

National

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Another Country

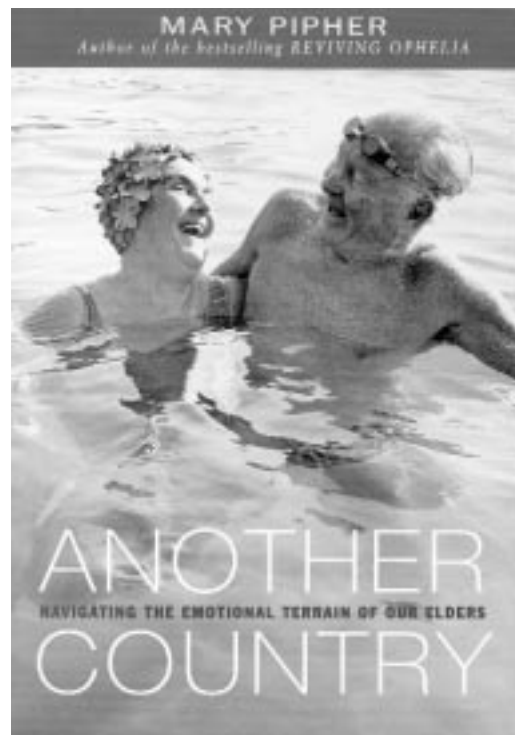
Feature Article by Helen Elliott

Having spent a large part of my grown-up life reading and reviewing books I feel I can be a bit high-handed about assessing them. My rule of thumb is, of course, that books can generally be judged by their cover and there's no reason to suspend this rule with Mary Pipher's latest book, "Another Country: Navigating the Emotional Terrain of Our Elders".

The cover is disconcerting : a man and a woman have obviously been swimming, the water laps chest high as they both stop for a moment to share a joke. She's wearing a daisy-styled rubber swimming cap so old-fashioned that it's become retro and he's pushed his swimming goggles up onto his forehead. The woman's head is thrown back, her face delighted by laughter, by something the man has just told her. He looks equally delighted at his joke. It could be a happy snap from your favourite family album and this is precisely why it's disconcerting. This couple are in their seventies. You expect to see these pictures in the family album, not as the cover for a book. As a joke advertisement featuring silly old folk doing something young folk usually do, but not as a straight photograph.

Pipher is an American psychologist and writer who lives and practices in Nebraska. She is now in her early fifties, just the age when the first crisp flutterings of mortality begin to make significant noises in our lives. This book was motivated not just by her own serious middle age, but by the clients she saw in her practice. Seeing older clients and being forced to think clearly and deeply about their particular needs caused Pipher to reflect on her own life and the way one particular extended family has approached ageing over several generations.

Pipher's extensive trowelling into her own family can become tedious and self-indulgent, and you might raise an eyebrow at the perfection of these "ordinary" folks. But despite the often irritating sentimentality of description usually there is something to be found because Pipher's great virtue is that she is a genuine seeker after some



truth about what getting older means. And her fundamental philosophy is irreproachable. She wants to assure the old that they are still loved and part of the community. As she explains in the opening pages:

"Wallace Stegner wrote 'After sixty you are aware how vulnerable everything is, including yourself.' Though I haven't yet reached that age, I feel intimations of that time. I deal with anxiety-provoking situations by gathering information,

by anticipating problems and thinking them through. Partly I explore the issues of ageing to calm myself down. I want to be prepared. Like the gray squirrels of eastern Colorado, I want to store up supplies for winter.”

And what a thorough preparer, a fine storer-upper Mary Pipher is. She seems to have gathered information about age and ageing not just through her family and clients but through extensive and often obscure reading that ranges from the sophisticated Wallace Stegner to the homely lines from popular hymn and “inspirational” verse.

One of the achievements of “Another Country” is that there is something for everyone without falling into the trap of meaninglessness through over-simplification and generalization.

Pipher relates story after story of individual lives and two qualities are outstanding. The first is her division of what she defines “old-old age” and “young old age”. What she hasn’t done is to draw a time line. What type of age you have depends not upon the date of your birth, but upon the state of your health. An infirm seventy year old can be in old old age and a healthy ninety year old in young old age. The second encompassing quality is the concept she has of the family. Her book is brimming with examples of loving families who accept their elders with naturalness and grace.

Family, it seems, can offer everything, including redemption. I would have liked to see her explore other notions of family other than blood relatives, but blood family is her area of interest. For Pipher, the disconnected families are the hard part of the story. Her attitude borders on unrealistic and she always forces a positive spin on these stories. It lets the book down. There MUST have been some failures in her therapy, there MUST have been some families that didn’t make it. It is one of the unsatisfying aspects of the book.

