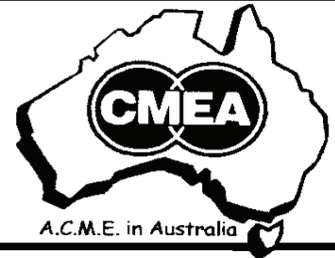

COUPLES FOR MARRIAGE ENRICHMENT AUSTRALIA NSW NEWSLETTER



March 2011

“Love You!”

Gerlinde Spencer

How often do we hear that little phrase these days? How often do we say it? It has certainly become a rather nice part of our relationship conversation as a nation over the past decade or so, just as kissing almost anyone you greet or say goodbye to, has. That is for those of us who do not find the phrase or indeed the kissing (and hugging) a little too close for comfort.

My 86 year old brother-in-law now says it to end our brief conversation arranging for him to come to dinner every few weeks and he repeats it when he hugs me goodbye after dinner. How much his wife, who died tragically of cancer when they were both in their sixties, would have loved to hear him say it, but sadly, to be so openly affectionate was not the fashion then. It seems we now have permission to express our affection more openly and frequently than was the custom not so many years ago.

Our grandchildren say it and so do our children when we talk on the phone. A couple of my friends say it and, of course, I respond in kind if I haven't got in first. It is certainly a good way to end a conversation or a visit on a positive note.

For one rather anxious grandson, as for many other children, saying “Love you” has become a magic formula which is

used to deal with separation anxiety when saying good bye to parents or even siblings. Somehow it makes a difference, especially if repeated a number of times.

Many years ago, before the advent of “Love You”, I became aware of the uncomfortable fact that I would tell my husband I loved him as a way of smoothing things over when we had had a disagreement. Maybe before we had really sorted things out or before I had acknowledged that what I did or had said was really not OK.

In fact I realized that while my statement was certainly true, I was using it in a manipulative way on such occasions. I needed us to be OK again so I tried to hurry the process. Having discovered all this I decided to stop using “I love you” as the magic fix-it phrase and hang in there a little longer until we had really reached understanding and harmony again.

Once we both felt more secure as people and as partners we got better at holding onto our emotions while we really listened to each other. Long term this has resulted in a much greater understanding of each other and, with that, a more speedy resolution to any conflict. Once we both felt more secure as people and as partners we got better at holding onto our emotions while we really listened to each other.



Now there is no need to move to a placating “I love you”, so that lovely phrase for celebrating our love for each other is there to be used often and honestly.

If you relate to any or all of this, you may like to use this opportunity to reflect on how you express love and affection to the people who are important to you. Are you tempted to be affectionate in order to get your own way? Or to smooth things over? Or to paper over the cracks, in any of your relationships?

If you find that you are being manipulative you can learn to stop, although that may take some time. You can also confess to what you have been doing and why, if the person you love can understand what has happened and appreciates your trust - and that will put an end to your manipulative behaviour very quickly! Risk it and see what happens.

So, here's to saying “LOVE YOU!” when we really mean it and enjoying the results.



From the editors

Ian writes.....

I have just re read Gerlinde's editorial letter from the last newsletter and it has crystallised my thoughts about what I should write on this occasion.

The truth is that we do need a new editor couple. We (mostly Gerlinde) have been doing this job for quite a while now and we want to put it down. It is also appropriate because there is sort of generational change occurring within CMEA, in which we clearly represent the older generation!

*The present committee is well aware of the need for change. CMEA is facing some new challenges and may need to reinvent itself and the ways it presents ME to the public. I am excited that the committee is thinking along these lines, for example the Seminar titled "Diamonds and Relationships" being conducted by Doug Sotheren in a few weeks time and for the first time in many years **the committee is sponsoring** two weekend retreats for all comers.*

Of course, it is my belief, that nothing beats the traditional ME retreat format when it comes to value for the participants and many of you would probably be able to testify to that. I hope that whatever shapes ME may take in the future there will continue to be ME events which provide opportunity for partners to meet each other deeply and develop new ways of communication.

But it is true that for many reasons, including a changing social climate, it is becoming increasingly difficult to successfully mount traditional ME events. Of course, it has never been easy! But it is getting more difficult. Yet the need for ME remains as great as ever. So, the challenge is to find new forms of ME that will appeal to the current generation of younger married couples. Frankly, I do not know the answer to this problem. For me, obviously, the way forward would be to do what worked for us as a leader couple in the past. But I do not think that it going to be the answer! So, CMEA needs to find additional ways to strengthen and enrich marriages. If we do not succeed in doing this then CMEA will become increasingly irrelevant and might ultimately die like many good organisations that have gone before!

