



The Voice of Midlife and Older Women

SEATTLE/KING COUNTY CHAPTER

March, 2008

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OWLs' Perch

Last month I joined Carol Hannum and Pat Melgard at the Wallingford Senior Center on Sunnyside Avenue, for a long postponed clean-up of Seattle/King County OWL archives. Newsletters, financial statements, endless minutes and other documents testifying to the organization's history were assessed and re-arranged. Most of them were saved of course together with a special file of photos and newspaper clippings.

A few things called my attention:

- We have been picketing for Healthcare For All since the early 80's.
- In the past Seattle/King County OWL published studies, participated in surveys, and interacted with government officials. OWLS were active activists then.
- We are spending too much time organizing and running the organization itself at the cost of activism.

The Leadership Committee's plan is to reorganize Seattle/King County OWL in such a manner that in the future we will need to spend only a small portion of our time on the business end of the organization and we will dedicate the better part of our energy to the true purpose of our group: active engagement in our community and its government.

To accomplish this goal, the Leadership Committee has identified committees that will make the management of the organization more time efficient and balanced: Leadership, Financial, Bequest, Membership, Programs, Newsletter, Chapter meeting, Speakers Bureau, Letter Writing and Social Activities among others. Each committee lists a short description of its responsibilities. We will include the names of the members who signed up last fall to serve on certain committees and the members who expressed their wish to volunteer on the bottom part of the Membership Renewal form.

In the April Leadership Committee meeting the final updates will be made before we mail out a copy to the membership, in time for the May chapter meeting when we will discuss this plan and campaign for your participation.

Instead of a few people running all these committees, we invite you to join us and together take care of some of these tasks. It will make us stronger, lighten the load for all and create the right environment for a larger membership and the important issues we care about.

Marielle Higler, Leadership Committee

Monthly Meetings

OWL Seattle meets every first Saturday of the month at University House (4400 Stone Way North, Seattle). Socializing starts at 9:45am with refreshments provided by University House. The business meet-

ing starts at 10am and from 11am 'till noon, we have a guest speaker—topics vary from women's history and fair elections to the importance of resilience. Watch your mailboxes every month for specific

info on each meeting topic. We extend an open invitation for lunch across the street after each meeting.

All this information is available on our website: <http://www.scn.org/hoot/>

OWL National Board Meeting

by Eleanor Owen

The National OWL January, 2008 Board meeting in Washington, D.C. was very upbeat. It differed markedly from the October, 2007 meeting when the financial status and outlook was considered dire. During the interim, National received funds from AARP & SEIU (\$50,000), grants from Wyeth (\$40,000), Cigna (\$5,000), and AARP Foundation (QuickLINK - \$40,000 and WorkSEARCH - \$25,000). The completion of a Challenge Grant netted another \$54,983.

This more sanguine outlook enabled the organization to hire a Development and Administrative Associate as well as recruit a student intern until May. Additional grants are in the works.

The Wyeth & Cigna funds will be used to raise awareness during Older American's Mental Health Week.

Discussion of Goals & Board Actions:

Ellen Bruce, President, discussed the importance of developing coalitions and partnering in co-sponsoring programs with organizations that have similar missions. She stressed the need to focus on increasing membership, not only at the chapter level but to do more outreach to increase At Large membership.

Important issues for OWL members to focus on during the coming year include Medicare for All; monitoring the press and its commentaries on women, equal pay, paid care giving, and active participation or programs during Mental Health Week.

The Board voted unanimously to hire Ashley Carlson as the permanent Executive Director. Ashley was Acting Director since Laurie

Young's departure due to a major illness last fall.

There was tentative agreement to hold the next National OWL Convention in Louisville, KY.

The Board appointed a Nominating Committee. There will be openings for four new members. Efforts will be made to get representatives from across the country. It was suggested that a fund be established to assist women who find it a hardship to cover travel costs.

A board member brought a short video on women in prison; many are mid-life and older. The Board approved a resolution to raise awareness in OWL about the need to address the problems of Women in Prisons.

Eleanor Owen is our Northwest Regional Rep. to the National Board.

Financial Review

Seattle/King County OWL ended 2007 with assets in checking accounts and certificates of deposits totaling \$231,617.66, an increase from the prior year of approximately \$2,000.

Ordinary income, excluding collected national dues of \$1419 and a one-time class action suit settlement of \$500, was \$1,238.22.