But Pipher is marvellous in her sympathetic practicality because she understands the value of the small things, the details of life, those “small unremembered acts of kindness” that, in the long run, make up the fabric of life. Her approach to life might be summed-up by her quotation from Henry James: “Three things in human life are

important. The first is to be kind. The second is to be kind and the third is to be kind.” Pipher is particularly interesting and illuminating when she explores the daily details of getting older, when she speaks, for instance of the value of “cultural rituals” when we make the transition from moving from our own home to a different home, either a village or nursing home. She makes the nice point that is often overlooked in the push by developers to market retirement places to older people, that it is not healthy for older people to be collected together without relevant connection to the more diverse outside world. She uses Betty Friedan’s term “playpens for adults.”

She also mentions moments which might sound trivial, but can be crucial in an individual life. Things such as “saying goodbye parties” when a person moves or “saying farewell to house and yard ceremonies”. The effect of this book is to pull you up now and again.

A friend of mine left her home of fifty years a few months ago. Her middle-aged, long-standing neighbours of nearly forty years forgot to formally say goodbye and she felt hurt and slighted. At 87 it’s a slight not likely to be forgotten. Pipher’s book swings the full weight of the meaning of such a slight in the course of a long life. Yet it wasn’t a slight through maliciousness, just carelessness, just lack of everyday kindness.

Pipher relates everything back to kindness, but along the way she takes in just about every other aspect of the daily human condition - food, language, love, learning, wisdom, respect, work and play. One of the most comforting and informative chapters is titled, “Let a thousand Old Flowers Bloom: Resiliency” and she offers a Chinese saying to launch it: “We cannot help the birds of sadness flying over our heads, but we need not let them build nests in our hair.”

It seems to me a perfectly sensible way to live. I recommend “Another Country” to anyone, young or old, who has any interest in asking that recurring question “How should I live my life?”. Pipher has some answers.

“Another Country: Navigating the Emotional Terrain of Our Elders” is published by Doubleday and sells for \$19.95.

Honouring Senior Australians in their International Year



Federal Minister for Aged Care Bronwyn Bishop launches the Commonwealth Recognition Awards with Betty Johnson from the Australian Pensioners' and Superannuants' Association

Senior Australians who have made a significant contribution to their local community will be recognised by the Commonwealth Recognition Awards for Senior Australians program announced by Federal Minister for Aged Care Bronwyn Bishop.

“An important part of this International Year of Older Persons is to formally recognise the valuable ongoing contribution of senior Australians to our community,” Mrs. Bishop said.

The Federal Government has provided \$5 million for activities at the grassroots level, which is supporting projects with momentum into the next century, and also has raised considerable awareness of the International Year through more than 34 projects and activities to operate at a national level, and hundreds of other projects and activities supported through funding to Australian Coalition '99, the IYOP non-government information

office that fosters and promotes positive developments for older people across Australia.

“I want our contribution to the International Year to begin cultural change within society, whereby we value and use the experience and wisdom of our senior Australians, not just have a celebration for 12 short months,” Mrs. Bishop said.

“Our support for the Year is moving into another phase with the launch of the Commonwealth Recognition Awards for Senior Australians which acknowledge the significant and ongoing contribution that senior Australians make to their local community.

“Up to 20 people from each of the 148 federal electorates around the country will be selected for a Commonwealth Recognition Award for Senior Australians and one person from each electorate will be chosen as their most outstanding recipient in the electorate.”

The outstanding award recipient from each electorate, together with their partner or companion, will be brought to Canberra for events leading up to and including the International Day of Older Persons on 1 October 1999.

“I encourage all Australians to recognise outstanding seniors in their communities by nominating them to their local Federal MP for the Commonwealth Recognition Awards for Senior Australians,” Mrs. Bishop said.

Nomination forms and information about the Commonwealth Recognition Awards for Senior Australians will be available from your local Federal MP, who has been provided with kits to assist them in coordinating these awards

NEWS

Australian Local Government Association Supports IYOP

In April this year, the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) became a National Partner of AC'99. ALGA is non-party political and represents the interests of Australia's 704 Local Governments at the national level. Local Government is very supportive of older residents in the community and believes that older people should be active, supported and visible in our society. Many councils are already involved in activities during the course of this International Year of Older Persons and ALGA supports and encourages initiatives associated with IYOP and AC'99 members.

"Update" will provide regular profiles of Local Government initiatives to facilitate information exchange and positive developments for older people between local councils across Australia. Local councils are invited to submit articles and photographs for inclusion in this monthly section.

City of Darebin (Victoria)

The following article has been supplied by Ana Vrantsis, IYOP Project Officer, City of Darebin.