As I have already said, it is great to see the NSW committee striking out in new ways and maybe we need a new Editor Couple to assist this process.

Gerlinde & Ian

ADVANCE NOTICE
MARRIAGE SEMINAR with DOUG SOTHEREN
30th April- 1 May 2011
See Pages 6 and 7 in this newsletter for details

CMEA NSW Committee Update

The Committee

Our constitution requires committee members to step down after 5 years in office. This is an important provision for busy couples who need the break. It does mean, however, that from time to time the committee is left with a vital position standing vacant. This time it is the Treasurer/Membership Couple's with the retirement of Linda and Rob Corner. To bridge the gap our Chair-Couple, Colin and Narelle Adams are taking on the job - hopefully in an interim capacity.

If you would like to be part of the action and join the committee you would be very welcome - even if you did not see yourself in the treasurer couple role! We could do with at least one more couple to share in future planning and facilitating events. If you have served on the committee in the past this is no barrier as demonstrated by Noeline and Paul Drayton who are on their third round of duty!

CMEA NSW is sponsoring three important events in the remainder of 2011.

The first is a high powered Marriage Seminar with Doug Sotheren 30th April -1st May 2011

Doug is an ordained Baptist minister with a degree in sociology, who has specialized in the field of personal and marital counselling since his initial training in 1969 -1972. His experience includes over 30,000 hours of counselling and thousands of hours of group training of counsellors and supervisors of counselling. He and his wife Judy trained with David and Vera Mace as marriage enrichment leaders in 1978.

They were active in establishing marriage enrichment and training leader couples for the Baptist Church in NSW for a number of years. Many of these couples have made a big contribution to CMEA since then.

The second event is the long awaited Dianne Ervine Workshop on Sexuality for Couples in the second half of the year.

Dianne Ervine's workshop will be for a restricted number of couples who wish to explore and expand and really enjoy their sexual relationship. It will be very special indeed and will of necessity be more expensive than the usual enrichment weekend or conference as Dianne will be paying attention to each couple's individual needs as well as working with the whole group. Having to travel from Adelaide adds to the cost but whatever the negotiated price will be you can be assured that it will be less than half of what you would normally pay for such an opportunity.

The third event is a non-residential Marriage Enrichment Weekend for all comers to be held at the Interrelate Family Centre at Bella Vista, Baulkham Hills, **19th- 21st August 2011**. This is a great opportunity for couples who do not have a ready made group to join for a retreat either as a first event or a refresher.

See our Calendar on Page 9 for details

**Who Needs Marriage?
TIME Asked the Question — Do You Have an Answer?
Albert Mohler**

"Who needs marriage? I do. You do. We all do — and for reasons far more fundamental than can be explained purely practical terms." TIME Magazine 2010 November 29, 2010 Albert Mohler.com

This article appeared in the February 2011 edition of the Queensland CMEA Newsletter. We thank the Editor Pat Noller for this contribution.

"When an institution so central to human experience suddenly changes shape in the space of a generation or two, it's worth trying to figure out why." Belinda Luscombe of *TIME* magazine made that observation in the course of reporting on a major study of marriage undertaken by *TIME* and the Pew Research Center. In the cover story for the magazine's November 29, 2010 edition, Luscombe summarizes their findings with a blunt statement: "What we found is that marriage, whatever its social, spiritual, or symbolic appeal, is in purely practical terms just not as necessary as it used to be."

Without doubt, marriage has been utterly transformed in the modern world. In Western nations, the concept of marriage as a sacred covenant has given way to the idea that marriage is merely a legal contract. The limitation of sexual intercourse to marriage went the way of the Sexual Revolution, even as the ideal of permanence gave way to no-fault divorce and serial monogamy. And as for monogamy, that may be on shaky ground, too. These days, you can't take anything for granted.

The debates over the legitimization and legalization of same-sex marriage have, among other things, revealed the fact that far too many Americans (and that includes a frightening number of American Christians) are simply unarmed for any intellectual conflict on any question related to marriage. And the demographics? Brace yourselves. In 1960, 70 percent of all American adults were married. Now, that number is just over half. Eight times as many children are born out of wedlock as compared to that same year. In the 1960s, two-thirds of all young adults in their twenties were married. Now, only 26 percent of twenty-somethings are married.

Statistics can inform or misinform, and it is possible to find statistical support that puts a happier face on the health of marriage. But in order to

find these happier statistics, it is necessary to redefine the question. For example, some marriage defenders will assert, accurately, that most Americans will at some point be married. But that fact lowers the question of marriage to the minimalist level of "at some point." By any honest measure, marriage is in big trouble.