Interest Income totaled \$11,258.69.

Our major 2007 expenses included the following:

- A grant to National OWL—\$5,000
- Healthcare coalition membership—\$1,000
- Web design & radio outreach—\$1,045

Ordinary operating expenses totaled \$3,814.35.

\$154,369.88 of our assets are Restricted Bequest Funds to be distributed as grants and scholarships according to guidelines voted upon by the chapter at the March, 2008 meeting.

Carol Hannum, Treasurer



Caregivers Should Bite the Dust Again According to the Seattle PI

by Carol Hannum

An editorial in the PI on February 27 made clear that the PI opposes the idea of foster parents of high needs children becoming unionized state contractors. "We find the idea of unionizing what is essentially parenthood to be odd and essentially onerous." I find the idea exciting. Here is one of the hardest jobs-- performed by a woman, no doubt-- the care of a disabled child, eligible for union status and all the benefits that implies -- what's wrong with that? The PI's stance is both anti-union and anti-women.

The following letter to the editor, PI 2/28/08, from Erin Kinsella says it best:

"Wednesday's editorial on foster care glossed over the intended beneficiaries of House Bill 3145. Unionization of foster parents can only increase the quality of care provided to the 10,000 foster children in Washington state... Foster Parents are parents, but they are also professionals providing care to some of the most vulnerable children in our state.

"Rep Ruth Kagi's bill would allow unionization of only those foster parents who deal with children with intensive physical, emotional or mental health needs. The intent is to create a stable workforce and decrease the 25% turnover rate for foster parents...

"Your assertion that unionization is

unnecessary fails to recognize that all previous attempts by foster parents to increase training and compensation have failed. These attempts have failed because foster parents lack the political backing a union can provide."

She goes on to say that foster children deserve that support. I would add that caregivers do too, and House Bill 3145 is a step toward recognizing the value of caregiving and perhaps decreasing the 23 cents gap between men's and women's wages.

Update on the Washington Health Security Coalition

by Edie Koch

OWL is a member of the WHS Coalition and supports its goals and mission as a non-profit association of diverse organizations, health care advocates and professionals working together to secure comprehensive, high quality, affordable health care for all.

These past few months, the Coalition's Legislative Committee has organized conference calls every Friday night to discuss and strategize on some critical bills:

The Washington Health Partnership bill **SB 6221** is still in Committee (no change as of February 29th).

SB 6241 (seeking patient privacy) is getting strong opposition from the pharmaceutical lobby and we have

sent out appeals for members to contact their legislators.



SB 6333 – Work Group on Health Care Reform passed out of the Senate on February 14th and out of the House Health Care & Wellness Committee on February 25th. The bill is being debated widely due to the "Single Payer" inclusion which is the one critical aspect to bring much

needed reform. It is our hope to see the public process start as soon as possible so that we can have legislative action during the 2009 session. As of March 3rd, the bill was in House Appropriations Committee and we sent requests to the committee members that it be sent to the House Rules Committee for more discussion.

Last but not least, **HB 1234** and **ESB 5261** (insurance rate accountability) passed both houses.

Hopefully, OWL's June Newsletter will have complete results on all the bills we've been supporting. Any questions, please contact Edie Koch – ediekoch@msn.com or call (206) 217-9451.

Wouldn't It Be Nice If...

Wouldn't It Be Nice If - - - - - ?

if there was peace?

if we put our energy, money and heart into:

pulling up each other's boot straps,
a guaranteed minimum income,
single-payer universal health insurance,
hospitals, nursing homes and jails

that were happy places where we helped people
to be all that they can be?

if girls and women had justice, equality and safety,
were encouraged and helped to be self-sufficient,
and had abortion available, covered by insurance?

(Since men are almost always stronger than women,
and they also have the penis)

if men knew that it is doubly important to respect and
protect females?

if members of the media were inquisitive, truth-seeking,
caring and brave?

if elections were paid for by our government?

if each vote was of equal value?

if we had complementary medicine?

if practitioners of Western and Eastern medicine worked
together for the common good?

if we had truly preventative medicine?

