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Issue 103

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Maitland Community
Men's Shed welcomes
new members!

We are here to assist
our supporters and
friends.

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The Maitland
Community Men's
Shed would like to
acknowledge our
major supporters



The Shed Report.....

December at the Shed saw the usual activities happening. Out in the project area the Lion's Club cubby house began to take shape and is well on track for completion and delivery in late February. The ever-popular dog's beds and raised planter boxes continue to roll out. While over in the joinery, the lads turn out their array of toys, tables and chairs. We received a callout from a local Early Learning Child-care for some wooden cars, trucks and toys, as they finding that the plastic toys, that they have are just not surviving the rigours of daily use. We were happy to be of use and answered their call for help. The gardens continue to flourish and provide a fine array of produce.

Some members of the BBQ team went to the final night of competition of the Maitland Athletics and Little Athletics to cook up and supply their members and parents with Sausage sandwiches.

During the past year a number of our members have moved into "village" living and this raised a thought, just how do people in other villages communicate to their neighbours how they are going each day? So, I enquired about this to friends from other villages. The message and methods were much the same around the many retirement establishments. Most opened curtains or blinds, maybe the garage door, however, those more technically advanced would ring or even send a message. But, let me tell you about another method that I learnt from a new member of our Shed.

There is a house in one of the main streets in East Maitland that I regularly passed on the way to the Shed each morning and again on the journey home. In the yard of this house is a cow. The cow was moved around the yard, taking up a new position

each day. The cow had a small goat as a friend, but I was to learn that someone thought they wanted the goat more, so that explained why the cow was now being tethered around the yard. During the festive months a neighbour decided the cow needed some Christmas clothing, and so the cow, Daisy I have been told, gained a Christmas cloth. Soon a new goat arrived. And so, Daisy continued to move around the yard, and the goat got to live on the roof of the garage.

How does this tie into the method of letting people know how you are going? Should Daisy be on the veranda with her back side to the road, then it is a sign that the occupant inside is not well. May Daisy continue to face the road.

And so, another year gone and we move headlong into 2025. Towards the end of 2024 a few plans began to fall in our favour. The Shed eventually received communication from The Crown Lands office informing us that they have given the go ahead to move forward on the project to build a garage in the backyard to house the Shed Ute and the Forklift truck, and so begins the journey to have the Development Application approved by the MCC.

The upstairs toilet and the downstairs urinal are ready for use. This project was made possible thanks to a grant from AMSA for Shed improvements.

I trust that our members and their families had a wonderful Christmas and I want to take this opportunity to extend my best wishes to all for a Happy and Prosperous New Year.

Take care and see you at the Shed.

Charlie Sanders - Chairman

Cubbyhouse Under Construction.....

The media headlines tell us that we have a critical housing shortage in NSW. Housing affordability, escalating real estate prices, supply chain issues, and a shortage of tradespeople all contribute to this problem. It's a complex issue that impacts all families and communities in one form or another. I never thought that the great Australian dream of owning a home could be denied to our children and perhaps our children's children. It's hard to imagine what the solution will be.

Far removed from this national crisis but in some ways similar was the problem facing East Maitland Lions Club. The Lions Club raises much-needed funds each year to support its many community projects.

Traditionally, this has been through a major fundraising raffle with the prize of a children's cubbyhouse. This cubbyhouse is not just any cubbyhouse but more like a 'Tiny House Movement' construction. The finished project will be timber-framed, fully lined and clad, with a pitched Colourbond roof, carpet, and shelves. The Lions Club asked for the Men's Shed's help to build the Cubby House.

Tom, our Shed Project Coordinator, has marshalled the troops and construction is underway. The cubbyhouse sits on a custom-made steel, box-framed chassis. This enables the finished cubby to be wheeled into Greenhills Shopping Centre for display. At the time of writing this, the flooring has been attached, the wall frames built and braced, and the lining started. Construction seems well ahead of

its delivery date of March 2025.

The tricky calculations have been made to determine the pitch of the roof, its overall height (limited by doorway heights and widths at Greenhills). The number and spacing of rafters and the roof overhang have been set. The design and making of the rafters require exacting angles for the plumb cut, birds' mouth cut, and the tail cut.