When Belinda Luscombe argues that marriage is "in purely practical terms just not as necessary as it used to be," she has a rationale to back up her argument. "Neither men nor women need to be married to have sex or companionship or professional success or respect or even children." All that is true — when marriage is viewed on the canvas of American culture. Marriage no longer regulates sex. The Sexual Revolution severed sex from marriage in a social sense, and the arrival of The Pill offered a pharmaceutical means of severing sex from reproduction. No-fault divorce arrived as a legal accommodation to marital impermanence, effectively redefining both marital and family law in the process. Social status and professional expectations were liberated from the question of marriage, and many feminists declared that marriage itself was an impediment to the full liberation of women.

And yet, Luscombe ends her argument about the "not as necessary as it used to be" status of marriage with these words — "yet marriage remains revered and desired." Really? Well, that all depends on how you define reverence and desire.

TIME reports that 40 percent of Americans believe that marriage is now obsolete, up from 28 percent in 1978. Cohabitation is now the norm for American adults — not just *before* marriage, but increasingly *instead of* marriage. And American cohabitation is an exceedingly weak arrangement. As Andrew Cherlin of Johns Hopkins University explains, Americans "have the shortest cohabiting relationships of any wealthy country in the world." Less than half of all Americans believe that cohabitation is morally wrong.

Divorce is now an institutionalized part of American life, complete now with an industry putting out divorce announcements, greeting cards, and party plans. The American divorce rate, though now somewhat stable, is so disastrously high that even social scientists are shocked. **Continued Page 10**

Marriage Enrichment Exercise

WHAT DO I LOVE ABOUT YOU?

An Exercise in Appreciation

Each of you read through the following sentence starters and complete in writing:

One thing I have *always* appreciated about you is.....

.....

One thing I *recently* appreciated is

.....

One thing I really appreciate *at present* is

.....

Some of the wonderful things you brought to our marriage are

.....

One of the occasions I really appreciated your..... (*support/presence/action*)

is.....

One of the things I specially want to thank you for is.....

.....

Now show each other what you have written and spend some time in dialogue around your answers, ending (if you wish) with a hug and kiss.

What is CMEA?

Couples for Marriage Enrichment Australia is an organisation which exists to enhance and enrich the marital relationship between a man and a woman. CMEA officially began in 1980 and has members throughout Australia. Activities include weekend marriage enrichment retreats, shorter seminars and local support groups, training of marriage enrichment leader couples and the publication of regular newsletters. Some of these events are sponsored by community groups and churches.

The Newsletter uses material from a wide range of resources on marriage. The opinions expressed in any article, report or exercise do not necessarily reflect the views of all members of CMEA.

Diamonds and Relationships

A Weekend Workshop lead by Doug Sotheren

Any diamond is a unique creation. Diamonds, typically, have fifty-eight facets. Each facet provides a window into the diamond. Depending on the light, the cut, the quality and the care with which the diamond was prepared, each facet can reveal a different aspect of the diamond's "personality".

Relationships, just like diamonds, are unique and of great value. Understanding a relationship can be like gazing into the many facets of a diamond. Exploring the many different aspects of a relationship can bring a new understanding of each other and can serve to deepen the bond between us.

This two day experience will provide an opportunity to explore some of the key components of your relationship:

Session 1 A Relationship has many Contracts.

In this session participants will explore the different stated and unstated contracts or agreements that are part of a committed relationship. Each of these will be presented with a series of fun exercises that open opportunities to understand our unwritten contracts and prepare for positive change.

Session 2. A Relationship grows through Stages

In this session couples will reflect on the change process that is a part of all relationships over time. This will involve an opportunity to reflect on your current stage and the ways to negotiate the future together.

Session 3. A Relationship is a Moment in Time

All relationships come from a past of many generations and are influenced by this amazing generational history. The past is in the present and with the present builds the future. This session with some fun exercises invites the past, present and future to join forces in the now.

Session 4. A Relationship tells a Story

The idea of narrative has been very important in modern society. From our birth, each of us is an author shaping a story. In relationships a third story emerges. This session will combine all the aspects of previous sessions to help us recognise and develop our own unique relational stories.

Diamonds and Relationships

DOUG SOTHEREN B.A., M.Th., Dip. R.E., AARC, CCA, first trained as a marriage counsellor in 1969 - 1972. He has undertaken further training in Gestalt, Family and Somatic Therapy. For eight years he operated a counselling centre in Western Sydney and then was involved in the creation of the Life Care Counselling Service in Sydney. He has been training counsellors and leading intensive workshops since 1975.

