



OWN MATTERS

Newsletter of the Older Women's Network New South Wales Inc.

No. 25 December 2003

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A story to tell!

Like every community organisation, the Older Women's Network has an interesting story to tell.

Our story involves a passionate commitment to acknowledging and valuing older women, their interests, their concerns, their abilities, their life experience and community involvement.

We communicate elements of our story through the Theatre Group, the Aboriginal Support Circle, Wellness Centres and also through individuals involved in the many OWN groups we have in NSW. And then, of course, there's *OWN Matters*.

This year, readers have been full of praise for the diversity of views, the subject matter, the humour and the overall look of *OWN Matters*.

We also think it's a quality newsletter that deserves a wider readership, and we've come up with two ways this can be achieved.

Firstly, subscribers can circulate their old copies to friends, libraries and community centres. A number of recent subscriptions have been received from older women who first came across the newsletter in a library or centre, so we know it can work.

The second way to increase subscriptions is for all our current subscribers to buy a six-month gift subscription for a friend, neighbour or family member.

For \$10 you have a gift that is intriguing, challenging, makes you laugh, has relevant information that you might not find elsewhere, and is handy to read in bed! Where else could you find such a gift for so little?

Please fill out the enclosed Gift Subscription form and send it to us before 19 December. Your gift will arrive on 1 February 2004.

Dorothy Cora



Season's Greetings to our readers.

Your next *OWN Matters* will arrive on 2 February 2004.

OWN Matters

is the Newsletter of the Older Women's Network (OWN) NSW. It is published 11 times a year. Subscriptions are \$20.

OWN Matters is available on audio cassette at no extra cost.

Who Are We?

OWN NSW is the peak body for nineteen OWN groups in NSW.

OWN promotes the rights, dignity and wellbeing of older women through a range of activities and resources, and advocates on issues of concern to older women.

Contributions

Members of all OWN groups in NSW are encouraged to contribute to **OWN Matters** with items of interest to older women and letters to the Editor.

They can be sent by mail or email marked 'Attention – Editorial Team'. Please include contact details. Contributions must be received by the second Monday of each month.

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Point of View

Alternative Medicine

It is a matter of conjecture whether the alternative drugs market is pitched to the unhealthy or the healthy – or to both. We are led to believe that if we throw alternative tablets and potions down our throats, they will prevent all the ills and ailments that beset our old grans and gramps in years past. The wages of omission will supposedly result in all manner of chronic ill health!

These products are quite expensive and very many people use them, although dusty half-empty bottles abound on most bathroom shelves! Fancy advertising of alternative medicines must be a factor in the cost of the remedial effects promised, as they are usually offered in expensive glossy colour displays in magazines and on posters. Maybe the money spent on alternative pills and potions could be better used in creating a better nutritional balance in our diets from a careful selection of meat, fish, vegetables and fruit?

There is also the problem of hygienic preparation of alternative products in the laboratories – remember the action taken against the Pan company when substitutions were made and unhygienic and unethical practices were uncovered? Medical doctors are also concerned about the interaction of ingesting these substances as they may be in conflict with prescribed medicines.

Word of mouth is often the vehicle of recommendations for miraculous cures, which doesn't usually happen with conventional treatments. Recommendations can be carried from person to person by a version of what happened to my second-cousin's aunt, who got up from her sickbed and walked immediately after she took this or that concoction.

There may be a useful role for natural remedial products to help the healthy avoid ill-health in the future. In an ideal society, if such a thing is possible, conventional drugs might be taken for preventative reasons, as opposed to taking drugs after the damage has been done.

Present research into genes might hold out promise here as we would know what diseases we were 'programmed' to get and with the right drugs, we might be able to avoid them. Maybe this sounds a tad too miraculous?

Enid Harrison

There are probably many 'points of view' amongst our readers on alternative medicine. Why not let us know about your experiences and opinions and we'll have a special forum in our February issue? (Eds.)