We are already halfway through International Year of Older Persons or IYOP for short. Certainly the breadth and profile of IYOP events throughout the State has risen in the last couple of months. IYOP at City of Darebin is no exception. We are currently delivering Internet classes for over 55's, preparing to run a Confident Living project, a local 'Global Walk for IYOP', a multicultural 'Fiesta at the (Preston) Market!' and our specially commissioned theatre project 'Hogs hair and Leeches' is under production ahead of a debut in October.

But in another 5 months it will be all over and what will we have gained? Well, perhaps a warm inner glow and some great community



Award-winning playwright Patricia Cornelious (right) with 'Hogs Hair and Leeches' Director, Bagryana Popov at the audition meeting held at the Nothcote town hall on 17 July. The play debuts on 8 October at Preston Town Hall. A short season is planned for 8 - 30 October through metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria. If you would like to see the play performed in your area/municipality, contact Ana Vrantsis on (03) 9230 4469.

development outcomes. We will have advocated that older persons have a valuable role to play in a society which should include all ages. But in fact older persons already do play a pivotal role in our society. They are the mainstay of myriad volunteer driven organisations and services. They support their children materially and with child minding. They care for ailing partners and relatives. Yet this reality is not always apparent in popular consciousness where older persons may be seen more as burdens in an ageing society.

Perhaps this concern is what the fuss is all about. Certainly we want to be proactive and encourage healthy lifestyle choices. But as we live longer, there will undoubtedly be a greater demand for support services. However, this demand will also be amplified by social, technological and economic changes which have undermined the familiar fabric, services and supports in our local communities. Local governments are bound to feel the effects through mounting pressure to fill the gaps with community support services.

And here is a curly issue to consider. The current ranks of senior citizens are coming from the baby boomers who have lived and worked through comparatively affluent times. Many will be cashed up with 'golden handshakes' and good superannuation entitlements. But today's twenty and thirty-somethings are working in an increasingly deregulated employment market

where super may be non-existent as they lurch from one temporary position to another. What sort of retirement income will they have to live on for thirty or so years after they reach their 50's? Who will be filling the gaps then? As first in the firing line, local governments would do well to take the opportunities this year's focus presents to examine some of these future scenarios.

Ultimately, the grittier issues which affect older persons, affect all of us regardless of where we currently sit on the family life cycle. Not for nothing is this year's IYOP theme, 'Towards a society for all ages'.

For more information on activities within the City of Darebin, contact Ana on (03) 9230 4469.

City of Unley (South Australia)

Throughout 1999, the City of Unley has initiated and supported many interesting initiatives including:

- The Volunteer Visiting Program has been established for the benefit of isolated older residents of Supported Residential Facilities in City of Unley. Some of these older persons have few or, in some cases, no visitors. This scheme provides support to these residents. Participating visitors are required to visit a minimum of once a fortnight, and they are reimbursed for out of pocket expenses.



Launch on 25 July at Unley Museum of the latest exhibition, "Was your Granny Groovy?" Year 10 students from Concordia College presented a fashion parade of clothing from the 1940's.

- Unley Library Service has compiled lists of books depicting older people in a non-stereotypical manner. The lists are suitable for children/parents and grandparents. Two lists are available (ages 4-8 and 8-12) from Unley Library Front Desk and Children's Section and from Goodwood Library Front Desk. Availability of books depends on the popularity of each title.

For further information, contact Veronica Watkins at the City of Unley on tel: (08) 8372 5134.

City of Manningham (Victoria)

Manningham Community Health Service, Doncare and Manningham Centre formed a working party to progress activities during IYOP. A number of IYOP celebrations have been organised including:

- "An Enormous Cup of Tea": this was celebrated in people's homes, in Clubs, in some Primary Schools and throughout Home and Community Care funded programs (i.e. ADASS programs). This was a wonderful morning tea with publicity through the local paper, the Mayor meeting with the groups and a good time had by all.
- "Walk In My Shoes": an exhibition held during June 1999 at Manningham Gallery. The exhibits were made by residents of nursing homes, hostels, supported residential homes, ethnic clubs, etc. There were a number of workshops held throughout the month culminating in a workshop for workers about art and aged services. This was a tremendously successful exhibition with one of the highest attendance rates at the Gallery to date.
- An Old-Fashioned Tea Dance: this event will be held on October 24 at the Shoppingtown Hotel. Volunteers from programs for older people will assist with transportation and at the venue on the day.

For more information contact Tess Tsindos, Manager, Aged and Disability Support Services, City of Manningham on tel (03) 9841 5044

Adult Learning Australia planning an exciting Adult Learners Week

Thousands of adults know that learning can open doors to a world of new opportunities. Adult Learners Week is a national celebration which aims to promote the diversity of the learning opportunities available to adults for work, personal development and community involvement.

