



The Voice of Midlife and Older Women

SEATTLE/KING COUNTY CHAPTER

June 2008

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OWLS' Perch

The Leadership Committee wants to thank Carol Hannum for her guidance and insight she so generously shared with the incoming board members in their first half year in office. Thank you, Carol, for standing by us and for being the driving force that makes the organization run smoothly and efficiently all year long. Your roots in the community and the community of activism are giving Seattle/King County OWL character and content.

The last few months the chapter meetings seemed more animated. Members shared information about forums they attended and

extended invitations to participate in upcoming events with enthusiasm and conviction.

There will be no chapter meetings in July and August but we hope to see you all at the summer events Carrie Lane and the Cronos have organized for us. Please remember to RSVP.

Our next chapter meeting will be on September 6th at University House in Wallingford.

I wish you a colorful, warm summer!

Marielle Higler, Leadership Committee

Upcoming Programs

The Educational Director from Purdy's Women's Correctional Facility will be our guest speaker for the September Chapter meeting. In October we will learn about Ethical Wills. In November a long-time journalist will speak about how the media, in its use of specific words stigmatizes many groups including older women, individuals

with mental illness and various disenfranchised groups.

Each of the programs is intended to raise awareness of social issues that have a direct impact on the lives of mid-life and older women. Further announcements will provide details.

Memory/Life Review Writing Groups

Several years ago, our OWL Chapter had an active Memory/Life Review writing group. We were all amateur writers, we met once a month, always agreed on one common topic to write about and shared parts of our stories if we chose to do so. Some of the fun topics were 'First Day of School,' 'First Kiss,' 'Holidays' and also many heavier ones. I fondly remember that we trusted and respected each other and that we observed absolute confidentiality.

I would like to revive this OWL tradition. If you share my interest, please call and/or join me on Thursday, July 10th 2008 at 10:00 at my Condo on Queen Anne, to discuss an action plan. Bus #2 stops in front of my Building.

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206 286 3605
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Bequest Committee Update

by Marielle Higler

As we reported in our March newsletter The Florence Marie Bauer Bequest Committee has made historic progress in the first six months of this year. The Chapter adopted the guidelines as presented by the Bequest Committee; four organizations received funding in March for a total of \$25,000. — \$1,000 was spent from the Scholarship fund.

In our June Chapter meeting two more organizations were voted in:

The Eileen Murphy Emergency Fund — \$ 5,000

Meals on Wheels — \$ 5,000

Both programs are part of and managed by Senior Services.

Although these programs are not exclusively geared towards older

women, statistics prove that more women than men need these services due to the higher life expectancy and lower income for women.

After these two rounds of awards, the Bequest Committee reflected on the results and concluded that, although the selected programs and organizations are truly wonderful and worthy of our support, there is still great, unresolved concern about the fate of older, frail, needy, poor, isolated women.

Before making further recommendations, the committee is considering "round table" discussions with experts in the community such as the Department of Social Services and Senior Services. The purpose will be to make Seattle/King County OWL members aware of how to

become actively involved in supporting and/or creating policies to better serve this demographic group. We hope to form an action plan from these meetings for Seattle/King County OWL, for which Bequest funding may be required.

\$123,369.88 remains in the restricted Bequest Fund. Of that amount, \$39,000 is available for scholarships since \$1,000 has already been paid out. We allocated \$10,000 per year for four years so \$9,000 in scholarships is yet to be given out in 2008 or carried over to 2009.

A total of \$254.38 was spent from the \$10,000 outreach fund for the 600 Caregiver cards (\$43.60), telephone (\$143.28) and web management (\$67.50).