OWN NSW Coordinators' Report

Another busy month has passed, and the first six months of the new Management Team has been successfully completed with the level of enthusiasm remaining high. It is very gratifying to have all members of the Team turn up for our monthly meetings.

Due to a restructuring of our funding body, the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care (DADHC), we now report to the Service Development and Planning in the Metropolitan-East region headed by Regional Manager, Sue Findlay. It seems that along with all projects funded under DADHC, we may be subject to an evaluation at some future date, but we will worry about that when it occurs. When you think of what we accomplish each year with the funding we receive, it's pretty impressive.

Thanks a million for your wonderful responses to the Transport Questionnaire. Obviously this issue is dear to the

hearts of many of our members. We will be collating your answers and publishing the results in February *OWN Matters*. We are planning to contact Council on the Ageing (COTA) and Combined Pensioners & Superannuants Association (CPSA), to see if they would like to join us in requesting a meeting with Michael Costa, the NSW Minister for Transport. We want him to know about the concerns of older people regarding the proposed changes to fares and other statewide transport issues.

Carol Barr, our TAFE student, has sent a questionnaire out to all members of OWN groups in NSW and would appreciate them being returned as soon as possible so she can collate the information before her placement ends in mid-December. Carol has been so impressed by OWN during her placement that she plans to become a member in her own right.

At Management Team meetings,

representatives from NSW projects provide regular updates on their activities. Need we say that the Theatre Group was a resounding success on the gruelling Women on Wheels (WOW) tour of NSW? You can read their report on P.4.

By the time you read this, the Aboriginal book launch of their superb publication, *Steppin' Out and Speakin' Up*, will be over. Anyone wishing to buy a copy can obtain one by contacting the office. The cost is \$17, which includes postage. The ASC will be making a separate report on the launch in February.

As this is the last *OWN Matters* for 2003, the Management Team would like to wish you all a safe and merry Festive Season and a bright and happy New Year. May peace prevail in 2004!

The office reopens on 19 January.

**Cate Turner, Anne Warren,
Lucy Porter and Peggy Hewett**

Hazel Hawke's courage

In a moving and inspiring *Australian Story*, Hazel Hawke spoke of her diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease. "Bugger," she said, "Bugger, Bugger." Her expletive would have been repeated by the many Australians who have admired her support for social justice throughout her life and particularly during her time as 'first lady'.

I wept at her plight and I wept at her courage in confronting it so publicly. It was the valiant action of a brave woman. Many people I've spoken to felt the same. Warm wishes to her family who are supporting her so lovingly.

Judith Mustard

Supporting research and care

The Hazel Hawke Alzheimer's Research and Care Fund has been established at the expressed wish of Hazel Hawke who has chosen to make public the fact that she is living with Alzheimer's disease.

Donations can be made at by mail to the Hazel Hawke Alzheimer's Research and Care Fund, Alzheimer's Australia, GPO Box 9894 in your capital city; by phone on 1300 306 293 or online at www.hazelhawke.net.au.

Theatre Group

We're back after a twelve day Women on Wheels tour of towns from Cootamundra to Cooma and Bateman's Bay, organised by the Department of Women. It was exciting, stimulating and satisfying in that we were very well received and our audiences appreciative and enthusiastic. This is important in that it gives us the energy to continue an exacting timetable. We visited fourteen towns in twelve days and twice we had three performances in the one day, and no one missed a beat!

In almost every town we hit, there were people, not necessarily involved in the tour, who said, "We've seen you on the Andrew Denton show." In Tumut, we had a *Woman in Business* dinner at which we performed. Before dinner three of us went to the bar. The male bartender said, "I've seen you on the Andrew Denton show." To Josie, "You were fantastic – hey, Jack, these women were on the Andrew Denton show. You made us think."