During Adult Learners Week events will be organised around the country and will include seminars, displays, family days, skill sharing activities and open learning sessions. Special dates during Adult Learners Week 1999 include:

- Lifelong Learning seminar -6 September
- Seniors Online Day -7 September
- International Literacy Day - 8 September
- Learning at Work Day -10 September

Events will be added continually to the calendar on the website:

<http://alw.ala.asn.au>. or contact

Adult Learning Australia on (02) 6251 9887 or (02) 6251 9889.

The Inaugural Seniors Online Day - 7 September 1999

As part of Adult Learners' Week, the inaugural Seniors Online Day will be held on 7 September 1999 to encourage older people to be introduced to the Internet.

All AC'99 partners organisations and affiliates are encouraged to introduce older people to the magic of the Internet on this day!

Seniors Online Day is being organised by Online Australia, the awareness program of the National Office of Information Economy (NOIE), a statutory body of the Commonwealth Government. The objective of NOIE is to raise awareness of the ways online technologies are changing and enhancing Australians' lives. The initiative comprises a national program of events and activities from March through November 1999, and Seniors Online Day is featured as a special event of this calendar.

The National Office of Information Economy is partnered by Adult Learning Australia (auspicing

body of Adult Learners' Week), Australian Coalition '99, and Australian Libraries and Information Association. Sponsors of this special event are St George Bank and Pacific Internet.

Things you can do:

① Host Internet Introductions for older people

It's easy! Just make a computer(s) available for older people and have a web- savvy person to "walk older people through" the step-by-step online tutorial on: www.seniorsonline.net.au . Online tutorials can be done at any place where there is online access - in public spaces or at home!

② Contribute to the Seniors Online Day website

If you have any information that may be of interest to older people, why not submit the information for inclusion in: www.seniorsonline.net.au. These could be links to interesting websites, articles relating to older people, events to be listed in the online calendar, or ideas to make the Day even more special!

Make www.seniorsonline.net.au a website for older people by older people! Email your contribution to: oa@noie.gov.au today!

③ Create your own activities for Seniors Online Day

Why not turn Seniors Online Day into regular community events: morning tea-parties, weekly Internet "show-and-tell" sessions, or a skills exchange with web-savvy kids at the local school!

④ Tell us about your Seniors Online Day event!

Whatever you do, just have fun, and remember to tell us about your event at: oa@noie.gov.au

- From mid-August 1999, you can go to the Seniors Online Day website for everything your organisation will need to make Seniors Online Day a success - from teaching notes to downloadable promotional material.

To find out more now, go to the Online Australia webpage for participating Seniors Organisations:

www.onlineaustralia.net.au/seniors OR call (02) 9240 0911, email: oa@noie.gov.au

New Study Slams Australia's treatment of older people with a mental illness

In July, SANE Australia released "Senior Service", a national survey which exposes widespread neglect of older Australians living with a mental illness.

The study reveals that "tens of thousands of [older people with mental illnesses such as schizophrenia] are warehoused in dingy boarding houses, with little or no support, and often on 'industrial strength' doses of older medications which have not been reviewed.

"People growing older with a mental illness are among the most disadvantaged and vulnerable in Australian society," says Barbara Hocking, Executive Director of SANE Australia.

"Too often, they are treated as though they are approaching their 'use by date' and are not worth spending money on. A shift of attitude is needed to give this group the same respect and access to services as younger people."

The Study reports that Australia does have some excellent programs to help people growing older with a mental illness. "The tragedy is that these programs remain isolated examples," comments Ms Hocking. "We should be implementing them systematically across all regions in every state and territory. We know what works. Why aren't we doing it?"

While some States do better than others according to the Study, attention is needed across the board in key areas such as decent supported accommodation, access to general and psychiatric health services, improved training and liaison for the workforce, and better use of HACC services for this group.

The RANZCP (Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists) Faculty of Psychiatry of Old Age has welcomed the Study. "So often...the focus is on the problems and tragedies of young adults with mental illnesses, often seeming blind to the continuing tragedy experienced by many older Australians", commented Associate Professor John Snowdon, Chair of the Faculty, expressing the hope that SANE Australia's study will lead to improved services for this underfunded and under-resourced area.

"Senior Service..?: A National Survey of Services for Older Australians with a Mental Illness 1999" (\$18.50 inc p&p) is available from SANE Australia on tel (03) 9682 5933.

The Inaugural 'Science Of Ageing' Conference

The National Ageing Research Institute is convening the inaugural 'Science of Ageing' Conference over two days - Monday November 29 and Tuesday November 30 1999.

The aim of the conference is to address the need to establish a coordinated and internationally competitive Australian effort to further our understanding of the normal processes underlying ageing and the mechanisms underlying age-related diseases across a range of systems and organisms. NARI wishes to encourage networking and facilitate the dissemination of recent and exciting developments in the field and raise the profile of ageing research in Australia.

