Time for a Change

After 33 years as a school teacher, John Amos knew it was time to make a change.

“I loved it but I had reached a point that I needed something different, a chance to freshen up,” John said.

That opportunity presented itself at the start of August when he took on a role as a shop assistant in the Co-op Home Hardware store.

It is a complete career about-turn but John loves every minute of it and says his new direction has made him a new man.

“I’ve got a spring back in my step – I love coming to work,” he said.

John undertook his teacher training in Bendigo but spent most of his working career in the Terang area, including 11 years at Noorat Primary School and 15 years at Terang P-12.

“I love teaching and working with kids but I was tired from all the extras. I couldn’t switch off the job, it had become 24-7 for me,” John said.

After discussions with his wife Sue (who is a teacher at Mortlake) and family and with support from his colleagues at Terang P-12, he decided to retire from the school.

At age, 55, John left at the mid-year break and started to think about what other options might be available.

“It was a huge decision. It had been brewing for a while but I knew I needed to make the break. I miss working with the kids and I guess I’ll miss the school holidays but peace of mind has a massive value.

“I had never been brave enough to make the decision before but I was prompted by a former student at Noorat. She went on to become a teacher but had recently left. I thought, if she can do it, so can I.”

After making the big move it was time to take the next step – finding a new job.

“I decided to be proactive and so I rang (Terang Co-op CEO) Charlie Duynhoven to let him know I would be interested if any jobs came along,” John said.

Five weeks later a position became available in the hardware store and John jumped at the opportunity.

“My son Blake (now in the police force) had worked there for a year and loved it. He was really excited about me going there – you could say I am following in my son’s footsteps.”

His other children, Rhianna who is studying nutrition in Melbourne and Nick who is a plumber in Mortlake, also support the move. “They said we’d love you to stay but we’re with you if you want to move.”

Not that John has closed off all ties with the school. “Some of the kids still drop in and say hello and now I also get to work with their parents, which is great,” he said.

John admits it has been a steep learning curve since joining the hardware store.

“I used to drive past on my way to work every morning and see the guys out the front setting up things and think that would be a good place to work, but I was never really a handyman.”

His new workmates are showing the way. “They are a great mob to work with,” John said. “The best thing has been to learn off the others, to watch what they do and learn from it. They are very knowledgeable.

“There is still something new to learn every day.”

John and Sue took some time off a few years ago to travel around Australia and he hopes to do more travel in the future. “Hopefully I’ll pick up some more skills working here to help with that,” he said.
Long Road to Recovery

It has been a hard road back after suffering a stroke but returning to work was one of the motivating factors behind David McDonald's recovery.

David has recently resumed duties in the timber department and is gradually increasing the number of hours he works.

“When I was in hospital I was asked to write down my two main goals – they were to drive again and get back to work,” he said.

“It’s good that I have been able to do both.”

David was felled by a stroke on Sunday, May 28 2010.

“I had been reading the paper and got up and walked along the passage. The TV guide fell out and I bent over to pick it up and felt dizzy. I lost my balance and crashed into the wall and fell down. I couldn’t even get up on my knees.”

The stroke was David’s second major illness after he suffered a heart attack about four years ago. In the first instance he had felt bad indigestion and generally unwell but this time there were no warning signs.

“I had no inkling something was about to happen, I had no headaches or anything,” he said.

“There is no family history, I keep pretty well, don’t smoke, and have low cholesterol so it wasn’t expected.”

David’s wife Kathy returned home soon after and found him on the floor. He was rushed to hospital where the stroke was diagnosed.

“I was paralysed down the left side but that went away overnight. I had a bleed on the right side of my brain, not a clot, but I had to train the left side of my brain to take up the slack.”

David, 51, went through a slow and intensive rehabilitation process to get back on his feet.

“It wasn’t too bad; I didn’t get too depressed over it and the time went pretty quickly. All the hospital staff were great and I couldn’t have made it back without the support of Kathy.”

Although visible signs of the stroke quickly cleared, there were lingering issues.

“To look at me you wouldn’t know what had happened but I was doing some funny things like leaving the lights and the TV on and doors open and crashing into the door way. It was all about training the other side of my brain.”

The 10-year veteran of the Co-op was manager of the timber department when he suffered the stroke. Lee McIntosh has been acting in the role.

David’s doctors advised him to build up his strength to return to work on a gradual basis.

The first step was ensuring he could safely drive his car for the trip from his home in Warrnambool to Terang.”