(Hippocrates wasn't just blowin' in the wind.)

if those at the head of corporations were fair and kind?

if they provided very good wages, working conditions and
safety,

encouraged strong unions,
and made sure that each job was satisfying and
appreciated?

if we provided top-notch education for all?

if we had teachers who expected the best from each
student?

if it was fun and exciting,

if each individual's way of learning was catered to,

if the best books, computers and pencils were plentiful,

if the rooms were clean, cheerful and healthy?

if we had reverence for all people?

if we knew that each person is unique,
whatever skin color, gender, religion, no religion, beliefs,
sexual orientation,

whatever language (or lack of) she/he uses?

if we had reverence for all animals?

if we knew that animals depend on us for their comfort
and survival because we have the upper hand now?

if we showed animals kindness (as we show all of
nature)?

if we made sure that farm animals:

live in their natural environment,
in clean conditions,

they were given food that is natural to them,

their bodies were kept clean – free of antibiotics,
pesticides and herbicides,

they got clean and fresh water,

babies were kept with their mothers,

they were provided veterinary care,

they were euthanized if necessary,

and then not used for food,

they were killed in a humane way,

with little or no suffering?

if we had reverence for our environment?

(this, too, depends on us for it's health)

if we used our government to protect it,

by careful development,

using as little as we can of natural resources,

tapping into wind, sun, and - - - ??

if we each protected it?

(we know what to do)

the special light bulbs,

using cloth napkins and grocery bags,

repair, repair, repair,

we were thankful for what we have,

(is the latest do-dad all that wonderful?)

and we showed appreciation for those who do these
things?

if we had reverence for our (and other's) bodies?

if we knew the value of what our mothers taught us:

"Eat your fruits and vegetables.

Only eat when you're hungry.

Eat your breakfast.

Only eat a little candy.

Go out and play.

Be nice.

You boys treat a girl with respect."

if we fell in love with the person, not the looks?

if then, we loved that particular body because
it was his/hers?

no face lifts, breast implants, tummy tucks needed,
because that body belongs to the person we love?

if we saw each body as a temple,

and so we protected that temple,

whether it was a kid's, a woman's, a man's, an old
person's,

a disabled person's, a drug addict, or a mentally ill
person?

if farmers and farm workers were rewarded

with a living wage and a healthy environment,
and homes in good condition?

if our food was clean, organic and inexpensive,

grown in healthy soil,

available nearby, and at Farmer's Markets?

Let's talk.

Jean Slocum Feb. 2008

Diversity in Media Ownership

Senator Byron Dorgan (D-ND) introduced legislation on March 5th to reject the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) regulations that would expand the ability of media conglomerates to increase their cross-ownership of multiple media outlets in a single community, reducing the diversity of local voices.

In support of the legislation, NOW president Kim Gandy says, "Not a day goes by that women don't call and write to us to express their frustration at what they see, hear and read in the media. They are outraged by sexist, racist, homophobic comments. They are disturbed by the high level of sexual exploitation

and violence. They ask why more women aren't featured on news and political talk shows. They are dismayed at the lack of substantive coverage of women's issues... I believe this condition is a direct result of the lack of diversity in ownership.

Women own just five percent of commercial broadcast TV stations and *six percent* of all full-power radio stations. Whenever the FCC allows big media companies to gobble up more stations, it leaves fewer outlets for women and people of color to purchase... It is

Women own just five percent of commercial broadcast TV stations and six percent of all full-power radio stations.

critical that we not let the FCC further relax its ownership rules. If media giants grow even larger, women and people of color will suffer

as their voices and viewpoints become even further marginalized..."

Ms. Gandy is calling on "all women's rights supporters to write

to their Senators today, urging them to vote 'yes' on the Senate resolution to reject the FCC's disastrous new rules."

Compassion and Choices

by Midge Levy

The December '07 Chapter newsletter included an article about the OWL members who co-founded the Hemlock Society in WA State. OWLs have continued their invaluable support and involvement in the Right to Die movement and may therefore be interested in developments in the Death with Dignity Initiative Campaign.

On January 9, 2008, a new initiative was filed to legalize aid in dying in Washington State. Initiative 1000 mirrors the Oregon law and would allow mentally competent, terminally ill adults in Washington with six months or less to live the legal choice to access and self-administer life-ending medication under strict

medical supervision.

Compassion & Choices of WA together with C & C National, the Death with Dignity National Center, and former Governor Booth Gardner formed a coalition in 2006 and worked together to plan an initiative.

Once the ballot title has been approved, we will print petitions for signature gathering and distribute them to volunteers. We need 225,000 valid signatures and aim to have volunteers collect 100,000 signatures and use paid signature gatherers for the remainder.