Financial Review

by Carol Hannum

Seattle/King County OWL ended the first quarter of 2008 with assets in checking accounts and certificates of deposits totaling \$210,890.45, a decrease of \$20,727.21 from December 31, 2007. Ordinary income, excluding collected national dues of \$969 was \$514.25. Interest income totaled \$2,258.91. Our major expenses for the quarter included the following:

Bequest Fund Grant to Compassion & Choices — \$10,000

Bequest Fund Grant to Jubilee Women's Center — \$10,000

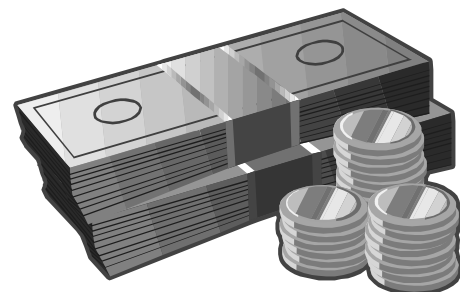
Bequest Fund Scholarship Grant to UW Retirement Association — \$1,000

Ordinary Income Grant to Compassion & Choices — \$1,000

Ordinary operating expenses excluding collected dues of \$969 sent to National totaled \$1,500.37.

As of March 31, 2008, \$133,369.88 remains in the Restricted Bequest Fund to be distributed as grants and scholarships through 2011.

Carol Hannum, Treasurer



New Member — Eleanor Langham

Although new to our chapter, Eleanor Langham is not new to OWL. In fact, on August 25, 1990, she received the Older Women's League Chapter Leadership Award for her "foresight in founding the first OWL chapter in the nation and her unceasing advocate's voice on behalf of older women." That chapter was in Louisville, Kentucky where she was similarly honored the year before by the Jefferson County Judge/Executive for her "contributions to improve the image and quality of life for mid-life and older women."

Born on February 2, 1917 in Alton, Illinois, east of St. Louis, Missouri, Eleanor remembers studying music

and voice at a couple of colleges. Her daughter, Rebecca, says she worked briefly for Monsanto and performed on the radio and stage in St. Louis. She married in the early 40's, and lived in Seattle in the 50's and 60's with her daughter and husband who covered the Northwest for Time Life, Inc. before joining King TV. She sang in UW productions and performed cabaret music at a club near the waterfront. At the end of the sixties she and her husband moved to Louisville and subsequently divorced.

It wasn't until the early 90's that Eleanor began longing for that minds'-eye image she had of a town by the

water in the Northwest. She and Rebecca drove around the area until she decided Poulsbo was the place and there she remained until four years ago. She built a lovely garden and organized and ran a Community College computer program for seniors. A series of strokes have robbed Eleanor of her greatest love, singing, and much of her memory, but the past, like her OWL activism is often recalled as she combs through old letters, photos and documents. It was the plaque from Louisville and the award from National OWL that led to a call to our chapter and a reunion with kindred spirits. Welcome Eleanor!

Reading OWLs, Welcome!

by *Pat Sterne*

It is significant that this book group (even though its members meet the same time each month, and remember to bring their sandwich) does not have a name, nor a leader.

Instead, each person brings a report about whatever book or pamphlet or review or magazine is of her current interest. Each meeting produces the gift of an eclectic list of new reading! Particular preferences are presented with passion and can cover any topic, style, age, humor, tragedy, history, food for thought – and this year, of course, matters of cosmic importance in the political realm. It is great fun and it offers an unusual stage for one's thoughts. Try it!!

If you had dropped in at the OWL Book Club to share some wonderful words with us, you would have heard some of these gems from our "regulars":

- A page from one of Angela Thirkell's many novels set in an imaginary English County;
- A sample read by Roxana Harper from Mister Pip by Lloyd Jones, about an innovative teacher during the second World War using Dickens' Great Expectations to help her students on a small island in the South Pacific deal with occupation by alternating armies.
- An astounding passage from Infidel by Ayaa Hirsi Ali (read by Pat Melgard) a memoir on her life trip from a tribe in Somalia to the Parliament in Holland.
- Carol Hannum showing the graphic novel Persepolis.
- Jean Savelle introducing us to literature from her real book club.

- Pat Sterne, Linda Meller or Barbara Heather or occasional drop-ins sharing likewise.



Place: Montlake Library Branch, 24th St. E.

Time: Third Friday of the month Noon-2pm, except for July and August when there are no meetings.

Bring your favorite readings to share and a brown bag for lunch.