It's specialist work that was easily accomplished. Our Men's Shed has a team with talent, experience, and expertise that they willingly apply to projects to give back to our communities. I'm assured that it has nothing to do with trying to get onto Santa's good list, even though this seems to be a major focus of boys and men both young and old at this time of the year. Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this worthy cause. We achieve so much more when we work together.

The finished Cubbyhouse will go on display at a location in Greenhills Shopping Centre sometime in March next year and will be one of the locations from which the Lions Club will sell its raffle tickets. Do yourself a favour and make sure that you get some of these tickets. This cubbyhouse would be a family present that will outlast just about every other present you could imagine. The Men's Shed builds things to last! I don't know a child who would not want a cubbyhouse to play out their fantasies. Remember, you must be in it to win it!

Writer: **John Williams** - Men's Shed Reporter



Shed Christmas Party 2024.....

The festive spirit was alive and well as the Shed celebrated its annual Christmas Party at the Telarah Bowling Club. On Friday, December 20th, a large group of members and their guests gathered to mark the end of a successful year and toast to the year ahead.

The celebrations kicked off with a delicious lunchtime feast. Guests enjoyed a comforting chicken and corn soup to start, followed by a choice of succulent roast pork or beef paired with baked vegetables for the main course. To round off the meal, dessert options included a classic pavlova with fruit salad or a festive combination of Christmas pudding, custard, ice cream, and fruit salad.

The atmosphere buzzed with laughter and good cheer as everyone reflected on the highlights of the year at the Shed. Stories were shared, memories were revisited, and there was plenty of excitement about the opportunities the new year might bring.

Adding to the fun, the lucky ticket raffles brought an extra spark of anticipation, with plenty of winners walking away with smiles and prizes.

The Board and all our members extend a heartfelt thank you to the community for their continued support. We wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a happy, healthy New Year. Here's to another fantastic year at the Shed!



New Year Resolutions: Embrace the Golden Years with a Smile.....



I remember that when I was working that I would make those infamous To Do lists. It was meant to prioritise your efforts, give you a plan and set your short-term direction. I always found this exercise to be a mixed blessing, sometimes disappointing and very often frustrating and on rare occasions fulfilling its original intention.

I tried it at home with jobs around the house and frequently it would result in a long list that never had its items crossed off. There's a Jewish saying that says 'Man makes plans and God laughs.' I tried, but it seemed like my plans were more for my wife's amusement because it rarely coincided with her plans for my efforts. Just like New Years Resolutions, I haven't had so much success with those either.

When I think about it now, I think we try too hard with enthusiasm and idealism when we set out to goal set. What's usually missing is a fair assessment of what is possible and practical in the time available to achieve our goals. Our To Do list can easily be swamped by more pressing and urgent demands that ensure that our jobs list is untouched creating the impression that nothing has been achieved. New Year Resolutions can be like this.

As the clock strikes midnight on December 31st, the world collectively takes a deep breath and steps into a brand-new year. New Year resolutions are for everyone to embrace change, growth, and a bit of fun. Here are some light-hearted yet meaningful resolutions to consider as you step into the new year.

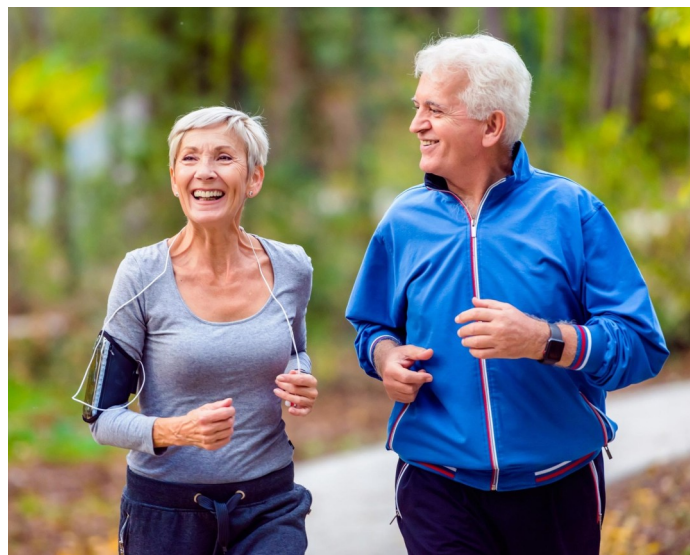
1. Master a New Hobby

The Men's Shed provides the perfect time and

opportunity to dive into hobbies you've always wanted to try but never have. If you always do the things you've always done you will always get what you always got! Have you tried woodturning, lead lighting, making glass wind chimes, toy making, welding, spray-painting? A new hobby can keep your mind sharp, but it also provides a sense of accomplishment and joy. Plus, it's a great way to impress the grandkids!