The Conference will be held at the Moonee Valley Racecourse, Moonee Valley, Melbourne.

For further information please contact Pam Every, Conference Organiser on (03) 9389 7148 or email: NARI@medecine.unimelb.edu.au

A Communication Technology Program & the National Women's Justice Coalition

AC'99 welcomes the National Women's Justice Coalition (NWJC) as a new National Partner. The NWJC aims to promote the equality of women before the law by raising awareness of issues relating to women's legal equality, coordinating and lobbying on women's justice issues and building networks and facilitating the work of individuals and groups. Represented on the board are: Australian Women in Agriculture, Australian Women Lawyers, National Association of Services Against Sexual Violence, National Network of Women's Legal Services, National Network of Aboriginal Women's Legal Services, Women's Services Network, Association of Non-English Speaking Background Women of Australia, Australian Feminist Law Foundation, Women's Electoral Lobby.

The NWJC is eager to assist in promoting awareness as to the legal needs of older Australians and particularly older women. In moving towards this vision the NWJC is able to provide the assistance of an exciting new project called the Australian Virtual Centre for Women and the Law. The Centre aims to promote women's use and proficiency with new technologies, focussing on encouraging the growth of virtual communities and networks among regional and rural Australia. This will be done through the use of email and the Internet.

The NWJC is an associate member of the Older Women's Network Australia which has recently established an e-mail list through the Virtual Centre for networking between members and supporters of OWNA's work. It is hoped that the e-mail list will assist to provide peer encouragement and assistance to older women to use a range of new communication technologies.

Legal issues affecting older women include: elder abuse; income support (spouse maintenance, superannuation, social security benefits and veterans entitlements); family issues (contact with grandchildren, family property arrangements, separation issues); credit and debt matters; transition to retirement (property issues, nursing homes, guardianship, power of attorney; and end of life decisions (wills, living wills). There are also issues relating to the availability of affordable and accessible legal advice and assistance. The NWJC is keen to establish additional e-mail lists to facilitate discussion and work on these issues.

If you would like to join the free Older Women's Network e-mail or to establish your own free e-mail list please contact the Australian Virtual Centre for Women and the Law at the National Women's Justice by phone: (02) 6247 207, fax: (02) 6257 3070 or email: virtualcentre@nwjc.org.au or see our website: <http://www.nwjc.org.au>

The Body Shop: "Life's a Blast at 80!"

The Body Shop's has recently announced the winner of its photographic competition for secondary school students in years 11 & 12. There was a heartening number of entries that conveyed enormous maturity and sensitivity for

the topic - 'In my life ageing means to me . . .'. Entries were judged by staff at The Body Shop's retail support centre in Mulgrave, Victoria and Starsha Henneberry's photo was the overwhelming choice of The Body Shop staff judging panel because of its positive sense of celebration.



From L to R: Doris Curry, May Duncan, Margery Seaman and Jean Morris (standing). © Starsha Henneberry 1999. "In my life, ageing means to me a time to celebrate, to laugh and enjoy life."

Kim Forte from The Body Shop was pleased with the outcome of the competition because it involved the participation of young people and their thoughts on ageing that were very considered and positive. "Engaging young people in the International Year of Older Persons is clearly one way towards a society for all ages", said Kim.

Each of the women in the photograph was asked for their comments on life and ageing. These comments can be found on AC'99's website at: <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~ac99/newsletter>

Rural Ageing Conference: A Great Success

The Second National Rural Conference on Ageing was held in July and made an important contribution to the rural sector as part of the International Year.

The Conference program at Charles Sturt University combined the collective wisdom, intelligence and experience of speakers, workshop leaders and participants. The process of the Conference was highly interactive and participatory with considerable feedback on the enjoyment and relaxed style in which people were able to participate and absorb issues on ageing. The style was to move away from formal

presentations of papers and use interactive discussion as opposed to the presentation of academic papers.

Maggie Fitzgibbon commenced the Conference with a brilliant keynote address on intergenerational relationships, using the Youth Off the Streets program in which she is involved and lets her farm be used for homeless youth. Concurrent and repeated sessions on leisure for living, men and ageing and sexuality and ageing were very popular. The use of a film festival to explore and discuss issues was extremely popular and will be used for future conference content.

Apart from the days at Charles Sturt University the Natalie Pfalert art installation at the Albury Railway Station utilised a beautifully renovated railway station for a major art event on ageing. The Charles Sturt photography students mounted an excellent exhibition of ageing across the generations.

The ABC "Grey Matters" program for NSW was launched at the Conference and will be an ongoing event for 1999. The ABC also ran daily reports during the week of the Conference.