The League of Women Voters Sponsors BOTOX Events

By Carol Hannum

It started simply enough, an invitation in the mail:

“ADMIT ONE, no cost to attend, Monday May 19, 6:00 – 8:00 p.m., Sky Church (Experience Music Project - Science Fiction Museum and Hall of Fame). Freedom of Expression Through Film. Oscar-nominated actress Virginia Madsen, the League of Women Voters and Allergan, Inc., the maker of BOTOX Cosmetic (Botulinum Toxin Type A), invite you to the movies! Join us for an evening of education, self expression, film and refreshments as we discuss the importance of choice and conviction in our lives. All attendees will have the opportunity for a complimentary consultation with a local physician specializing in the administration of BOTOX Cosmetic. If the physician recommends treatment, attendees will also receive one complimentary treatment of the glabellar lines (moderate to severe frown lines between the brows), a potential value of \$500 - \$700.” Oh, and by the way you and your guests will have the opportunity to learn more about the election process and register to vote on site.

So the League of Women Voters has joined the cosmetics and drug industry in promoting dissatisfaction among women with their appearance. Eighty percent of U.S. women already think their looks are unacceptable and world wide only 2% of women consider themselves beautiful. Okay, let's see how this works, I empower and express myself by voting and at the same time I give up my independence and expressiveness by signing up to ultimately spend thousands of dollars enriching the drug and cosmetology industry by perpetually paying them for the removal of frown lines quaintly called “elevenses.”

The Education Fund section of the June issue of the League's National Voter describes Allergan as “a leading maker of eye and skin care products” without any mention of BOTOX and praises Allergan's “sponsorship of ten local events around the country that will allow us to involve a new demographic of voters that we have not previously reached as a group: workers in the beauty industry.”

While the League's intended goals, to increase voter registration and participation among younger women is to be admired, their decision to use the lure of cosmetic injections is not. Many organizations including OWL, CLUW and NOW have worked toward such goals by educating on issues that are vitally important to women's health such as vaccines against shingles and HPV. These programs reach out to young women and their parents and families and actively involve them in the many aspects of policy-making.

There must be a better way to foster the democratic process than handing mirrors out to participants and urging them to check out those grumpy looking frown lines while short-skirted, seamed-stockinged beauties toss out candies from the old cigarette trays. Cameras, sweat bands and rhinestone t-shirts advertising BOTOX were all part of the package. I tried to embroider a red “X” through the logo but my thread was no match for the sparkles. All I can finally say is that a science fiction museum was probably the best place to show off an alliance made in hell.

Sound Alliance

By Barbara Heather

On Sunday, June 1, 2008, 43 non-profit organizations assembled in the Tacoma Dome for the founding of Sound Alliance and to approve its “Visions for the Common Good,” which deal with six concerns: Health Care, Education, Sustainable Jobs & Environment, Housing, Immigration, and Civil Rights.

The founding and observing institutions included churches, unions, educators, and other non-profits such as Casa Latina and Real Change. At least 1,000 people were in attendance. Governor Gregoire came to show her support.

The Sound Alliance office is in Tukwila. The website is www.soundorganizing.org.

There will be Sound Alliance cluster orientations, research action teams, and leadership institutes July to September. Anyone interested is invited to come to the next cluster orientation coming up on Tuesday, June 24, 7-8:30 pm, at University Unitarian Church, 6556 35th Ave NE in Seattle, in order to find out whether it might be useful for OWL to join and what our role might be.

Save the Dates

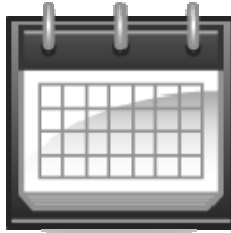
Saturday, July 12th **OWL Annual Summer Potluck.** Noon-3 PM at Carolyn Lehman's, The Boulevard Condo (375 Kirkland Ave. in Kirkland). Please RSVP to Carrie. Let Carrie know if you need a ride or if you want to be a driver and if you are bringing a hot dish, salad or desert to share. RSVP 206-367-1683 (after 6:30 PM). *Directions on back page.*

Sunday, August 3rd, 5pm, Crone Picnic at Interbay P-Patch—west side of 15th West, just south of Interbay Golf Course and north of Wheeler Street. Crone has invited us to join them in their annual summer picnic. Stroll among the flowers and vegetables. Bring food to share and your own plate and utensils; Crone will provide beverages. For information, call Barbara 367-0295 or Betsey 244-4399.

