information on the latest scams. Below is an example of portion of a recent email alert:

SCAMwatch is warning consumers to beware of an airline ticketing scam that can download malicious software onto your computer.

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) has received a number of complaints from consumers who were sent an email that claimed they were charged for an airline ticket.

The email claimed that the recipient's credit card was charged around \$500 and contained an attachment that appeared to be the ticket and receipt.

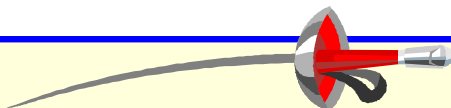
It was not a ticket and the recipient's card was not charged, but if the attachment was opened, malicious software may be downloaded onto your computer.

Scammers use these programs to steal passwords such as online banking passwords. They may also use spyware to steal other personal information from you, such as documents that you have stored on your computer.

Anyone who receives an unexpected email should not open any attachments and should simply delete the email. Alternatively contact the airline to confirm if a ticket was purchased in your name. When doing so, make sure to use contact details that you have looked up yourself – DO NOT use any contact details provided in the email.

Explore [SCAMwatch](#) for more tips on how to recognise and protect yourself from [internet scams](#). To report a suspected scam, visit [report a scam](#) or call the ACCC Infocentre on 1300 302 502.

A DOUBLE EDGED SWORD



Are you taking care to produce hard copies of all the interesting, important, or historically significant emails you receive and send? Remember the fascination of reading those old letters you found in your grandmother's house? Have you produced a number of hard copy versions of that family history, local history, or other project that you have spent many hundreds, or thousands of hours preparing on your computer for your descendants? We may take meticulous care to produce digital backups of our work, and even arrange to have a couple of them kept in a fire-proof safe, or off-site; but imagine the disappointment if, in 2045 the hypothetical situation suggested by Jeff Rothenberg, a Rand Corporation scientist specialising in digital longevity, actually happened to our precious digitally prepared legacies.



It is 2045, he suggests, and his grandchildren are exploring the attic of his old house when they come across a CD-ROM and a letter, which explains that the disk contains a document that provides directions to obtaining the family fortune. The children are excited. "But they've never seen a CD before - except in old movies - and, even if they found a suitable disk drive, how will they run the software necessary to interpret the information on the disk? How can they read my obsolete digital document?"

This warning of the pitfalls of accelerating obsolescence appears in an interesting and thought provoking article called "The Digital Dark Age" which was published on September 23rd, 2005 by Fairfax Digital SMH OnLine. It was apparently Matthew Connell; the curator of the Powerhouse Museum who fascinated his listeners with his history of computers and computing at the recent ASCCA Conference at the Powerhouse; who coined this phrase.

According to the Fairfax article; *Connell is one of a growing number of computer experts worldwide who believe that, far from a panacea that provides increasingly efficient answers to problems of recording, storing and retrieving information, technology is deeply flawed.*

They fear that rather than ushering mankind into a techno-utopia of paperless offices and clean, eco-friendly, endlessly flexible, virtual communication, it threatens to cast future generations into what Connell describes as a "digital dark age".

It all seems very attractive - scanning documents, taking pictures, putting them into the computer for safekeeping, allowing us to throw away hard copies and to save space. Indeed, it is the most dramatic record-keeping revolution since the invention of printing.

"But what happens some time later," asks Connell, "when we discover that we no longer have the machines, the programs - the hardware, the software - the know-how, to access all that computer-based, digital material?"

Shades of the Rosetta Stone perhaps? This slab of black basalt on which was inscribed an Egyptian decree of 197 BC was discovered by Napoleon's troops in 1799 and is now housed in the British Museum. The inscription was given in three versions; Greek - and two forms of Egyptian: hieroglyphics ('picture-writing') and demotic, the simplified form of hieroglyphic in common use. The discovery near the town of Rosetta in northern Egypt provided the key to deciphering Egyptian hieroglyphics by the French scholar Jean-François Champollion (1790-1832).

It seems that our amazing digital technology which makes it so easy and rewarding for us to research and prepare material of unbelievable quality (even in our own homes) could baffle future generations. The technology is perhaps in a way a "double edged sword". A Google search; "define double edged sword" reveals it is, *"An expression for anything that can simultaneously help and hinder, as when in sword fighting a person can increase his leverage by putting his hand on the blade, which might win the contest but also result in a wound."*

There are many problems associated with a number of seemingly obvious solutions like retaining the original equipment that can read the files, or transferring and updating the files to the next generation of technology; not the least of which is expressed in Matthew Connell's sceptical questioning of *"the industry's ability, or willingness, to develop common standards: after all, most companies have a commercial interest in rapid obsolescence."* Although fascinated by the possibility of preserving some of the original machines to read data, Matthew also notes that the task is daunting, and would be crippled by lack of spare parts and the inbuilt obsolescence of hardware and unavailability of software.

Continued on Page 4

Australian Seniors Computer Clubs Association **ASCCA**

ABN 47 097 847 642

Level 4, 280 Pitt Street, Sydney NSW 2000

Phone 02 9286 3871 Fax 02 9286 3876

office@ascca.org.au

Continued from Page 3



The Fairfax article states that "Records of the entire present period of history are jeopardised by precisely the technology, and the pace of the technological change, that characterised it - a fact recognised by Rothenberg as long ago as 1999. To those who believe in the immortality of new media files, Rothenberg offers a suitably new-age adage: "Digital information lasts forever - or five years, whichever comes first."

The overwhelmingly clear message conveyed by Matthew Connell, and others mentioned in this article, is the necessity and importance of hard-copy backup of anything of value or importance. The impracticality of retaining original machines to read data, along with the software and operating instructions, plus many tons of spare parts is obvious. Perhaps we would also be wise to use archival quality ink and paper for our printed hard copy documents while we are preparing for the future!

Greetings from the Sunshine Coast Computer Club - We would like to let other computer clubs know, that if any of their members are visiting the Sunshine Coast, they are most welcome to come to our club and enjoy our facilities, whether they need some help, or would just like to say hello. We hold a meeting every Saturday morning at Caloundra, and every Wednesday morning at Buderim; cost of entry is \$4 and our Club information phone number is 07 54921005.

Marie McGregor (Secretary)



**You don't stop laughing because you grow old;
You grow old because you stop laughing.**

Pass on this issue of the ASCCA newsletter by printing copies for distribution, or make a list of all your club members with email addresses and forward it to them.

The newsletter can also be read and/or downloaded from our website: - www.ascca.org.au

You are welcome to copy items from this newsletter but acknowledgment of ASCCA is required

Membership of ASCCA is open to all Seniors Computer Clubs, Organisations with a membership including Seniors, and Organisations that recognise the value of computer technology for Seniors. Cost of membership is \$100 per year. Corporate Membership is also welcome.

If you fit one of those categories and are interested in joining ASCCA please go to our website www.ascca.org.au or email office@sascca.org.au to find out how to start a club or read some of the advantages of joining ASCCA if you are an existing club. You can download an Application Form.

DISCLAIMER: This newsletter is provided "As Is" without warranty of any kind. Each reader of the ASCCA newsletter assumes complete risk as to the accuracy and subsequent use of its contents.

Newsletter Editor: Joan Craymer, Email: thewhistlers@optusnet.com.au Contributions are welcome.

Remember this is **YOUR NEWSLETTER**. Please take special note clubs outside Sydney and NSW.

Please forward contributions by email to Joan Craymer, thewhistlers@optusnet.com.au