



Webwords 2

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Seniors on Internet

I can see you! You are a speech pathologist and you're either reading the June issue of *ACQ*, or you have opened http://members.tripod.com/Caroline_Bowen/webwords2.htm. Either way, you are focused enough on work issues to be reading this column. Perhaps this focus is reflected in how you value yourself. The way we perceive and measure ourselves often has much to do with the work we do, the success we achieve in doing it, and the "who" that we are in the work environment. This is the year that people born in 1934 hit 65, and those born in 1944 become over-55s. If you are in the over-55 age-range, perhaps part of the "who" that you are is that you are a senior member of our profession, nearing retirement. You may even be in need of an off-the-shelf retirement speech for around US\$15 from <http://www.speech-writers.com/>.

There is just so much available to today's retiree as long as some of the things that can go wrong (listed at http://dir.yahoo.com/Health/Diseases_and_Conditions/) haven't! Internet resources (for example <http://aaa.com.au/matilda/religion/>) abound for those who want ideas, inspiration, stimulation, support or spiritual guidance as they negotiate this exciting, challenging life-stage.

An American colleague who cherishes life and lives it to the full and who is on the verge of retirement is Barb Lackritz. Known in Internet cancer circles as GrannyBarb, she has been an active speech pathologist since 1959. For the last 20 years she has worked in St Louis, MO. She prefers working with school-age children and has resisted all attempts to make her into an administrator! She's a former city council woman and member of the planning and zoning commission of her suburban city, and was elected to office 4 times. She and her husband of 40 years have three children and three grandchildren.

In 1989, Barb was diagnosed with chronic lymphocytic leukemia (CLL). She's been through the whole range of treatment ending with a bone marrow transplant in 1997. When I communicated with her around St Valentine's Day 1999, she was celebrating being 20

months cancer free. To help others in similar positions, she runs the haematological cancer lists on the Association of Cancer On-line Resources (ACOR), of which she is a board member. Barb leaves her "SLP job" in June, but will continue her second career in cancer patient advocacy. Her impressive website GrannyBarb and Art's Leukemia Links



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<http://www.acor.org/leukemia/> (with Arthur Flatau, PhD) has won many awards, bringing requests for information from around the world.

Speaking of awards, in 1944 (that year again!) Carl Emil Seashore was the first person to receive The Honors of the Association from the American Speech - Language Hearing Association. As ASHA's highest honour, the award recognises distinguished contribution to the field of speech, language and hearing. It was not until 1953 that a woman, Sara Stinchfield Hawk, received it, as the list at <http://www.asha.org/professionals/association/honors.htm> reveals.

The older person of today has plenty of peers! At the turn of the century the life expectancy for women in Australia

was 46 and for men 45. Now, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (<http://www.statistics.gov.au/>), it is 81 for women and 75 for men. In 1911, the year my father was born, only 4% of the population were over 65. ABS figures from the last general census in 1996 showed that this figure had trebled to 12% with every prospect of its reaching 14% by 2011. Over the next two decades, the number of people in Australia aged 80 or more will rise from just short of 500 000 in 1996 (one in five older people) to around 800 000 (one in four older people). Prompted by the rapidly disappearing International Year of Older Persons (<http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/iyop/>), policy-makers (<http://www.aoa.dhhs.gov/jpost/australia.html>), healthcare researchers, writers, thinkers and the media commentators who record and shape our experience, are exploring and investigating ageing.

In their various ways they applaud and worry about the diversity and richness of what it means to grow old. Policy-makers talk about global ageing in relation to the future of "systems": economic systems, health systems, and social welfare systems. The healthcare (<http://www.who.int/>) and medical fraternity focuses in general on issues relating to disease, disability, quality of life and longevity. Writers, thinkers, print and electronic mass media reflect these viewpoints, presenting older adults in a myriad of ways: often as figures of fun, sometimes as objects of pity, and occasionally as startlingly original role models (you know who I mean: <http://foodtv.com/fn/programs/fatladies/index.htm>!).

Seriously old

Of course, it is comparatively easy for people in the developed world to indulge themselves on the subject of old age (<http://www.cpa.org.uk/ageinfo/worldres.html>). We have available to us the luxurious perception that old age is personal and special. All of us hope that we, our parents, friends, colleagues and children will live to be old. We are probably more prepared for the positive and negative effects of growing old than we were for any other phases of our lives (<http://seniorlink.com.au/community/index.html>). This is not so for everyone in the

world (<http://www.who.int/dsa/cat98/healtheld8.htm>), or indeed everyone in Australia (http://www.hreoc.gov.au/social_justice/statistics/index.html).

The Australian Association of Gerontology at <http://www.cas.flinders.edu.au/aag/> defines gerontology as the understanding, through scientific study, of the processes and the phenomena of ageing. Members of the association will be heading off to Seoul for the 6th Asia/Oceania Regional Congress of Gerontology. The theme for the gathering is changing family systems and finding useful ways of caring that can incorporate tradition and culture (<http://www.mbc.co.kr/internat/project2/gerontology.htm>). Inevitably, discussion will include elder abuse (<http://www.aoa.dhhs.gov/Factsheets/abuse.html>) and topics surrounding the dementias (<http://www.mankato.msus.edu/dept/comdis/kustere4/part18.html>).

Internet on Internet

Everything you need to know about the Internet is available on-line. Among many informative sites are the Internet Society's home page (<http://linus.isoc.org/internet/>), and Matisse Enzer's Glossary of Internet Terms (<http://www.matisse.net/files/glossary.html>). As an example of one of his clear explanations, Matisse defines FTP (File Transfer Protocol) as:

A very common method of moving files between two Internet sites. FTP is a special way to login to another Internet site for the purposes of retrieving and/or sending files. There are many Internet sites that have established publicly accessible repositories of material that can be obtained using FTP, by logging in using the account name anonymous, thus these sites are called anonymous FTP servers.

Young at heart

Seniors' home pages (<http://www.seniorssearch.com/spersonalpages.htm>) demonstrate that you can have a lot of fun in cyberspace in your old age. It is obvious that elder webmasters like Goldngal the Cyberspace Granny at <http://www.fyi.net/~goldngal/goldn2.htm> derive great satisfaction from the net, as well as finding a rewarding outlet for their creativity. If you are not keen to develop your own website, and it's entertainment you want, lovers of doo wop doo wops nostalgia and the music of the 50s and 60s will get a lot of bang for their click at <http://www.wanderers.com/wanderer/menu.html?#C37>, the home of Wanderer's Golden Oldies. By contrast, if you are enthusiastic about Wesleyan hymns you might sample the collection at <http://ccel.wheaton.edu/wesley/hymn/jw.html>.

1999 Conference Proceedings

Following the conference and submission of papers for peer review, the Proceedings of the 1999 Speech Pathology Australia National Conference will be published and available for:

Conference delegates @ \$30.00
Members @ \$33.50
Non Members @ \$40.50
(Prices include postage and handling)

To order, please contact Speech Pathology Australia's National Office.