With that accomplishment under his belt, a return to work plan was instigated.

“I started off in August with two half-days per week and have just gone up to three days per week. It is good to get my independence back and get my life back to normal.”

“The plan is to get back to full-time.”

David said it was great to be back. “Kathy has really noticed the change and improvement since I’ve been back working.”

David is also high in praise of the Co-op for its support during a tough time. “Management has been great and I really missed the guys I work with. Walking back in the first day was a weird feeling but their support has been fantastic.”

Despite his setbacks, David thinks he is lucky. “I’m back in good health. You’ve got to look at the positives. There’s always someone worse off than you.”
Help to Keep Fit

Terang Co-op members now have no excuse for not getting fit.

The town’s new Fitness and Wellbeing Centre opens on September 19 and Co-op members can receive a special discount on centre memberships.

The Co-op is the major local sponsor for the centre and thanks to the generous donation of $50,000; members can now enjoy exclusive discounts.

All Co-op members can receive a 10 per cent discount off their yearly memberships.

Centre manager Richard Wearmouth said the $1 million centre included state-of-the art gym equipment never before seen in the Corangamite region.

“We are very confident that people will be impressed by the amount of equipment that we have and the high quality and versatility of the set-up,” Richard said.

“This is something the Terang community has been crying out for and we hope that people, not only from Terang but from throughout the shire, will take advantage of these facilities,” Mr Wearmouth added.

More than 30 pieces of gym equipment, including cardio gear and weight machines, have been installed in the gym.

“There is something for everyone and all fitness levels,” Mr Wearmouth said. Personal trainer Joel Moloney will be available to guide people on how to use the machines.

The centre also features a separate fitness program room for a variety of classes including cycling, boxing, circuit and cross fitness.

Memberships are now available.

In 2006 a fitness centre was voted as one of the top priorities at a community opportunity workshop organised by the former Terang and District Community Building Initiative.

An official opening ceremony will be held at a later date.

Rural Changes

Rural store manager Matthew Cust is moving on to fresh pastures.

Matthew is ending his six years with the Co-op at the end of September to concentrate on his growing agricultural contracting business.

“It has been a great time working for the Co-op but the role has been growing here and so has my contracting work and it was becoming too difficult to balance both,” he said.

“Things have been expanding on both sides. I’m really thankful that the Co has shown me such a high degree of flexibility to do both but the time had come to make a choice.”

Matthew has seen the rural store grow into its own enterprise over the past six years.

“When I started it was part of a shared site with the Home Hardware. It has been very pleasing to be able to value-add to the service and develop it into a stand-alone site.”

“I think we provide a pretty good service to customers. I’m proud of what we have achieved and I’m very happy with the support shown to me. I can’t thank all of my customers enough for their patronage of the Rural Store during my time with the Terang Co-op.”

Matthew plans to remain based in Terang as he works on his hay and silage agricultural contracting business.

A new rural store manager will be appointed soon.
June Wynd has been shopping at the Terang Co-op for 45 years and says things have never been better.

June is one of many customers to appreciate additions to the grocery department which have resulted in more displays and a greater range of products.

The extension has added 150 square metres of retail space, with 11 new upright freezers, more than 100 three-foot bays of shelving and a new four-metre cheese and dairy display case.

“It was interesting to watch the work in progress. I’d sneak a look through to see how it was going,” June admitted. She is highly impressed with the final result.

“There are more things to choose from and more space for everything,” she said.

June has been a loyal customer of the Co-op since moving to Terang in 1966 where she has raised three children and is now enjoying the joys of two grand-children. “I try to do all my shopping here in Terang,” she said. “I go to Warrnambool for appointments but seldom do any shopping there. Everything I need is here.”

“The grocery department is wonderful and the extension is an absolute bonus. The staff are great too; if they don’t have something they will endeavour to get it for you.”

High on her list of priorities is her favourite...black licorice.

“I am buying more licorice lately,” she said. “I love to have a few pieces with a cup of tea – I can’t stand the coloured stuff though, just the black licorice, that’s the real McCoy.”

June also enjoyed the Co-op’s home delivery service when she broke her wrist a few years ago. “It is really great that they have a service like that for people who can’t get around,” she said.

The Co-op is taking part in a new national campaign which gives IGA customers access to great grocery bargains.

The ‘Lock Down Low Prices’ campaign applies to a massive range of essential grocery items across the store.

We’ve lowered the prices and we are keeping them locked down.