Wednesday, August 13th, Lunch at Louie's Cuisine of China (5100-15th NW, Ballard). Reservations should be made. We plan to carpool from University House. Please RSVP to Carrie 206-387-1683 (after 6.30) not later than August 10th.

Tuesday, August 26th, Women's Equality Day Celebration. Call Carol (206-325-6622) or Carrie (206-367-1683) if you want to participate in an informal fun gathering to celebrate Bella Abzug and US !!!

We would REALLY like to organize



a monthly social get together. This can be in the form of a lunch, maybe a movie after-

wards, visit the outlet malls or play cards.

It would help greatly with the organization of these events, if you would give us some feedback at the potluck or the next chapter meeting.

- What days work for you and what days do not?
- Do you like the lunch option on Saturdays after our Chapter meetings?
- What is YOUR favorite restaurant?

We can carpool to these events from University House.

WE WOULD LOVE TO HEAR YOUR THOUGHTS AND IDEAS FOR SOCIAL ACTIVITIES!!

Women's Equality Day

by Carol Hannum

August 26th, Women's Equality Day, commemorates the 19th Amendment, the Woman's Suffrage Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which gave women full voting rights in 1920.

This date was established in 1971 as a result of the leadership of Representative Bella Abzug, the extraordinary first Jewish Congresswoman known for her work for women's rights, peace and civil liberties.

Bella said:

- "Women have been trained to speak softly and carry a lipstick. Those days are over."
- "The test for whether or not you can hold a job should not be the

arrangement of your chromosomes."

- "Our struggle today is not to have a female Einstein get appointed as assistant professor. It is for a woman schlemiel to get as quickly promoted as a male schlemiel."
- "We are coming down from our pedestal and up from the laundry room. We want an equal share in our government and we mean to get it."

LET'S CELEBRATE ON AUGUST 26th – call Carrie at 206-367-1683 or Carol at 206-325-6622 with celebration ideas.



Dorothy Gordon — 1920-2008

by Lynn Reynolds

OWL members who have worked with and laughed with long-time member Dorothy Gordon will remember her for a very long time.

Dorothy died in April at the age of 87 after a very brief illness. She was surrounded by her family. Several OWL members attended her memorial service held at the Washington Park Arboretum on May 18th.



Dorothy was an active member of the OWL Steering Committee for six

years beginning in the late 1990s and during that time originated the weekly "coffee hour" when OWLs gathered first at Julia's and later at the Essential Bakery, both in the Wallingford district. She was also a strong advocate for OWL members' eventual decision to expend some of the Florence Bauer Bequest funds for local causes.

Dorothy was born in Transylvania and moved to Ohio with her family when she was seven. She spent

most of her life in New York City, which she loved, and moved to Seattle in 1995 with her late husband, Daniel, to be near her daughters, Judith Gordon and Chris Owen.

Although Dorothy's primary interests were her two daughters, their families and her longstanding involvement as a second violinist in the Symphony Emeritus orchestra, she held loving space for many friends. Some will indeed miss most her laughter when she was messing up in a poker game with Connie Schnell and others a couple weeks before her death.

Victory for Hotel Workers

by Jessica Lawson

Community Affairs Coordinator, UNITE HERE Local 8

On June 2, workers at the SeaTac Doubletree and Hilton Hotels overwhelmingly ratified a groundbreaking four-year contract! Workers at these hotels have been fighting for a new contract since July of 2007. In February of this year, after months without negotiations, workers voted to enact a boycott on these two properties. Community groups, labor unions, students and others threw their support behind this boycott. With the help of a dedicated boycott committee, with leaders from labor and religious organizations, over \$1.2 million was pulled from the SeaTac Hotels. The success of this strategy brought management back to the table!

The final agreement provides workers with:

- Good wage increases

- Affordable health-care
- Safer workloads
- Improved immigrant protection language
- Job security through a no-subcontracting clause
- Job security through successorship language (if the hotels are sold, the new owners must take on the existing contract)
- AND FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER for UNITE HERE Local 8, GROWTH LANGUAGE!!! Workers in all future Hilton owned and/or operated properties built in King County, will have the opportunity to organize without intimidation!

