Connecting & Learning in Retirement

Staying Connected after Retirement

Retiring information professionals have spent much of their careers working with computer technology — librarians were early adopters and it is hardly surprising that retirees will use online technology to 'stay connected' with colleagues and to keep abreast of the profession. A couple of good examples are the newly established aliaRETIREES elist at <**http://www.alia.org.au/alianet/e-lists**> and the Celebrations and Acknowledgements blog on the ALIA website — please visit <**http://aliaretirees.blogspot.com/**>.

Another example is the Library Success Wiki — Services for Older Adults at <**http://www.libsuccess.org/index.php?title=Services_for_Older_Adults**>.

Particularly note the technology link at the bottom and the Senior Friendly Libraries link under 'blogs'.

Staying abreast of technology can present a challenge, but groups like the Australian Seniors Computer Clubs Association (ASCCA) support seniors to enjoy information technology — to become computer literate at their own pace, in a non-threatening environment and to have fun whilst doing so. Visit <**http://www.ascca.org.au**>.

Retirees have a number of tools at their disposal to locate volunteering opportunities, particularly capitalising on their professional skills. The ALIA Retirees Group website provides some useful links. See <**http://www.alia.org.au/groups/retirees/links.html**>, specifically Seek volunteer, Australian Volunteer Search, Go volunteer, Fido and The centre for volunteering (NSW).

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U3A — the University of the Third Age

U3A is an international movement that encourages retired people to take part in lifelong learning activities for pleasure. U3As allow people to study in a relaxed environment at low cost. There are no prior qualifications required, there are no exams and no degrees awarded. Being in your Third Age is the only criterion for membership.

U3As are like universities in the original sense of the word — communities of people who come together to learn from one another. U3As are learning co-operatives of older people. By offering a huge range of educational, creative and leisure activities to their members, they encourage positive ageing.

U3As draw on the huge resource of skills and experience of people in their 'third age', which is sometimes called 'the age of active retirement'. It's the stage of life reached after the first age of childhood and dependence, and the second age of working life and home making.

In any U3A community there are always some people willing to share their knowledge with others by acting as course leaders or tutors, or by assisting with administration. Quite often, members are leaders in some classes and learners in others. The costs of running a U3A are very low because the time and effort needed to run them is given voluntarily by its members.

There is no national U3A in Australia; there are U3As all over the country and in regional areas. To locate a U3A near you, go to <**http://www3.griffith.edu.au/03/u3a/**>, then you can search by location, state or region, postcode or suburb/town.

U3A also offers remote study via the Internet. Go to <**http://www13.griffith.edu.au/03/u3a/**> for more information.

PEARLS

PEARLS (acronym for Previously Employed And Retired Librarians) is an ever-changing and informal group who meet five times per year at Bookplate, in the National Library of Australia, for coffee, cake and conversation.

Often travel photographs are perused or sometimes portraits painted by an artistic member discussed. News and views of cultural and library activities in Canberra are exchanged. Usually our gatherings are the third Monday of February, April, June, August and October. At the beginning of each year we usually advertise our group meeting dates in the community activities section of the local press. Our email contact is Brenda McAvoy at <**bmcavoy@optusnet.com.au**>.

Elizabeth Stone

Reduced ALIA fees for retirees

ALIA offers heavily reduced membership fees for retirees. See <**http://www.alia.org.au/membership.benefits/fees.html**> for further information.

Volunteering your computer skills in retirement

As Mylee Joseph points out elsewhere on this page, retiring/retired information professionals have spent much of their careers working with computer technology, so why not consider volunteering in retirement to utilise your computer skills to assist others? There is plenty of research to show that people who keep their mind as well as their body active during retirement are generally healthier and happier, and the benefits will increase knowing that you are helping others.

The University of the Third Age (U3A) is always seeking people to volunteer to run courses. Go to <**http://www3.griffith.edu.au/03/u3a/**>, where you can search by location, state or region, postcode or suburb/town.

A fantastic example of the value of volunteers' computing skills is in Tasmania, where there is a network of 66 online access centres around the state providing access to online information and lifelong learning opportunities. In 2005–2006, the centres had a total of 842 volunteers who gave a total of 84,526 volunteer hours!