The Campaign Office is on 4041 Roosevelt Way NE, Ste B, Seattle, 98105. Please call us at 206-633-

2008 if you are interested in volunteering either to help collect signatures or work in the office. We have a number of OWLs assisting us and can always use more if you have the time.

Approximately 30 Oregonians a year have used their law, but many more terminally ill qualified patients requested a prescription which they did not use. These patients and their families had the comfort of knowing that they had the option of using the law if they needed it. Washingtonians would like the same option and now have a realistic expectation that they will get it.

Florence Marie Bauer Bequest

by Marielle Higler

Our March 1st Chapter meeting was fantastic! If you were not there, you missed a great moment in the history of the Florence Marie Bauer Bequest.

The Chapter voted unanimously to accept the Bequest Committee's Guidelines as presented to the membership by mail in January.

The members at the meeting agreed that we do not have to abide by the four-year time span to spend the balance of the Bequest if an organi-

zation or the right cause presents itself sooner. \$40,000 is reserved for the yet-to-be organized Scholarship Committee.

Four organizations had submitted requests for funding and their requests were awarded as follows:

Compassion and Choices of Washington—\$10,000

NAMI Greater Seattle (in support of the Hofmann House for women)—\$5,000

Jubilee Women's Center to support their Learning Center—\$10,000

University of Washington Retirement Association—\$1,000

There was consensus that a large portion of the balance of the Bequest shall be spent on older, vulnerable, and isolated seniors. The Bequest Committee members shall brainstorm with experts and organizations in King County involved in senior outreach to form a plan and make suggestions to the membership.

Update on Hotel Workers Rising

by Carol Hannum

On December 7, 2007 Seattle/King county OWL faxed a letter to Frank Welton, General Manager of the Hilton Seattle Airport & Convention Center that said, in part, National OWL, Older Women's League, works to ensure that all women have the tools with which to build their own economic security today and in the future. OWL works to achieve true parity between men and women in wages, benefits and access to savings and pensions, to eliminate the structural deficiencies that keep women poorer, and to eliminate workplace discrimination based on gender and age. The Seattle/King County Chapter of

OWL is committed to those goals and our support of the Hilton Hotel workers, many of whom are women, is part of that agenda. We strongly urge you to do the right thing the next time you sit at the table, to provide your workers with:

- Affordable healthcare
- Lowered workload for housekeepers
- Successorship AND no subcontracting language
- Fair wage and pension increases

According to the press release dated March 4 from UNITE HERE Local 8, the hotel workers of the SeaTac Hilton

and Doubletree have been advocating for a fair contract since last summer. "Some of the most important issues are still left on the table: wages, healthcare and job security. Aside from much needed increases in the economic package, job security is a top priority. Without language that protects their jobs in the event the hotel is sold...the rest of the contract details are irrelevant." Since the 550 workers are currently working on a day-to-day extension of expired contracts and management cancelled the last negotiations in January, UNITE HERE launched a Picketing and Call to Boycott Campaign on March 6.

Open Invitation—OWL Book Club

You are invited to join the OWL Book Club. We've been meeting monthly since the '80s on the third Friday of the month from noon to 2pm.

It is not a REAL Book Club, but instead a two hour brown bag lunch with exchange of interesting readings: light-hearted, profound or an

article that caught your attention. We each take about five minutes to show and tell or read a paragraph or two.

Drop-ins are welcome, at the Montlake Library (24th Ave E. and E. McGraw) Meeting room at the head of the stairs.

FREE
PARKING!!

Bus routes # 43
and 48

For more information:
Pat Melgard
206-325-3548



What is ARA?

According to their website, “the Alliance for Retired Americans is a nationwide organization, founded in May 2001, with three million members working together to make their voice heard in the laws, politics and institutions that shape our lives.” They focus on issues that affect retired workers and are allied with the AFL-CIO and other partners. “Unions support the Alliance because they want to ensure that their members remain active and stay informed in their retirement years.”

Currently, the Alliance is working to improve the inadequate prescription drug benefit under Medicare and is “fighting any new tax breaks for the wealthy at the expense of programs that help seniors, (and they) are

also opposed to any form of privatizing Social Security and Medicare.”