In one town, Josie Jackson and I (Judith) were poking around in the local shops. In one small gift shop the woman serving us said, "I've seen you on the Andrew Denton show. It was fantastic, you were inspirational. When someone I recognise from the media comes in here I respect their privacy, but with you I just had to say something. You were wonderful, it gives us hope."

Sometimes women from the audience came up after the Domestic Violence show and spoke of their own experiences and the hope they get from our show. In one small town with a population of 230, at least a quarter of them were in the audience. It also struck us that in all these towns they had watched the Andrew Denton show. Good on you ABC.

These are the comments, the recognition, that make what we do worthwhile and gives us the determination to keep going. After all, we are all older women with ages ranging from 64 to 80!

This report is only a tiny part of our experience on the WOW tour – we could write a book!

Brenda Hardwick and Judith Mustard

To Josie Jackson

I've just returned from six weeks' holiday, and was 'gobsmacked' to read your letter in the November issue of *OWN Matters*. What a terrible experience to have. I feel so embarrassed that it happened at our 10th birthday, when we were all having such a good time. I suppose it's silly to feel embarrassed when I haven't a clue who the culprit was, but nevertheless I do. If you had said something I would have asked the person to leave immediately. That sort of behaviour – whether it comes from male or female – is just not on.

What can I say? I'm so sorry that the day was sullied in that way. I hope the readers of *OWN Matters* do not presume that OWN Newcastle members behave in this way, because I can assure them they do not!

Pat Carlton

From Josie: Please be assured that the woman who touched me inappropriately was definitely NOT a members of Newcastle OWN.

We love you

Have staggered back to work this week to try and remember exactly what it is that I do here when I'm not working on WOW.

I'm really glad that you had a good time on the WOW - because you guys were just GREAT! It's always a pleasure working with you – and just plain fun spending lots of time with you all! And pleased with you all? You bet your life we are - we love you all! My own view here is that I wouldn't take on doing a WOW without you lot.

Now that we are back sorting out the WOW aftermath we are a bit lost without the 100-odd phone calls a day and the chaos and drama – it's actually quiet, which can't be right!

Danny Blackman

Project Coordinator

Women on Wheels 3

NSW Department for Women

Moved to Tears

I was one of the women in the audience who was in floods of tears during your performance at Moruya. I just wanted to say how fantastic your show is, and although I was crying for the whole time, I'm glad I didn't miss one minute.

Also a special thank you to the cast member who came over to me afterwards to see that I was OK. I'm sorry I couldn't talk to you at the time, but I did appreciate the gesture. It broke my heart to think what some of you have been through. You are all an inspiration and you have given me hope of regaining the strength and confidence I once had - two things which are so evident in all of you.

Anne Jackson

Unsung Heroine

When she was only nine years of age her mother died, leaving her to care for two younger siblings and an almost blind father, which put an end to her formal education.

In 1925, her husband migrated to Australia in search of a better life for his family. Would they ever see each other again? There were thousands of miles between them. The following year, with her two children under three years, she left her country of birth, her now totally blind father, and other members of her family and many friends. She was never to see those family members again and none of her friends migrated to Australia until years later.

There were no English classes, so she had to manage the best way she could, and manage she did. We heard some very funny stories about her efforts, but as her English improved, she gained confidence and became involved in local organisations, particularly the unemployed movement during the depression of the thirties. She also lent her home to raise money for the needy. She was a feminist (but would not have heard the word), fought against injustice, gave support and encouragement, and worked tirelessly for the underprivileged.

Her friends were many, the largest group being Australians. She never became Mother of the Year, and received no medals from the establishment. Was she unsung? No, never. A heroine? Yes. She was loved and respected by her husband and five children and adored by her fourteen grandchildren and others who knew her. She was born in a tiny, very beautiful village in the north of Italy, and died too young at 73. Her name was Elena Caterina Solari – my mother.