The Portland Hilton workers have also reached a tentative agreement! However, the Vancouver Hilton continues

to fight for a first-time contract. Groups that are considering booking future events at the SeaTac Doubletree and Hilton are urged not to make reservations until the Vancouver Hilton is settled.

The success of this campaign was made possible with the support of the community.

The workers thank all those who honored the boycott. A strong message was sent to the Hilton Corporation that every worker in the Northwest deserves a decent job with fair wages and affordable benefits.



Good News for the Depressed

by Pat Melgard

At last Seattle and Washington have evolved practical, common sense ways to help. A recent all-day summit conference of the Washington Alliance for Healthy Aging had an exciting forum "Lifting the Clouds: Addressing Depression in Older Adults." The conference involved many agencies of the state and city, including religious and ethnic services. The participants were fully involved in discussions.

Minor depression is characterized by loss of interest or pleasure in activities and feelings of sadness and hopelessness. It strikes about fourteen percent of seniors, many of whom are dealing with isolation, loss of friends and family, and debilitating chronic diseases. Seniors who have diabetes are more than twice as likely as other people their age to be depressed.

Some of the problems arise from the assumption that depression is normal for their age. Many elderly may have financial problems. This

generation are survivors, used to pulling themselves up by their own bootstraps. In the case of mental illness, they simply can't. They are supposed to be strong and tough; therefore, they don't seek help when they need it. They believe that personal problems are private, that complaining has to be avoided and they fear the loss of control. Many depressed elders avoid the label, the stigma, the trouble attached to finding mental health specialists.

Their depression may not be recognized by their doctors in routine contacts. If it is recognized, it may be treated with pills but not with informed and sustained support. Medicare does not cover mental health treatment with equity, which leaves many mental health facilities underused. Transportation to specialists' offices can be another critical barrier.

One of the highlights of the program was that there are now statewide

trainings to help primary providers learn strategies for community-based screening and early detection of depression. Collaborative approaches among aging services have been developed. The goals for helping mildly depressed elders include instilling hope and maintaining resilience. With training, primary providers (doctors, nurses, case workers) can offer lasting assistance. Results are very positive.

OWL, founder of Older Americans' Mental Health Week in May 2003, was an exhibitor at the all-day conference. Pat Melgard and Joann Lund gave away OWL literature and met with participants. They were able to sit in on the excellent sessions and learned that financing for these hopeful new approaches has become threatened, like so many human services. Pat and Joann made preliminary suggestions to organizers that they consider applying to OWL'S Bequest Committee, perhaps for scholarships.

Teeth Hurt? Consider UW School of Dentistry

by Roxana Harper

If you are like me, and have reached that time of life where major dental work is necessary but you have only minimal preventive dental insurance (or none at all!), you may want to consider applying to UW/SofD as a patient for care by a dental student. Third and fourth year students perform dental services under the direct supervision of experienced, licensed dentists/faculty members of UW/SofD AND the cost is about HALF what you would be charged by your private dentist.



The School is unable to accept everyone (I was accepted but my husband was not! I think it had something to do with the number of treatments needed - I had six and Gordon 10). A comprehensive intake exam will be done at your first visit to determine your treatment

needs and eligibility for care (cost of initial visit: \$150 including x-rays, if necessary, and your current dental insurance may cover this).

I have been in their program for 3+ years now and have been very pleased with the students' work and especially pleased at the (comparatively!) low cost. Hint: patience on the patient's part is a necessity as appointments are 2-3 hours each visit due to repeated checking by the faculty members and the students' deliberate pace!

This is a very fine service offered in our community and I would encourage you to give them a try. I will have New Patient Information brochures available at the next regular OWL Chapter Meeting on September 6.

Caregiver Cards

As an outreach project, OWL printed 600 copies of the card below. Now we need volunteers to place them in pharmacy and library information racks. Call Carol to get your supply. 206-325-6622



The Voice of Mid-Life And Older Women

Seattle/King County Older Women's League (OWL) holds free educational forums the first Saturday of the month at University House, 4400 Stone Way North, Seattle.

Guests are welcome!

OWL, a grass-roots non-profit organization with headquarters in D.C., has chapters in every state. Members focus on legislative and health care issues that directly impact the lives of mid-life and older women.