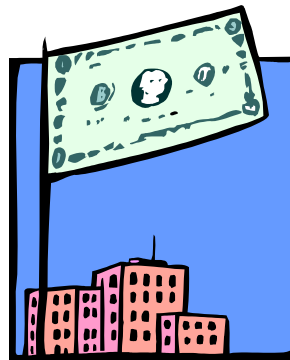
Seattle/King County OWL has been a sustaining member of the Washington State chapter of ARA since 2006 and we have joined activist coalitions with them on Social Security, Medicare and universal health care. On the state level, they have been active in Olympia supporting the Health Care Working Group bill to fund a state-wide debate on health care reform, the Prescription Privacy Act and the Insurance Rate Accountability Bill as well as advocating for more state budget dollars for elder care and more affordable housing.

OWL member Edie Koch is treasurer of the local Puget Sound affiliate, PSARA, and Will Parry, president, has spoken at our chapter meetings. All OWLs are invited to attend the WA State Alliance annual meeting on May 12th at the IAM District Hall. Instead of a registration fee, this year there will be a suggested voluntary contributing membership fee of \$12 in order to encourage as many participants as possible. Speakers include Insurance Commissioner, Mike Kreidler, Nancy Amidei, Will Parry, Rick Bender and Dave Freiboth, from the state and county labor councils respectively, and, possibly, Governor Gregoire. Lunch is provided. Call Carol Hannum 206-325-6622 to sign up.

Wherefore Economic Stimulus Rebates?

1. Social Security income qualifies seniors for a federal rebate check ranging from \$300 to \$600 if your benefits were at least \$3,000 during 2007.
2. Seniors need to file federal tax form 1040 or 1040A by October 15, 2008 in order to receive a check. If you file by April 15, you'll receive your check in May. No rebate after 2008.
3. Tax preparers trained by AARP are available at senior centers for a limited time and a donation to the center. Call your local senior center or 1-888-687-2277 for AARP and

follow the link for financial products and assistance. Senior Information and Assistance at 206-448-3110 or 1-888-435-377 will also direct you to a tax aide site. You will probably need an appointment.



4. The IRS will help you prepare your return at their tax office in the Seattle Federal Building on 2nd Avenue. Bring a book in case you have to wait.
5. For low and moderate income tax payers, call 1-800-906-9887 for the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program (VITA).
6. Online filing is an option as well as Turbo Tax and Tax Cut. These are basic low-cost tax programs for the more adventurous. If you follow the interview, the process is almost painless. Both programs are available at office supply stores.



*The voice of midlife
& older women*

The Older Women's League

c/o Wallingford Senior Center
4649 Sunnyside Ave North
Seattle, WA 98103
(206) 781-6679

VISIT OWL ON THE INTERNET

Local:
www.scn.org/hoot

National:
www.owl-national.org

OWL Quarterly Newsletter—March 2008
Leadership Committee: Roberta Cole, Marilyn Oakes-Greenspan, Carol Hannum, Marielle Higler, Carolyn Lehman
Newsletter: Jennifer Haller

University House at Wallingford
4400 Stone Way North, Seattle

Saturday, April 5th

9:45 a.m.—Coffee and Greetings
10 to 11 a.m.—Business Meeting
11 a.m.—Marilyn Oakes-Greenspan, MSW, PhD, OWL Leadership Committee

Running Toward: The ways we talk about the end of life

Modern dying is medicalized and removed from our everyday experience. We tend to rely on the news of our dying by having our medical doctors confirm dying as a condition for which 'nothing can be done.' This talk looks at how physicians respond to their care of their dying patients by telling stories that reveal the embodied and personal nature of the dying experience.

Bio: Marilyn Oakes-Greenspan, MSW, is a social worker in home health and hospice and was awarded her PhD in Sociology in December, 2007. The end of life and care for the dying was the focus of her dissertation. She lives in Seattle and hopes to continue her research on end of life care.

Lunch after the Chapter meeting: Call Carol Hannum if you need info or a ride 206-325-6622.

YES! I WANT TO JOIN OWL!

Name _____
Address _____
City _____
State _____ Zip _____
E-mail _____

Annual dues of \$35 include \$10 for Seattle/King County and \$25 for National OWL. Members receive newsletters from the local chapter and National OWL. When you pay dues to the Seattle/King County chapter, you automatically become a member of the National OWL. No one is denied membership. For waiver, apply or send check to:

Older Women's League
Seattle/King County Chapter
720 22nd Avenue East,
Seattle, WA 98112