Ermes Solari

Corroboree 2003

The Wirringa Baiya (Black Women Speak) Aboriginal Women's Legal Service, with other agencies, recently held their second national event, *Corroboree 2003 – Reclaiming Back Our Rights* at La Perouse. A minute's silence was observed at the opening of *Corroboree* for those who have died from violence, and for their spirits. This was followed by ten tiny girls who delighted onlookers as they sang and danced short pieces – some to the songs from "Aunty Wendy's Mob". Older girls from Bass Hill performed, young women sang their own songs and older women sold their ceramics. Community and legal workers from local agencies and interstate explained their work and a number of agencies had information stalls.

The incidence of violence is many times greater in Aboriginal communities. I was awed, delighted and moved as the women spoke out so strongly against community violence perpetrated against their women, children and youth. Aboriginal women won't accept domestic violence any more. It is not part of their culture, and women have a right to live in safety with their children and youth.

The aim is to establish *Corroboree* as a national event (which will be held in different communities) and to develop recommendations which will be taken to state and federal governments. *Corroboree* objectives include educating and empowering Aboriginal women, providing information and legal advice, ensuring women have legal representation and challenging the acceptance of violence against women and children. Support and resources are vital.

A special moment at the end was joining hands around a group of older school girls who read the aims and objectives of *Reclaiming Back Our Rights*.

As older women, I think we must give all the support and encouragement that older Aboriginal women need to ensure that these brave women and their communities can live in peace.

Joy Ross

Gains Lost

Did you know that in the five years between 1996 and 2001 most of the gains that had been made for Indigenous Australians in the previous five years were lost? Official statistics from the Australian Bureau of Statistics show that in relative terms Indigenous Australians have been going backwards in employment, income, education and health under John Howard's policy of 'practical reconciliation'.

Core funding of services to Aboriginal people is the responsibility of key Commonwealth agencies, not ATSIC, which many people think is responsible for them. Health is

run by the Health Department. Education is run by the Education Department. Employment Services are run essentially by the Employment Department, other than the one thing that is working in Aboriginal communities which is the Community Development Employment Project.

One example of the decline in government support is the fact that the number of Indigenous teachers being trained has fallen by 33 per cent in the last 5 years. In the five years before that, the number of Indigenous teachers improved by 45 per cent.

Lucy Porter

Are we or aren't we?

Members respond . . .

Bound by the same ideals

Firstly, I am a feminist. In the early 70s, Germaine Greer wrote in *The Female Eunuch* about the need for change in women's personal, social, workplace, educational and political lives. I totally embraced her ideas with my own personal and political commitment to change.

In hindsight, I can see my feminism evolving from a very personal and painful life-shaping experience in childhood: my mother died from septicaemia caused by a backyard abortion, and was buried on my ninth birthday. Through several foster homes, two older progressive women entered my life: Topsy Small, the first female union organiser, and Flo Davis, the first female union secretary of the Hotel Club and Restaurant Union in NSW. These two women became my mentors and friends for their lifetimes, and through their actions and values, my life changed forever. I know that women of their ilk initiated the Older Women's Network in Sydney in the mid-eighties.

In the early nineties, after the death of my beloved partner, and following many other significant life changes, I joined the Older Women's Network. I was so pleased to become part of a progressive and stimulating women's organisation. I see OWN as an organisation which implements a feminist philosophy in its activities and principles, accepting diversity in its membership and working for the improvement in status for older women.

In the '70s and '80s we got improved equality in the workplace and in education, free health care,

and a greater perception that a more egalitarian society would benefit everyone. But in today's Australia, freedoms, services, equity and social justice have been reduced or disappeared from the political agendas of most political leaders. Women's lives, in many regards, have grossly diminished to the point that much of the equality and the services so hard won, have been lost.

The Older Women's Network is still relevant today. More than ever we need organisations that will speak out publicly for women's rights, and will be there as role models for other courageous woman in the future. So, yes, I personally believe that OWN and feminism are one and the same, bound by the same ideals for women.