2. Stay Active and Healthy

While lounging on the couch binge watching your favourite show or watching test cricket on TV is attractive, we know that you lose it if you don't use it! Staying active is crucial for maintaining good health. Exercise doesn't have to be a chore; it can be a fun and social activity. Remember, it's never too late to start!



Continued Next Page

New Year Resolutions: - Continued



3. Volunteer Your Time

Giving back to our local community is incredibly fulfilling. Your membership of The Shed is a great way to stay connected and make a positive impact supporting local charities or participating in community events. Plus, it's a wonderful way to meet new people and make new friends.

4. Travel and Explore

Now is the perfect time to satisfy your wanderlust. Whether it's a road trip across the country, (we have lots of 'Grey Nomad' advice and experience in The Shed) even if you're simply exploring nearby towns and attractions, travelling is a fantastic way to create new memories and experiences. Don't forget to take lots of photos to share with family and friends!

5. Learn Something New

Keeping your mind active is just as important as staying physically active. Consider taking a class at a local community college. Try short cooking/breadmaking courses, some even offer cheesemaking and seafood, Chinese, Japanese or Indian cooking classes. Learning a new language, (Anglo Saxon is sometimes heard around The Shed). Who knows, you might discover a hidden talent or passion!

6. Connect with Loved Ones

In the hustle and bustle of daily life, it's easy to lose touch with family and friends. Reconnect with loved ones through regular phone calls, video chats, or even planning family gatherings. Strengthening these bonds can bring immense joy and fulfillment.

7. Embrace Technology

Dive into the world of technology with Steve and Gary. Technology opens a world of possibilities. The internet is a treasure trove of online courses and tutorials on virtually any subject you can think of. From staying in touch with loved ones through social media to exploring new hobbies and interests online, embracing technology can enhance your life experience. Don't be afraid to ask for help if you need it; there are plenty of resources available to guide you.

8. Focus Self on -Care

Last but certainly not least, make self-care a priority. Whether it's indulging in a relaxing bath, enjoying a good book, or simply taking time to meditate and reflect, self-care is essential for overall well-being. Remember, taking care of yourself allows you to better enjoy all the other wonderful aspects of your life.

New Year resolutions are all about embracing the freedom and opportunities that come with this new year of life. Resolutions don't have to be 'perfect', and they should be treated as 'do your best' goals that help you to see how far you can go. With a positive attitude and a sense of adventure, the possibilities are endless. Here's to a happy, healthy, and fulfilling New Year! See you all in 2025.



Writer: **John Williams** - Men's Shed Reporter

Remember, "This Is Your Shed". Be PROUD Of It And Contribute Where You Can.



BBQ News.....



Little Athletics Maitland.....

I recently read that the Stress Management and Phobia Institute in America estimated that 17 - 21 million people in the USA are affected by Paraskevidekatriaphobia. Some of these sufferers are so fearful that they avoid normal routines and may not even get out of bed for the day. Thankfully, Graham Masters and his five barbecue helpers are unaffected by Paraskevidekatriaphobia.

On a ridiculously hot afternoon on Friday the 13th of December, we headed to Maitland's Athletic Field with our barbecue trailer loaded with barbecues, tables, eskies of sausages and buckets of chopped onions. Graham has perfected the provisioning of barbecues and managed to include everything that we needed, everything from aprons to knives, sauce, drinks, tablecloths, paper towels even cold drinks for the workers.

Our mission was to provide a sausage sizzle for the young and not so young members of the Maitland Athletics Club. This Athletic event was the last of the year and was a celebration of the commitment and persistence of the club and its members during 2024.