The Co-op is a big supporter of local sporting clubs and 2011 has been another successful year. As a major sponsor of Kolora-Noorat it was great to see the Power win their third successive WDFNL grand final this year.

The Terang Mortlake Bloods have also reached the finals again in the Hampden league.
Vale Geoff and Bill

The Terang Co-op was saddened by the recent deaths of two long-serving staff members.

Bill Salt became manager of the Co-op in November 1978, the culmination of a lengthy career with the business. Bill retired in October 1985 due to ill health, ending a career which stretched back over 37½ years. He told the Terang Express that it was an “honour” to have been given the opportunity to serve as manager. Bill retired to Geelong but returned to Terang for the Co-op’s centenary celebrations in 2008 where he spoke about the characters he worked with over his career. “When I started Fred Beanham was there, Russ Reeves, Harry Baker, Dick Lewis and others, we had some good times. There were a lot of good people there.”

He looked back at significant changes during his time with the company, most notably in the development of new technology. He also reflected with great satisfaction at the Co-op’s role in helping people start their careers. “It was my first job and it was the same for a lot of people in the town,” he said at the reunion.

Geoff Buchanan spent 46 years with the Co-op before his retirement in 1995. Geoff began his career in 1959 at the Noorat store at the age of 18 where he later became branch manager. He remained with the store until its closure in 1973. After that he moved to the Terang Co-op where he worked in a number of roles, initially in the timber yard and later in the grocery and hardware departments.

At the time of his retirement Geoff told the Warrnambool Standard that he treasured the friendships he had made with co-workers and customers. “The contact with the community is what I’ll miss the most,” he told the paper. “It’s been a lot of fun.”

We were also saddened by the loss of Geoff’s daughter Pam Lourey, another former Co-op staff member. Geoff’s grand-daughter Zoe Lourey is a current staff member.
After School Work Still an Issue

The long-running saga surrounding the ability of school students to work less than a three-hour minimum shift continues to takes twists and turns.

The campaign was instigated by Terang students and former Co-op staff members Matthew Spencer and Leticia Harrison when they were told they could no longer work 90-minute shifts at the Co-op after school.

Government regulations were enforcing a minimum three-hour shift, effectively blocking any chance for students to work after school in a retail environment.

In June Fair Work Australia acknowledged the retail award three hour minimum as unfair for regional students. The campaign was supported by Member for Wannon Dan Tehan who said the change was welcome relief for students, their families and small retail businesses in regional and rural Australia who had been suffering for months as a result of the blanket ruling on the minimum shift in the retail award.

However, the Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees Association has since indicated it will appeal against the Fair Work Australia ruling. The students gained 1600 signatures for a petition to change the award.

Footnote: Fair Work Australia on September 14 dismissed the final appeal by the Shop Distributive and Allied Employees Association for a minimum three-hour shift. This enables students to work for an hour and a half after school.

New Role for Nigel

Nigel Bruckner is adding to his community involvement by becoming a member of the Terang Co-op Board.

Nigel is already part of the Terang & Mortlake Health Service board and Terang P-12 School Council but sees more opportunity to make a difference with his Co-op role.

“With the other boards you have to go through a process of reporting to government departments,” Nigel said. “With the Co-op we can implement decisions on our own without needing to refer it on.”

Nigel came to Terang from Melbourne in 1992 with his wife Tania (Blackburn) and continues to love the country experience.

“The country life is fantastic; it’s a great environment to bring up two boys,” he said.

He initially worked with Sinclair Wilson in Warrnambool before joining Wayne Dowell in Terang in 1997 and later formed his own accounting practice, Bruckner & Associates.

Nigel said the Co-op board would continue to meet the challenge of providing services to members.

“The focus is always on the needs of members,” he said. “We have to be able to work in an economic environment both locally and nationally that stretches the retail industry, but the Co-op continues to provide a great service to the local community.

“It is a really good Board to be part of with a great mix of people,” he added.

Nigel replaces Graham Blain on the Board. Graham is a former Board Chairman and we thank him for his contribution.

Rob Durant has been re-elected as the current Board Chairman.

Conveniently Yours on the Web

Have you visited our new-look website?

Our site is now online and can be found at www.terangcoop.com.au and features pages on our Home Timber and Hardware, Super IGA and liquor store, CRT and Dairy Services.

The site features a brief history of the Co-op and details about the benefits of becoming a shareholder.

There is also a link to a Terang Co-op Facebook page.