For further information on the outcomes of the Conference, contact Ms Celia Bevan, Ageing & Lifestyle Group, Charles Sturt University on tel: (02) 60 516 820, fax: (02) 60 516 772 or email: cbevan@csu.edu.au

MARKET

intelligence

Seeking Participants for an Exciting Documentary

"Grey Voyagers", a December Films production, will be a series of six half-hour stories about older people undertaking compelling overseas journeys of work, adventure and fulfilling lifelong dreams. The idea for "Grey Voyagers" emerged from the fan mail received from the critically acclaimed documentary, "Grey Nomads".

Series Director, Steve Westh is seeking 6 participants - individuals or couples "who tackle the stereotypes. They will be movers, people who want to stay in motion and who show us we are always capable of change."

For further information, contact Steve Westh on email: swesth@netspace.net.au or Series Co-Producer, Tony Wright on tel: (03) 9417 4377.

A Festival Celebrating Long Lives on Screen

"Long Lives on Screen" Film Festival will tour state capital cities and NSW regional centres, screening a program of award-winning Australian and international short films: comedy, animation and drama - all of which celebrate long and rich lives. The Festival offers a unique opportunity for people of all ages to see older people portrayed on screen as positive and dynamic characters, rather than the older stereotypes to which audiences are often subjected.



Some superheroes are less well-known than others. Reg O'Grady seems just like any other mild-mannered husband, until he turns into "Handyman"! Before films, Director Martin Murphy trained as an actor in the European tradition of clown and comic improvisation.

The 1999 tour will be launched in Sydney on 27 October by the Hon. Bronwyn Bishop, MP and finishes on 10 December in Perth. The Festival's Advisory Committee includes well known actors and film critics, Bill Collins, Henri Szeps and Margaret Pomeranz.

In kind support for travel and accommodation is being sought from community groups and associations.

For further information, contact Tracey Mair at Tracey Mair Publicity on tel: (02) 9362 8566 or fax: 02 9362 8599.

RAISING AWARENESS

with the media

“Ad News” Competition Champions Older People

The following editorial appeared in *Ad News*, 30 July 1999, to accompany the launch of the “Towards a New Age in Creativity” competition.

The Australian advertising industry is not exactly short of awards, but few put the interests of the community above personal achievement as their sole reason for being. A new competition, however, challenges the industry to promote an ageless society by actively supporting the UN International Year of Older Persons (IYOP).


Entrants are required to develop a print ad (newspaper, magazine or outdoor) targeting 18 to 39 year olds that encourages understanding of ageing and acceptance of older people (50 years and older). Advertising agency creatives as well as tertiary students of media and communications are eligible to enter the competition, which carries a main prize of a luxury overseas holiday for two for the winning agency. The agency prize comprises two business class tickets for two to Austria with Lauda Air, staying at two of the Leading Hotels of the World. The prize for a student design is a month’s work experience at a leading advertising agency and one year’s free subscription to *Ad News*.

Australian Coalition ‘99 Project Manager, Lisa Ellis, says she hopes the competition will encourage the industry to challenge the prevailing

“youth epidemic” by developing ads showing ageing in a positive light. Ellis says the ad industry has the power to make or break public perceptions, especially among the youth and can therefore play “a decisive role in dispelling the myths of ageing and the stereotypes of older people”.

Sean Cummins of Cummins & Partners welcomes the competition as a “contribution to and a reflection of a growing industry understanding of older people as key consumers

in a fragmenting market”. Describing older people as an “increasingly vocal and skeptical constituency”, Cummins says market fragmentation and an ageing population are “already pushing industry to depict ageing more positively and progressively”. He says the industry still either “gets it very right or very wrong” when targeting older people but this is “an improvement from the days not very long ago when ads were uniformly patronising”. He says the Milk “Retired” TV commercial by Clemenger Melbourne, which shows a retired



Will your work
contribute towards
a new age of
creativity?

milkman still on his “rounds” of the neighbourhood’s housewives, is a fine example of an “emerging positive trend”.

The advertisement reproduced here will appear in two subsequent editions of Ad News. Entries close on 1st October 1999. For further information check out: www.vicnet.net.au/~ac99

Ad News is Australia’s top selling marketing, media and advertising magazine. It is available through subscription and newsagencies across the country.

Calling Young Storytellers!

The Australian Women's Weekly and Australian Coalition '99 invite primary and secondary students across the nation to participate in an exciting national writing competition, "Time of Your Life". The competition will be launched in the September 1999 edition of the Australian Women's Weekly.

The competition is open to school children aged between nine and 18. Students are invited to write about what they imagine life will be like in 50 years time, by writing a story starting with, "In the Year 2050, I..."