Our diners included beginning athletes who ran enthusiastically red faced in the oppressive heat, all the way through to young adults with perfected techniques and running spikes. The final group, the adults included the hardworking coaches and officials, supportive parents, and the doting grandparents of the children from the Maitland's commu-

nities.

The sausage and onion sandwiches were of course excellent and 360 were consumed during the three-hour grazing period. While the sausages were good, the more refreshingly outstanding feature was the respectful and cooperative atmosphere throughout the afternoon and evening. Competition in good spirit, earnest commitment from the kids to be the best that they can be, no tantrums, no arguing, simply good clean fun.

We hear increasingly about the difficulties community events can face with ranges of ugly behaviour fuelled by misplaced sense of entitlement, abusive language, partisanship, and poor respect for any form of opposition. This happens in the playground, in the workplace, in politics and if you follow the news, in the world. Not so with the Athletic Community of Maitland. Having spent the afternoon alongside a group of the young people of Maitland it brings us a great sense of optimism and joy for the future.

As we packed up after handing over the last sausage sandwich families were leaving the venue. They all thanked us for the barbecue and wished us a Happy Christmas. It was a great end to a tough day sweating over a hot barbecue. Clearly, we don't have many people in fear of Friday the thirteenth - Only in America!

Writer: *John Williams* - Men's Shed Reporter



Embracing Modern Technology For Senior Health And Well-Being.....

In an age of rapid technological advancement, seniors in Australia have more tools than ever to help them monitor and maintain their health. With user-friendly devices and apps designed specifically for older adults, staying healthy and informed has never been easier.

1. Wearable Devices

Smartwatches and fitness trackers, like the Apple Watch or Fitbit, offer features such as heart rate monitoring, sleep tracking, and step counting. Many also include fall detection and emergency alert systems, ensuring immediate assistance if needed. These devices empower seniors to keep track of their physical activity and detect potential health issues early.

2. Telehealth Services

Access to healthcare has become more convenient with telehealth platforms. Seniors can consult with doctors or specialists from the comfort of their



homes via video calls. This eliminates the need for travel, reduces waiting times, and ensures timely medical advice.

3. Smart Home Technology

Smart devices such as automated pill dispensers, voice-activated assistants (like Alexa or Google Home), and home monitoring systems help seniors manage daily routines and stay safe. For instance, reminders for medication or appointments can be set with just a few spoken words.

4. Health Apps

Mobile apps tailored for health tracking, such as My Health Record, allow seniors to manage their medical history, appointments, and prescriptions. These apps also provide reminders for check-ups, vaccinations, and other essential health tasks.

5. Social Connectivity

Technology isn't just about physical health - it also boosts mental well-being. Platforms like Zoom, WhatsApp, and Facebook help seniors stay connected with family and friends, reducing feelings of isolation and loneliness.

By embracing modern technology, seniors can enjoy enhanced independence, better health outcomes, and a higher quality of life. With a little guidance, these tools can become trusted companions on the journey to healthy aging.

Just a Little Joke.....

A stingy old lawyer who had been diagnosed with a terminal illness was determined to prove wrong the old saying, "You can't take it with you."

After much thought and consideration, the old ambulance-chaser finally figured out how to take at least some of his money with him when he died.

He instructed his wife to go to the bank and withdraw enough money to fill two pillowcases. He then directed her to take the bags of money to the attic and leave them directly above his bed.

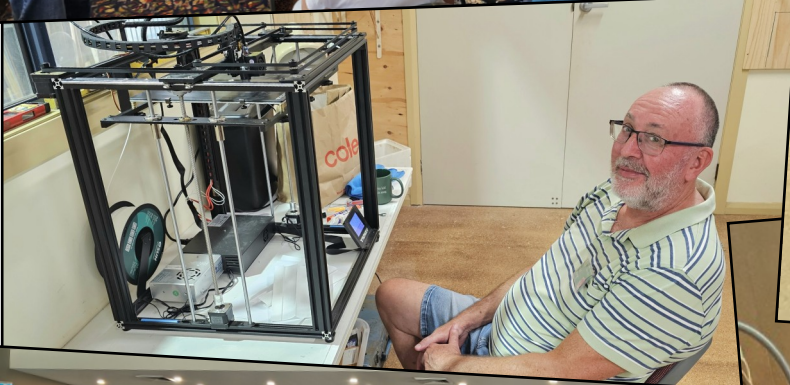
His plan: When he passed away, he would reach out and grab the bags on his way to heaven. Several weeks after the funeral, the deceased lawyer's wife, up in the attic cleaning came upon the two forgotten

pillowcases stuffed with cash.