Russ Aroney

Different things to different people

It seems to me over the past thirty years of being involved in activity among women that feminism is like happiness, that is, it's different things to different people.

I've known and worked on issues and causes with left-wing feminists, radical feminists, lesbian feminists and many more dedicated women who didn't fall into the category of any '*ist*', and it seems to me that in many cases power is the name of the game. Whoever is in the driving seat often determines the style of an organisation.

I personally consider myself to be a left-wing feminist, who is committed to the betterment of all women's needs, in particular lower income women, whether or not they fit into the *little boxes* created by the '*ists*' who are in power.

The victories mentioned in the November article were won by many people from many different walks of life. By taking up relevant issues which concern all older women, we have the opportunity to reach a wider group of older women and win a bigger membership.

I therefore think it would be divisive to label OWN as a feminist organisation. We welcome all women who are prepared to agree and work towards OWN's aim of promoting the rights, dignity and wellbeing of older women.

Peg Hewett

Depends on definition

In answer to your leading article in November *OWN Matters*, I think everything hinges on what is the definition of 'feminism'.

I seem to remember attending a meeting at OWN earlier this year where we discussed what feminism meant to each one of us. Although I've never regarded myself as a feminist, I said then that I care very deeply about the plight of my sisters in third world countries and places like India, so does that make me a feminist?

Perhaps being a feminist means using feminine values of caring and compassion, which OWN members display in abundance. So, I agree with you, we do care about and challenging injustice, taking each other's opinions seriously, valuing our female friendships and accepting our different life experiences, which are definitely forms of feminism in action.

Pat Zinn

Call us what they like

It is an age-old scam to label organisations and people. I wonder what the ancient Greeks would have labelled “Lysistrata” and her merry band of supporters? Any women’s movement that does not actually fit into a socially conformed box has to be labelled. Let them call us whatever they so desire, be it feisty, feminist or a great bunch of older women. We have more important matters to deal with than labels.

June Goss

Proud to be a feminist

I read Dorothy Cora’s front-page article last month and was delighted to see that a strong word, feminist, was being written. For years I have wondered why women back off from that word. Surely the real meaning of feminism is equality for all. We should be proud to call ourselves feminists.

Calling OWN a ‘feminist organisation’ might be a bit of a problem for some people who have negative reactions to the word, which is very disappointing, but how do we let women know what our values are if we don’t label ourselves?

Dorothy Cox

It’s what we do that counts

It’s a loaded word, feminism, a hangover from the flurry of panic it caused in the late sixties when women began to seriously challenge the patriarchal society, though not for the first time in history. During that time big changes were taking place. It was in an era when we first heard the words flower-power, peace, make love not war. Women’s Liberation came as women began to find a common framework for viewing themselves and the world as

women first, not crippled by the old ways of thinking in a society where men ruled the roost. Women began to express themselves in all sorts of ways.

Our country had been historically dominated by men. It was sexist and even misogynist and in this climate Women’s Lib. took off, attracting the brightest and most dedicated in the fight for women’s rights.

In Sydney a group of independent older women rebelled against the male culture of the Aged Pensioners and Superannuants’ Association and, declaring they would no longer tolerate the secondary status they occupied, broke away and formed their own organisation. It gathered force and eventually became the Older Women’s Network. Our needs, our

views and our wishes became paramount.

In our Network today, feminism means women uniting with other women who have interests in common, who laugh and have fun together, who are creative together, but who also work together to fight sex discrimination, domestic violence and any abuse of women be it physical or mental. We are advocates for government improvements in health, education and welfare, and assert our right to do so, loudly and long. Our feminism is not moralising, it is simply women actively working together to achieve what we all want, a fair go.

Yes, I would happily call us a feminist organisation.

Muriel Hortin

Are you a feminist?