For More Information on OWL

206-781-6679

Seattle/King County Older Women's League
c/o Wallingford Senior Center
4649 Sunnyside Avenue North
Seattle, WA 98103

www.scn.org/hoot/

ARE YOU A CAREGIVER?

Feel Isolated?
Want Respite?
Need Support?

Information
&
Resources
Are Available

DIAL 211

Or Contact

Caregiver Outreach and Support Program

206-448-3110 Toll-free: 1-888-435-3377

TTY: 206-448-5025

<http://www.seniorservices.org/caregiver/caregiver.htm>

Seattle-King Co Aging and Disability Respite Care Program

206-448-3110 or 1-800-972-9990

Senior Information & Assistance

206-448-3110 or 1-888-435-3377 (WA)

TTY: 206-448-5025

www.seniorservices.org

Summary of 2008 State Legislative Session

Washington Health Security Coalition

The Washington Health Security Coalition (WHSC) supported a number of bills in 2008 that would benefit Washington residents and take steps to improve the affordability and accessibility of comprehensive health care in our state.

Through a strong presence and effective efforts by our WHSC and its allies and supporters, an important bill was passed by the Legislature and signed into law by the Governor. This legislation, SB 6333, creates a working group to review health care reform proposals, and funds \$1.27 million for an actuarial study of a number of health care concepts, including a single payer proposal.

Our WHSC also supported other long term and short term health care-related legislation that the Governor has now signed into law. With the exception of the Prescription Privacy (Data-Mining) bill, which would have banned the sale of providers' prescribing histories to pharmaceutical companies for marketing purposes, we were successful in our efforts. These included the following:

Access to Personal Physicians

It is widely recognized that our state has a shortage of primary care providers and that improvements in the affordability and accessibility of health care will place further stress on current resources. State Legislators responded to the shortage of primary care providers across Washington by allocating \$1.25 million to expand the Washington State Health Professional Loan Repayment and Scholarship Program. This funding will help in the retention of 20 additional primary care providers and will provide education and training to 40 additional providers. This is a huge victory for underserved communities across our state.

Affordable Choices for Small Businesses

The Legislature allocated \$750,000 for subsidies for low wage employees of small employers under the Health Insurance Partnership Act. This legislation provides access to quality coverage for low-wage employees of small businesses.

Insurance Rate Accountability

The Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC) has rightfully regained oversight authority on the individual market. This is a huge win for consumers who have seen rates for individual health care premiums skyrocket in the last several years. SB 5261 also increases the portion of the premium that insurance companies must pay for medical claims and it limits the ability of insurance companies to raise rates without the approval of the OIC.

Continuing Our Commitment to Kids

Our WHSC and its allies are also committed to seeing full implementation of the Cover All Kids legislation. The Legislature allocated \$6.25 million for mental health funding. Advocates for children will be working to get a portion of these dollars targeted to meet the needs of children.

Other Legislation

Other bills which our WHSC supported in 2008 included the Washington Health Security Trust (SB 5756 and HB 1886) and the Washington Health Partnership bill (SB 6221) proposed by Senator Karen Keiser and modeled on the Healthy Wisconsin plan. These bills will have to be

reintroduced in the 2009 Legislative Session by their respective sponsors. However, since the passed Work Group bill (SB 6333) will include actuarial studies of health care plans which incorporate the general concepts of these two proposals, the findings and results of these actuarial studies will most likely impact decisions about the reintroduction of these bills.

Session Summary

In final review, our WHSC had a very successful first legislative session and we look forward to similar accomplishments in the future. Our

Coalition became known and recognized by legislators, staff, lobbyists and others. WHSC representatives articulately testified at committee hearings and effectively spoke with elected officials and staff. WHSC organizations and their members persuasively

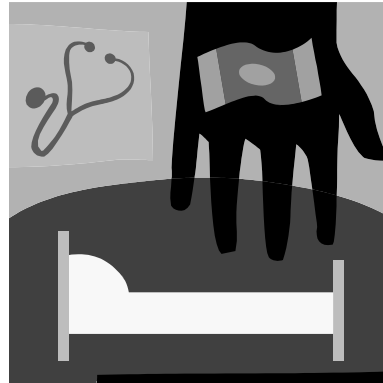
sent emails, faxes and letters and made phone calls, when needed, to targeted lawmakers. Our success is due, in large part, to everyone's individual and collective commitment and participation. Many thanks to each and all! Together, we can make a difference!