"Oh, that old fool," she exclaimed. "I knew he should have had me put the money in the basement."



January Picture Gallery.....



Celebrate Australia Day in Maitland Park!

Kickstart your Australia Day with a morning packed full of fun in Maitland Park! Enjoy a vibrant mix of exciting activities, delicious food, and fantastic entertainment that promises something for everyone.

Feast on a free barbecue, unleash your creativity with craft activities, and soak up the lively atmosphere with live performances. Plus, take advantage of free entry to both Maitland and East Maitland Aquatic Centres for a refreshing dip with the family.

As the day winds down, the excitement doesn't stop! Maitland Pool transforms into a magical floating cinema for the Dive-In Cinema experience. Grab your floaties, don your swimwear, or simply relax by the poolside and enjoy a movie under the stars. It's the perfect way to wrap up your celebration with a splash!

Best of all, this fantastic event is completely free! With plenty of free car and coach parking, and a family- and pet-friendly atmosphere, it's a day not to be missed. Come along and make your Australia Day unforgettable at Maitland Park!



When: The 26th of January 2025 from 7:30am - 9:00pm

Where: Elgin Street, Maitland

More Info Contact:

Email: events@maitland.nsw.gov.au

Phone: (02) 4931 2801

Website: <https://www.maitlandevents.com.au/events/australia-day-in-park/>

Summer Reading Party at East Maitland Library.....

Celebrate the summer holidays with a special all-inclusive Reading Party at East Maitland library. Designed for those who love to read, but don't want to do it alone, reading parties offer a safe space for you to read with a community of like-minded people doing the same thing.

Enjoy delicious cool drinks and snacks, chill out to some calming vibes, and dive into that TBR pile. Suitable for all ages.

When: Monday the 13th of January 2025 from 6:00pm - 7:30pm

Where: East Maitland Library, 3 Garnett Rd, East Maitland

Cost: Free Event

Tickets At:

<https://www.trybooking.com/events/landing/1318930>



Birthdays This Month.....

Mick Dawson, Ian Goldsworthy, Darryl Grant, Fred Harvey, Neil Horne, John Peters and Barrie Robinson



Is It Dementia or Normal Brain Ageing?

As people age, the body changes as part of the normal ageing process, such as greying hair and loss of elasticity in the skin. Unfortunately, normal ageing also causes changes in the brain that can cause people to forget things from time to time, such as where you put your car keys.

Dementia refers to impaired thinking and reasoning due to abnormal brain changes. If daily activities become difficult, such as losing track of what day or year it is or having trouble recognising well-known people, it is time to see a healthcare provider for a memory check-up.

What is considered normal ageing?

As natural ageing happens, besides other bodily changes, there are some changes in the brain.

For example, there may be a mild decrease in the ability to multitask, to recall words or names, or the attention span may be shorter.

Ageing may also bring positive cognitive changes. Older adults are proven to have larger vocabularies and a better understanding of the meaning of words than younger people. Older adults can still learn new skills, improve their vocabulary and language, and form new memories.

How does the brain change with ageing?

As a person's brain ages, there are changes in parts of the brain, including structural changes and the way cells, chemicals, and other processes in the brain work. These changes may affect how older adults think. Even in healthy older adults, the changes of an ageing brain include:

- Shrinking in certain parts of the brain.
- Nerve cells (neurons) cannot communicate as well as before.
- Inflammation (the swelling from injury or disease) increases.
- Blood flow in the brain slows.

Any of these changes may make it harder to remember things, or an ageing person may need more time to complete tasks. Of course, these are normal ageing changes, but daily habits and routines can help with reducing their effects. For example, always placing your keys and wallet in the same spot, setting cell phone reminders of appointments, or writing appointments on a calendar in a place sure to be seen (like in the kitchen where breakfast is eaten), and actively engaging the brain by reading or participating in a favourite hobby.