There are great prizes for students, including three IBM Aptiva computers, books from Collins Booksellers and products from The Body Shop. The winners' schools will also be rewarded with books from Collins Booksellers.

To stimulate the creative thinking process, some of Australia's top young adults and children's writers - John Marsden, Libby Gleeson, Terry Denton, Sonya Hartnett, Sarah Walker, Anna Fienberg, Nadia Wheatley, Andy Griffith, Chris Wheat, Jenny Pausacker and Libby Hathorn have penned the first essays around the theme. These essays will be posted on the AC'99 website (www.vicnet.net.au/~ac99) at the beginning of September to coincide with the release of the September edition of The Australian Women's Weekly.

The Internet Service Provider, Schoolsnet, will be sending emails directly to teachers and students promoting Time of Your Life at various times in the lead up to the closing date.

Schoolsnet has been involved with Internet related support and educational initiatives since 1994. It has supported government and private schools from P-12 bringing the Internet to classrooms across Australia. As well as developing world class Internet management software and providing this to schools through its key partnership with Telstra, Schoolsnet has been committed to working directly with teachers in the classroom.

There will be an awards ceremony held in Canberra on Friday November 5th in Canberra. The winning students will be flown to Canberra and presented with their awards by the Minister for Aged Care, the Hon. Bronwyn Bishop.

The competition will be launched in The Australian Women's Weekly September edition which will be available for sale from 25 August.

IYOP

n e w s

Dogs & Cats: a secret to a healthier and longer life?

The following is an extract from The University of Melbourne, Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research journal, "Australian Social Monitor" Vol 2, No. 2, May 1999, and is reprinted with permission of the author, Bruce Headey, Centre for Public Policy, The University of Melbourne.

People have been keeping dogs as pets for more than 10,000 years and cheerful canine affection has brightened many a pet owner's day. Do pets also have more tangible benefits?

A paper published in May 1999 by The University of Melbourne, Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research reports that this may be the case. The first results from representative national surveys, conducted in Australia and Germany, indicate the benefits of relationships between pet ownership and better human health. It seems clear that dog and cat owners (but not owners of other types of pets) use the health system less than non-owners: they make fewer annual doctor visits and spend less time in hospital.

If it is true that dog and cat owners use the health system less than non-owners, then it follows that savings in national health expenditure result.

The second part of the paper outlines a straightforward method of estimating the large potential savings in national health expenditure resulting from lower use of the health system by pet owners. National health expenditure is vast, and the possible cost ranging between 6% and 15% of GDP in Western countries. So even small differences in service use between pet owners and non-owners can potentially result in large savings.

Previous research in the United States, Britain,

Canada and Australia has shown some evidence of a relationship between pet ownership and better health. Friedmann et al. (1980) found that patients who owned pets were much less likely to die in the year following a heart attack than patients who had no pet in their home. The methodology of this study was criticised by Wright and Moore (1982) but it has since been replicated on a larger scale and the relationship seems fairly well established (Friedmann, 1995).

Anderson et al. (1992) of the Baker Medical Research Institute in Australia conducted a heart risk screening survey in which volunteers were given a medical examination and also completed a questionnaire which included questions about pet ownership. Analysis indicated that pet owners had lower blood pressure and cholesterol levels than non-owners and were therefore at less risk of heart disease. The results held up when regression analysis was used to net out the effects of age, income, smoking, being overweight and other heart risk factors.



[The] estimates of potential health expenditure savings are plainly preliminary but the public policy implications could be substantial. The estimated savings are large, and might be even higher if it is confirmed that pets especially benefit older people. Older people disproportionately use hospitals- the most

expensive part of the health system- to an even greater extent than they visit the doctor. In the light of that fact, it is even possible that our estimates of health savings are understated.

A final public policy implication is that, if dogs and cats benefit human health, governments should consider adopting programs to enable high risk groups [especially older people] to retain their pets or even acquire a new one.

Previous research has not been based on national representative samples, so it has not hitherto been possible to estimate national health savings. Data for this paper come from the Australian People & Pets Survey conducted in 1994 and from the 13th wave of the German Socio-Economic Panel Survey conducted in 1996.

Trends within the older population revealed in Australian Report

Extracts from Aged Care Monitor Weekly News Summary, Issue no. 163, 25 June 1999

Older people and isolation

A new Australian Bureau of Statistics report, Australian Social Trends 1999, has revealed on average adults spend three hours and one minute alone each day. However, a man aged over 65, living by himself, is likely to spend 12 hours a day on his own. This represents 83 per cent of his waking life. A woman of similar age, living by herself, will spend 12 hours and 12 minutes alone each day (78 per cent of her waking time). A third of Australians aged over 54 live alone. Council on the Ageing Policy Officer Michael Keats, believes the findings have disturbing implications for social isolation, depression and suicide. Through programs such as the Commonwealth Community Visitors Scheme, Keats organisation is attempting to meet the care needs of lonely old people.