His experience includes over 27,000 hours of counselling and thousands of hours of group training in the field of personal and marital counselling. He is in private practice as a counsellor/clinical supervisor, and human relations trainer on the Central Coast. He has acted as consultant for various agencies and Government departments in the areas of counselling, grief, and family dynamics.

Doug is a Clinical Member and Registered Supervisor of the Australian Association of Relationship Counsellors, and a clinical Member of the Christian Counsellors Association. He is an ordained Baptist minister, has a B.A. in Sociology and a Master's in Theology with a focus on family systems.

He is an energetic and entertaining presenter and participants in this seminar are assured of a very special experience.



WHEN : * Saturday 30th April : 9.30 am to 5.00 pm
* Sunday 1st May : 9.30 am to 4.00 pm

COST : \$195 (includes workshop expenses, lunch and refreshments)

An optional dinner (an Indian Banquet) is planned for Saturday evening at the Peacock Indian Restaurant, Bella Vista. (additional cost)
<http://www.peacockrestaurant.com.au/>

ACCOMMODATION.

If you wish to stay overnight in the local area a number of excellent facilities are available including :

The Crowne Plaza Norwest Sydney
(Ph) 1800 899 960
<http://www.crowneplazanorwest.com.au/>

The Hills Lodge Grand Mercure
(Ph) 9680 3800
<http://www.hillslodge.com.au/>

Quest Apartments Castle Hill
(Ph) 8848 1500
<http://www.questapartments.com.au>

VENUE : Interrelate Family Centres,
Level 4, 14 – 16 Lexington Drive,
Bella Vista 2153

GETTING THERE : Norwest Boulevard exit off the M7

BOOKINGS and FURTHER INFORMATION :

www.bettermarriages.org.au

Colin and Narelle ADAMS
(H) 02 9524 6343 (M) 0428 154 123
colinadams@optusnet.com.au

NSW & ACT Leader Couple News

Noeline and I would like to dedicate the leader couple column in this issue of the newsletter to Heather and John McAlpine.

As they remarked last Christmas "This past year we have experienced joy and peace as well as fluctuating uncertainty as we dealt with the vicissitudes of life"

Heather, with the support of John, Melinda, Christine, Matthew, her wider family and friends, has come through a battle with breast cancer to a point where she has currently been given "the all clear" Last October they started to lead marriage retreats again and this month Heather returned to work (part-time) at Relationships Australia.

In 2011 Heather has had to face another health challenge but thanks to God's prompting and grace, all is well. Even to the point that Heather was able to complete one day of the cycle trip from Sydney to Kosciuszko that she had been planning to take part in, before this latest hurdle occurred.

Due to the impact of her battle with cancer Heather shares that she is adapting the way she lives her energetic life to a "new normal". Many of you may already have been following the McAlpine's journey through their email updates, so full of John's cheeky good humour and care for his partner, and reflective of their deepening love for each other, their family and their God.

We're inclined to call them Wonder Woman and Superman but they would point us to the wonderful grace of God. We all face our own hurdles in life, but as fellow leader couples we know that you will join with us in affirming Heather and John, as they celebrate this milestone, and in the next stage of their personal journeys as they continue to grow in their relationship with God and each other.

Just a reminder of the following:

Please let Rob Corner have dates for your events to enter on the **website calendar** as soon as they are confirmed! And don't forget to give **at least two week's notice to the Spencers** when you order your retreat folders or have a request for Newsletters and brochures for non standard events.

Leader Couple Coordinators:

Noeline and Paul Drayton 02 96293324
pandndrayton@bigpond.com



Membership Application/Renewal

Membership is due on the 1st July each year

Please enrol/renew us as a Member couple.

- We'd like a one year membership at \$30*
- We'd prefer a two year membership at \$50*
- We'd also like to make a donation of \$.....*

Names of Husband and Wife (please print)

.....

Address.....

.....

Post Code Telephone

Email: _____

For Bankcard payment please complete the following:

Card Number _ _ _ _ _

Name on Card

Expiry Date Card Security Code _ _ _

Amount

Signature

Please send to:

The Treasurer Couple
CMEA NSW
154 Ellesmere Road
GyMEA Bay NSW 2227

Thankyou for supporting the work of CMEA

CMEA NEW SOUTH WALES & ACT UPDATE

Calendar of Events 2011

For the latest dates and details check out www.bettermarriages.org.au or phone the Retreat Contact Couple, Noeline and Paul Drayton on 02 9629 3324.