DATED: April 25, 2008

SUBMITTED BY: Kent L. Davis
and Linda Sternhill Davis
Co-Chairs, WHSC Leg. Committee

Email:
legislative@wahealthsecurity.org

Phone: (877) 502-1873



Talking with Animals

by Barbara Heather

On April 11, the speaker at the Jung Society said that when we let animals into our heart, we can learn leadership, problem solving, how to be alone, and how to become less naïve and tougher—all the things I need and strive for! People had their first tame cats in 2600 B.C.! Crows are intelligent tricksters, and often symbolize the descent into death. I sometimes say hello to a crow when it stares at me.

When I was four years old, there was a fortress on a hill, in Germany, where a man inside a bearskin growled at me. I remember the feel of my father's hand, warm, dry, and a little rough, as he told me not to be afraid.

Once, when I was a girl of 12, I felt more related to a skylark singing its way straight up into the sky than to my friends chattering and laughing nearby.

So, the other day I tried talking to a good-looking black beetle out in the street in front of my house. He was walking along next to my car.

"Hey, watch where you're going," I said. "Cars could squash you here."

The beetle stopped. I went on to my garbage can. When I came back he was running towards my yard. "Hey, that's the right direction. Good going," I told him. It felt pleasant to have a conversation with a beetle.

As for the human animal, I was collecting signatures for the Death with Dignity Initiative on Sunday afternoon, at my spot in front of the QFC on Broadway. Some people come straight over when they see my sign. Others look confused, and I offer to explain. Sometimes I have chatty people. One man smiled happily and described his friend's death as being such an uplifting moment, "like a birth," he said.

A woman with a lot of curly gray hair that flew out in the wind told me she had signed up with the Peace Corps. They're sending her to Kazakhstan in September, and she is learning the language. She was happy and excited. I almost felt like going with her.

Update on the Death with Dignity Initiative Campaign

by Midge Levy

The Campaign Office is extremely busy with signature gathering, fund raising and endorsements, and doing well in all areas.

Our volunteers have gathered over 100,000 signatures, with a goal of collecting 175,000 by June 30. We are more productive in good weather but we have intrepid volunteers collecting in the pouring rain, wind, anywhere and everywhere they can find WA citizens to sign. Some of our volunteers take petitions with them wherever they go, medical appointments, beauty parlor operators, a whole range of community and social gatherings. Several OWL members have proven to be star signature gatherers.

We understand that older women are optimal signature gatherers because they do not appear threatening and are more approachable.

Older women are also our preferred speakers, they inspire trust as revealed by the polls.

Eighty-eight volunteers are members of the "1000 Club" pledging to gather 1000 signatures.

One volunteer (an older woman) reported that she rear ended someone coming off the freeway, after pulling over and exchanging identifying information inclusive of insurance coverage she got out a petition and asked him to sign. He did!!!

Another volunteer (also an older woman) took a trip in Europe and met another tourist from WA State who had not signed our petition. Naturally the volunteer happened to have one on her and got an additional signature in Austria!

The weekly Campaign Progress Report of May 19 proudly listed under New Endorsers:

"Older Women's League of Seattle." We have had a number of other endorsements from women's groups, i.e. The American Medical Women's Association, Coalition of Labor Union Women, Puget Sound Chapter, National Council of Jewish Women, Seattle Chapter, the National Women's Law Center and the NW Women's Law Center.

The Campaign will also benefit from the donation made by OWL to Compassion & Choices of WA since C&C of WA is able to donate a percentage of their funds to the Campaign.

OWL members have therefore made important contributions in all areas and our organization has become a significant source of support to this Initiative. The three OWLs who were founding members of the Hemlock Society of WA State in 1988 would be proud of us

Sharing Florence's Savings

The mysterious bequest from Florence Marie Bauer is going to work in new ways.

The Chapter voted in our June meeting to fund \$5,000 to Meals on Wheels, a large program of Senior Services. They offer home delivered meals for older persons who are unable to leave their home to shop or prepare nutritious meals.

