

Membership

The renewals have been coming in thick and fast, and we already have 386 Membership renewals for 07/08. The second bit of great news is that the Waitlist ended on 24 July, is already fading to a distant memory, and we now have vacancies for new Members. Of course, as well as giving a bit of welcome relief for all the trainers who have been working flat out for the first half of the year, too much "relief" is frustrating for trainers who give up their time and end up with no one to teach.

This is the second year in a row that we have been rushed off our feet in the first half of the year, and things have become fairly slack in the second half, and it seems to be driven by events which are beyond our control. So, if we can't control it, the next best thing is to plan for it.

The plan for the rest of 2007

In an effort to have as much spare training capacity as possible at the beginning of next year, we have decided to make an all out effort to get as many members as possible through Fundamentals before we close for Christmas – leaving the minimum number of carryovers to 2008. The plan for this is fourfold:

1. Put spare training capacity to use by giving students extended (free) teaching time. Where rosters permit (and students are agreeable) Roster Officers are asked to swap from 3 x 1 hr sessions to 2 x 1hr 20 minute sessions. This will be a win/win situation allowing trainers to take a 20 minute break in the middle of their 3 hour stint, and students to get an extra 20 minutes training which will not count against their 20 week allocation.

2. Bring forward prospective memberships. There are several prospective new members who are delaying joining the club until they return from planned overseas holidays so as not to "waste" some of their 20 weeks allocation. We have invited them to join now, with the promise of a couple of free weeks of "revision" when they return from their holidays to brush up on the things they may have forgotten. Senior Trainers will know who these people are, and will mark their cards accordingly.

3. Offer students the chance of two sessions a week. If students and trainers are available, we suggest inviting the more capable students to consider having two sessions a week. The second session would be on a different day and with a different trainer (it might be for 1 hour or 1 hour 20 minutes depending on the roster on that day), and would count toward their 20 session allocation.

4. Group Course As happened last year, we were thinking of stopping the final Group Fundamentals course after PC Fun and rostering those students one-on-one for XP Fun. We have now decided against this, and this course will now run to completion.

New Trainers

Congratulations to Ron Ford (Friday mornings) who was awarded his Trainer's Badge during the month.

Windows 98 Training

With the exception of Marj Jones, teaching Windows 98 is generally unpopular with most of our Trainers. As the numbers of Windows 98 students joining the club has also decreased, we have decided that whenever possible, Windows 98 students will now be taught either by Marj on Monday afternoons, or else directed to Group Courses. Thank you Marj for volunteering your time in this way.

Relief Trainer List

The Relief Trainer List has worked extremely well in this busy half of the year, and although it is unlikely to be used much during the next few months, it will certainly be returned to service in 2008. Anyone wishing to change their availability please put a line through your existing details, and add a new line at the end of the list, and thank you all for your commitment to the Club.

PC/XP Fun Refresher Course

An enrolment form will be available at the August Monthly Meeting to gauge amount of interest and determine which topics would be most popular for a proposed 2 x 3 hour PC and XP Fun Refresher course. This is open to all club members, so please complete an enrolment form if you are interested.

Vista and Office 2007

Microsoft gave us plenty of warning about the changeover from XP to Vista, and we have therefore been able to plan our changeover. The same cannot be said for the introduction of Office 2007, with Office 2003 being withdrawn from sale with no advance notice whatsoever. This is already causing students problems both in Fundamentals and in Graphics in Word, and is expected to spread to some other courses fairly rapidly.

We cannot teach Office 2007 until next year when the new software is installed on the Vista PCs, so this year's MS Office courses (Graphics in Word, MS Excel, MS Word, MS PowerPoint, MS Publisher, Card Making and Mail Merge) will continue to be taught using Office 2002/3 only. There will be a notice about this in the month's Newsletter, and it will be announced at the Monthly Meeting. On the assumption that our manuals are written for Office 2002/3, the Presenters & Coordinators of the MS Office courses have been asked to update their clipboards to indicate which versions of Office are required for students to enroll in their courses. Course Presenters have also been asked to consider providing conversion notes on their class CDs for students with Office 2007 to use at home. (There will be no pressure applied to Presenters to do this, and if provided, they will only be on CDs and not as extra handout notes.) Please advise Peter of all restrictions/additions to your clipboards so that the website can be updated accordingly.

(In case you haven't yet seen it, the outer layer of Office 2007 has completely changed, with the Menu Bar and Toolbars replaced by "Task Oriented Ribbons", and the drop-down menus by "Graphical Galleries" which make the user interface very different. However, once you find your way through this new outer skin, the bottom layer is not too different from 2002/3.)