In a normally ageing brain, memories, language and experiences are undamaged. All a person's knowledge gained over a lifetime remains accessi-



ble. However, should normal activities of daily living (ADLs) become unmanageable because of things like not recognising well-known people, losing track of what day it is, or getting lost in a place that should be familiar, then it is time to see your health care provider (HCP).

The inability to manage ADLs can be a sign of disease or illness.

10 warning signs of dementia

The Alzheimer's Association published 10 dementia warning signs that can indicate the possibility of dementia and merit a visit to an HCP for investigation. Warning signs with examples include the following:

- Memory loss that disrupts daily life. Forgetting recent information or asking the same question over and over.
- New problems planning or solving problems. Trouble working with numbers (doing maths) or forgetting how to make a familiar recipe.
- Difficulty with familiar tasks. Forgetting where the grocery store is or the rules of the weekly card game.
- Confusion with time and place. Not knowing where they are or how they got there.
- Trouble understanding visual images. This may cause trouble with balance, reading, and driving.
- New problems with words. May have trouble continuing a conversation, forgetting a word, or calling something the incorrect name.
- Misplacing items and unable to retrace steps. May lose something and cannot go back to where they started to look for it.
- Poor judgement. May have changes in decision-making skills, like no longer being able to handle money correctly.
- Withdrawal from social activities. Stop going to favourite activities or may no longer follow a favourite sports team.
- Mood and personality changes. Becoming confused, irritated, suspicious, or depressed.

There are many types of dementia, and each person may have different signs and symptoms. There may also be other reasons for changes in a person. Seek the advice and evaluation of an HCP for individualised treatment if a friend or loved one is beginning to show warning signs.

What is the treatment for dementia?

There is no cure for dementia yet. However, some treatments may slow its progression, helping to maintain mental capabilities and treat the behavioural changes that may arise. There is no cure for dementia yet.

Medication treatments

Some medications may help slow decline or may improve memory and thinking.

However, medications do not work for everyone and may not work for all types of dementia. Other kinds of medicine may help with anxiety, depression, or sleep problems that may come as a result of dementia. Furthermore, medications can have serious side-effects for some people with dementia. For safety, discuss all medications or supplements with the primary HCP.

In some cases, a person with dementia may need supervision or help with taking medication properly. Some medications may help slow decline or may improve memory and thinking.

However, medications do not work for everyone and may not work for all types of dementia. Other kinds of medicine may help with anxiety, depression, or sleep problems that may come as a result of dementia. Furthermore, medications can have serious side-effects for some people with dementia.

For safety, discuss all medications or supplements with the primary HCP. In some cases, a person with dementia may need supervision or help with taking medication properly.

Therapies for dementia

Different types of therapy may benefit people with dementia.

- Occupational - helps people find ways of doing daily activities in the best way for them.
- Mental health - can help the person with dementia and their family learn to cope with the emotions and behavioural changes of dementia.
- Speech - helps with speaking clearly and with problems swallowing.
- Music or art - can help reduce anxiety and increase feelings of wellbeing.



How to stay healthy and active

There are steps you can take to help maintain your physical and mental wellbeing. The National Institute on Aging recommends these steps:

- Take care of physical health.
- See an HCP regularly and get the recommended screenings.
- Limit alcohol.
- Quit smoking.
- Manage chronic conditions like high blood pressure, diabetes, depression and high cholesterol.
- Get enough sleep.
- Eat healthily.
- Exercise regularly.
- Keep the mind active by reading or participating in games or a hobby.
- Stay socially connected.

Additionally, trying out the best resveratrol supplementation might have potential benefits for brain health due to its antioxidant properties. Resveratrol is a compound found in red grapes and berries. While studies are ongoing, it's important to consult with a healthcare provider before starting any new supplement to ensure it's appropriate for your individual health needs.

Focusing on these steps will aid with overall wellbeing. Doing even five minutes of exercise or activity each day helps. Start small and make one thing a habit, then build on that by choosing another activity to add to your day. Step by step, you will become healthier.

Source: - YourLifeChoices Contributor