Calendar of Events 2011

April/May

April 30—May 1

MARRIAGE SEMINAR with DOUG SOTHEREN
Interrelate Family Centre
423 (level 4) 14-16 Lexington Drive
BELLA VISTA (Baulkham Hills)
TO REGISTER: contact Colin & Narelle Adams on (H) 02 9524 6343 or (M) 0428 154 123 or at colinadams@optusnet.com.au

May 21-22

2 day course for married couples
Anglicare
Morinda Conference Centre Shoalhaven
Glenda & Simon Devlin
To book phone Elizabeth (02) 98958054

August

19-21

CMEA Non-residential Weekend
Interrelate Family Centre
423 (level 4) 14-16 Lexington Drive
BELLA VISTA (Baulkham Hills)
Glenda & Simon Devlin
Phone 02 4421 5239 to register

Dianne Ervine Workshop on Sexuality for Couples .
Date in second half of the year to be advised.

GARY & JENNIFER STRACHAN will conduct
4 Refresher & Enrichment Weekends
throughout the year at "Rivendell" near
Hall NSW. For dates and details contact them
on (02) 6230 2570

Marriage Education

(pre-wedding, closed)

All Saints Hunter's Hill, Derek & Ellen Yule
30 April—1 May
13-14 August
12-13 November

Are you interested in more information?

Please contact any member of the Committee for further details or enquiries regarding any of these listed events.

We also would welcome enquiries about organising an event and using CMEA accredited leaders.

PEOPLE TO CONTACT

NSW COMMITTEE 2010-2011

Chaircouple

Colin and Narelle Adams	02 95401914
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Secretary couple

Maggie and Ron De Rooy	(02) 4271 5320
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Treasurer & Membership

Colin and Narelle Adams (interim only)	02 95401914
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Leader Co-ordinator Couple

Noeline and Paul Drayton	(02) 9629 3324
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Committee Couples

Grace and Stephen Mok	02 9980 8055
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Correspondence to:
154 Ellesmere Rd
Gymea Bay NSW 2227

Retreat Contact Couple

Noeline and Paul Drayton	(02) 9629 3324
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Newsletter

Editor Couple

Gerlinde and Ian Spencer E-mail iandgspencer@gmail.com	(02) 94364731 85 River Road Greenwich, 2065
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Newsletter Production Assistance:

Noeline and Paul Drayton	E-mail— pdrayton@tpg.com.au or pandndrayton@bigpond.com
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Website Development and Maintenance

Linda and Rob Corner	rob@ozcorners.net
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"Who Needs Marriage?"
Continued

As Professor Cherlin remarked: "One statistic I saw when writing my book that floored me was that a child living together with unmarried parents in Sweden has a lower chance that his family will disrupt than does a child living with married parents in the U.S." That statistic should floor all of us.

The TIME/Pew study also revealed more visible contours of the "marriage gap" that has emerged with respect to income and education levels. For most of the twentieth century, the age of one's first marriage rose for those young adults pursuing a college education, while those without a college education married earlier. That is no longer the case. Now, it is those marked by lower incomes and educational levels who are marrying late — if at all. In a stunning reversal of social patterns, it is the more highly educated who are now more likely to marry. Economic factors are most often cited as the reason for this reversal, but this is not fully convincing. In far more desperate economic times, couples have managed to get married, stay married, and raise a family. Furthermore, as *TIME* notes, this pattern becomes a formula for disaster, since marriage uniquely provides the stability needed to escape poverty and many social pathologies.

TIME's cover asks the question straightforwardly — "Who Needs Marriage?" The magazine and its team sought to answer that question "in purely practical terms," doing their best to leave questions of morality and theology aside. But Christians, who rightly see the practical benefits of marriage as exemplars of common grace, cannot stop there. We believe that humanity needs marriage. God created the institution of marriage — defined on his terms — as the central institution of human society. Marriage was given to us by our Creator as the central institution for sexual relatedness, procreation, and the nurture of children. But, even beyond these goods, God gave us marriage as an institution central to human happiness and flourishing. Rightly understood, marriage is essential even to the happiness and flourishing of the unmarried. It is just that central to human existence, and not by accident.

There is much more to the Pew Research Center's report, but *TIME's* cover story put the most crucial questions before its readers. The question on its cover demands a faithful answer.

Who needs marriage? I do. You do. We all do — and for reasons far more fundamental than can be explained "in purely practical terms."

Dr. R. Albert Mohler, Jr., serves as president of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary — the flagship school of the Southern Baptist Convention and one of the largest seminaries in the world.

CMEA NSW NEWSLETTER

March 2011

Return Address: 154 Ellesmere Road, Gymea Bay, NSW, 2227

Inside this Issue: "Love You" "Who needs marriage?" "Diamonds and Relationships" Couple Exercise; Committee Update News on CMEA events for 2011 and more.