(Major Sources: Sydney Morning Herald, Australian, The Age, Canberra Times, Herald Sun, Hobart Mercury)

The Health Report

The report also revealed that 64 per cent of those aged 65 and over consider their health to be good, very good or excellent, and they are smoking less.

However, obesity continues to rise and represents a health risk. Cancer has overtaken heart disease as the biggest killer of men over 65, while heart disease remained the biggest killer of women. Stroke remained the third-biggest cause of death overall, while the fourth was respiratory disease. In addition, 89 per cent reported experiencing a recent illness while 99 per cent had one or more long-term health conditions. Some 92 per cent used medicine or herbal preparations in a two-week period and 41 per cent had visited a doctor.

(Major Source: The Australian)

A Grey Future Is A Bright Future For Australian Tourism

In June 1999, Seniors Card offices around Australia released a national report called "Not over the hill. Just enjoying the view", revealing that seniors are the next boom market for tourism.

The report summarises the most extensive over-60's market research ever conducted in Australia. More than a research summary, "Not over the hill" also offers practical strategies to help tourism businesses motivate and attract senior travellers.

Up-beat photos and an easy-to-digest writing style make "Not over the hill. Just enjoying the view" an enjoyable read for both small business operators and Chief Executives. The unique treatment of the report even carries through to the page numbering - like so many good things in life, this report starts at 60.

The report is a healthy ageing initiative as part of IYOP in recognition of the increasing numbers of older Australians seeking positive experiences, improved health and social interaction through travel.

Research conducted for the report reveals that seniors spend more time and more of their recreational budget on travel than any other age group: 80% of Australia's 2.97 million older persons want to travel now or in the near future.

Tourism Council Australia is the national peak body for the tourism industry and endorses the initiative.

More information on "Not over the hill. Just enjoying the view" is available on the report's website:

http://www.families.qld.gov.au/seniors_tourism/home.htm

or contact (07) 3224 7565 or (07) 3224 2788, or email: tourismscheme@powerup.com.au

A Greener Society for all Ages

A day of action to celebrate IYOP will take place at the Nairne Olympic Landcare site, in South Australia on Saturday 21 August. This site is notable for its enormous 'Olympic Landcare' sign written across the hillside with yellow rocks and having three 'Gold Trees' on site. This will be a day out suitable for listeners and their families. Ten thousand more trees need to be planted on this site.

This will involve "straight-forward tree planting" activities for individuals and teams of volunteers. And of course there will be positive environmental activities.

For more information contact Wayne Brown (08) 8391 7513 or the Olympic Landcare Hotline 1800 155 180.

Gerontologic Post-Graduate Research Programs

Information about the Post-Graduate Programs was published in the "Update" May 1999 edition and prompted an outstanding response from interested people across Australia. The article is reprinted below.

The University of South Australia offers Gerontologic Post-Graduate Research Programs and invites you to make a significant contribution to your workplace and the community at the same time gaining a Masters or PhD. The innovative programs are designed to address issues related to both the professional field and the workplace.

For further details contact: Margie H Sharpe PhD, Associate Professor, School of Physiotherapy, University of South Australia, City East Campus, North Terrace, Adelaide 5000 tel: (08) 8302 2584 fax: (08) 8302 2766 and email: Margaret.Sharpe@unisa.edu.au

IYOP CALENDAR

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION
1-2 September	HAI Asia/Pacific Regional Meeting	
5-8 September	ACA & AAG National Conference	Sydney
5-9 September	Fourth Global Conference of the International Federation on Ageing	Montreal
6-10 September	Retirement Village Association Annual Conference	Launceston, TAS
9-10 September	Innovative Municipal Approaches in the World	France
14-17 September	Social Welfare and Social Development in the New Millennium	Sydney
16-18 September	15th International Conference on Alzheimer's Disease	South Africa
20-24 September	Tour - Salvation Army	
21-25 September	Alzheimer's Association of Australia National Conference	Perth
24-30 September	Masters Games	
26-30 September	The Asia Pacific Regional Conference of Social Work and AASW National Conference	Brisbane
26-29 September	31st Public Health Association Annual Conference	Darwin, NT
27 September	Social Justice Sunday	
27-30 September	Images of Our Elders Tour, NSW	Westfield, Tuggerah, NSW
27-30 September	Gerontology and Geriatrics '99	Havana, Cuba
29-30 September	Australian Psychological Society Conference	Hobart
29-30 September	Theology, Economics and Public Policy Colloquium 1999	Canberra

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