Steep increase in basic food prices has made their work so much more difficult.

Another program of Senior Services is an emergency fund named after Eileen Murphy, the beloved late assistant director of Senior Information and Assistance. This fund is available for one-time crisis help in situations when stringent guidelines of referring agencies don't fit.

OWL has suggested that the Fund consider the purchase of medical alerts (like lifeline) from companies that do not charge monthly service fees.

Wearing this device (a wristband or necklace) is very reassuring for isolated elders in unstable health. Seniors with income above Medicaid level may need this kind of reassurance, but hesitate because of initial cost.

Focus on Strength for Fall Prevention

By Lisa Pemberton
TheOlympian

The statistics are scary.

Nationally, about one-third of adults older than 65 and about half of those older than 80 fall each year, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

And falls are fatal more often for senior citizens in Washington than in any other state.

Deaths because of falls by people 65 and older are 40 percent higher in Washington than the national average, at 63 for every 100,000 people.

Medical experts say it isn't just those who fall who are affected: The fear of falling can lead to depression, isolation and loss of independence.

As part of Older Americans Month, state and health officials are trying to spread an important message: Most falls can be prevented.

"We want people to understand that falls are not a normal part of the aging process," said Ilene Silver with the state Department of Health's Fall Prevention Program.

Here are ways to reduce risk factors:

- **Get fit:** Seniors often fall after they've lost muscle mass because of inactivity, Silver said.

Several local health clubs and senior centers offer fitness programs designed especially for older adults.

In addition, Providence St. Peter Hospital offers Stumble Stoppers, a program geared toward improving seniors' strength and balance.

"Instead of use it or lose it, our motto is 'use it and improve it,'" said Anne Peterson, one of the hospital's exercise physiologists.

Part of the issue is that the first of 78 million baby boomers have begun their transition into retirement. And retirement often equals less physical activity.

"We're in big trouble if we don't start addressing this issue - they will overwhelm the medical system," Peterson said. "And a lot of these things are preventable. ... The whole goal is to get people active so they're not in the high-risk category or so they never get there."

- **Get medical information:** Talk to your doctor and pharmacist about medications you're taking, and possible interactions that could cause dizziness or low blood pressure, which are risk factors for falls.

- **Get your vision checked:** Incorrect prescription lenses, cataracts and other conditions can make vision less clear, making rugs, curbs and other potential tripping hazards less obvious.

- **Get safe:** Many falls can be prevented by clearing clutter out of the house, wearing shoes or slippers that fit properly, and using a cane or other assistance when needed.

Some risks can be removed with a little effort.

"A lot of seniors get up to use the bathroom (in the dark) - they should have a night light," Silver said.

Other ways to help prevent falls around the house include installing handrails on both sides of a stairway, using nonslip mats in the shower and bathtub, and removing tripping hazards such as throw rugs.

- **Get educated:** Several Web sites offer more information on fall prevention. Peterson recommends www.fallsfreewashington.org, which has information about strength exercises, nutrition, and community events and programs.

Lisa Pemberton writes for The Olympian. She can be reached at 360-704-6871 or lpemberton@theolympian.com.



*The voice of midlife
& older women*

The Older Women's League

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OWL Quarterly Newsletter—June 2008

Leadership Committee: Roberta Cole, Carrie Lane,
Carol Hannum, Marielle Higler, Carolyn Lehman

OWL Annual Summer Potluck

Saturday, July 12th—Noon-3pm

At Carolyn Lehman's in Kirkland

Please RSVP to Carrie. Let Carrie know if you need a ride or if you want to be a driver and if you are bringing a hot dish, salad or desert to share. RSVP 206-367-1683 (after 6:30 PM).

Directions:

From 520 E take Lake Washington Blvd N.E. exit, head north along lake to downtown Kirkland, turn right onto Kirkland Ave. until 4 way stop at 3rd Ave. Then choose:

1. For Library Garage turn left onto 3rd and into Library Garage on right (Four hour max parking)
2. For Library Parking go straight on Kirkland and turn left for Library
3. For street parking continue straight with eyes peeled (Two hour max parking)

Questions re: directions/parking Carolyn 425 822 7853

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