Trainer Availability for Vista and Office 2007 familiarization

We will soon have an additional laptop running Vista and Office 2007, and hope to run some Trainer familiarization courses in the not too distant future. As we currently only have the two machines running these programs, these courses will have to be more "watch and talk" demos rather than hands on for everyone.

In order to plan the best times to run these courses, there will soon be a new Clipboard in the hall for you to indicate your interest and general availability (day of the week, am or pm).

Virus Checking

As announced last month, the Vet Antivirus program is being updated on all PCs, and when complete a single page update to the PC Fun manual will be issued to cover the instructions for using the new version. In the mean time, the temporary half page instruction sheets covering both the new VET and Avast! are still available from the Office.

New, Updated and Deleted Courses

Word Processing

Our existing 8 week Word Processing course is in the process of being rewritten as two courses – Word Part 1 and Word Part 2. Each expected to run for four weeks of 2½ hours a week. Word Part 1 has been developed by Terri Weston, is in the final stages of approval and will be used for all future Word Processing courses. The Clipboard will shortly be updated to indicate the new course length, and all students on the existing Waitlist will be transferred to the new course. (Part 2 is only at the drawing board stage at the moment.)

Digital Cameras

John Greenlees and Keith Horam are looking at the feasibility of developing a 2 day Introduction to Digital Camera course for those students interested only in downloading their digital photos and basic editing using Picasa. (The full 4-day Digital Camera course run by Peter Fowler will continue for those wanting to know more about this extensive subject.)

Internet & Email

We believe that this topic is now such an important part of today's world that we should be expanding our course to include such topics as virus and adware software, firewalls, downloading software, password security, etc., together with some of the more important applications like internet banking. Ella Ross and Peter Fowler will be developing a new expanded group course of 4 x 2.5 hours.

Club Help Desk and Mailing List Group

The new Help Desk has received and answered its first questions and seems to fill a gap in our services to members. A new initiative by Ella Ross and Ken Caldwell has resulted in the creation of a new Mailing List Group at <http://au.groups.yahoo.com/group/cphills>. This group is perhaps for the more technically oriented members of the Club, but anyone interested is invited to join in. You can learn heaps by just following the email discussion. This is a "closed" group and is only accessible to members, so there is no fear of email addresses falling into the wrong hands, etc. Go to the above address and follow the instructions to subscribe. It is better to use a Yahoo email address if you have one, but this is not essential. You can always unsubscribe if you find it too boring or time-consuming!

Embellish Course

Unfortunately, there are so many software problems with the Embellish program that we have reluctantly decided to abandon this course. The remaining two students on the Waitlist will have their session, but no more courses will be organized.

Course Certificates

As you may or may not know, for the last couple of years all the course certificates have been produced by Barbara Browne. We recently added the Fun certificates to the Office PC so that they could be printed on demand for students completing their one-on-one Fundamentals courses. This seems to be working well, and as Barbara is taking a well deserved holiday in August, we decided that this would be a good time to transfer printing of all our other certificates to the Office PC and printer, rather than having someone make them at home. "Read only" Word documents for course certificates for all courses are now available on the Office PC and Office Assistants and Course Coordinators will be shown how to use these in the near future. Many thanks to Barbara for her time and effort in producing these certificates over recent years – Barbara enjoy your holiday!

USB Problems

The first batch of USB flash drives has now been delivered – the Clipboard list will stay until the end of August in case anyone missed out.

Room 2 Sound-proofing

The remaining walls will be carpeted - probably at the end of August.

Articles for Newsletter

Jo Wickens is now in charge of the club's Newsletter, and is always on the look out for more articles. All Senior Trainers are welcome to send their contributions directly to Jo, and any club member can submit articles to any member of the Committee for consideration.

ASCCA's 9th Australian Computer Conference for Seniors

This year's ASCCA Conference is at the Powerhouse Museum on Monday 27th and Tuesday 28th August 2007. Groups of Club members will be there on both days (Hills Bus and Monorail) to take advantage of these enjoyable and informative sessions. Also included in the Registration Fee are: tea or coffee on arrival, morning tea and lunch, not to mention the Conference Pack of freebies (including the popular black ASCCA shoulder bags which are so good for transporting Club Manuals). If you have never been before, why not join us for at least one of the days this year? More information, including Program and Registration Form, are available on the Club Website (ASCCA page), at the Club, or by ringing Jill on 9899 1843.

The next Members meeting is our Club AGM on 8 August 2007, and will be followed by a short demonstration of Adobe Photoshop Elements (one of the possible replacements for Corel) by Terri Weston, one of our Associate Trainers. There will be no Trainers' meetings in August, so the next Trainers' Meeting will follow the September Monthly Meeting on Wednesday, 12th September 2007.

Peter & Eleanor