Reprinted from The Guardian 3 July 2003

If a woman answers “no” to the question, “Are you a feminist?”, she should immediately be stripped of her voting rights, her right to institute divorce, her legal protection from domestic violence and marital rape – oh, and her pay should be cut to less than that of her male colleagues. Then she could lead the carefree, ball-breaking life she so desires, and not be forced to take advantage of all those unpleasant and exhausting social gains which those nasty butch feminists in the 20th century forced on her.

When I hear a woman say, “I’m not a feminist,” I avoid her. Partly, I despise her because she makes me think that she spends time entertaining furtive fantasies about lesbian sex, and repeats such Stepford Wife clichés merely to put us off the “scent”. And as a respectable middle-aged monogamist matron from Hove, such closeted, confused suck-ups fill me with horror. For they are neither friends of women or of men, but stunted misanthropists, fearful and envious of the true love and comradeship between the sexes that can only come from simple equality. Let these cowering wretches embrace the state of allegedly longed-for slavery that existed before feminism, and see if they really like it. It could even be a reality TV show. It’d be a real hoot!

Julie Burchill, UK columnist and author

...and now for something completely different

A reverent definition

“Feminism encourages women to leave their husbands, kill their children, practice witchcraft, destroy capitalism and become lesbians.”

Rev. Pat Robertson

Letters to the Editor

The following letter was circulated by members of *Women in Black* in Sydney.

Women with vision for a just peace

Bat Shalom, the Israeli feminist Women's Centre for Peace, strongly rejects the vicious attempts to de-legitimize Dr. Hanan Ashrawi. Dr. Ashrawi is one of the founders of *The Jerusalem Link* and the *Jerusalem Centre for Women*, our Palestinian partners, and is part of the executive board.

Dr. Ashrawi's strong, continuous and persistent voice for a just peace, based on the two-state solution, recognising Jerusalem as capital of both states, her commitment for promoting this peace through democratic and non-violent norms are unquestioned.

In spite of the continuous violence and the repressive measures of the occupation, Dr. Ashrawi has remained obligated to ongoing political dialogue with Israeli women, envisioning peace that will preserve the sanctity of human life, dignity and freedom for all the peoples in our region.

Dr. Ashrawi is committed to speak the truth as she witnesses it, truth as a large number of people in Palestine and Israel see it – namely, the endless domination over the Palestinian occupied territories, using the genuine fear of the Israeli people of terrorism, in order to intensify brutal and immoral measures that oppress the entire Palestinian people.

This truth must be acknowledged by the International community as well.

Molly Malekar
Director, Bat Shalom
www.batshalom.org

The more things change...

I was touched by an article in November *OWN Matters* written by Meg Coulson about *Women in Black*, and the conference she attended in Massa in Italy. What a wonderful thing, meeting women from all over the world who oppose war.

When she mentioned women from the Congo who had borrowed money to get to the Conference, it reminded me of a book I read some years ago called *The Tanglewood Bible* by Barbara Kingsolver. It's a remarkable book set in the Belgian Congo about a family headed by a missionary intent of converting 'the savages' to Christianity.

They were turbulent times, and they still are: the stupidity of the CIA and the interference of the USA causing tragedy. Then they went off, rubbing their hands with self-righteous glee, leaving the country to clear up the mess they had caused. Does that ring a bell? *The Tanglewood Bible* is a racy, exciting, interesting book, written by a superb storyteller.

Joan Johns

Another definition

I was interested in your definition of health in *OWN's* health charter printed in the last newsletter. I remember reading somewhere that, "Good health is merely the slowest possible rate at which one can die". An interesting thought.

Mary Taylor

MacDonaldisation of Culture?

Did you see the excellent documentary, *Hollywood*, on SBS about what has happened to the film industries of the countries that have signed free trade

agreements with the US? Part of the agreements seems to be that only US films shall be screened in cinemas or shown on TV.

Please, to save us from a fate worse than death, get those protests in to the Minister for Trade, Mark Vaile, Canberra ACT. I have taken on the phrase of a French woman (sorry, I did not note her name or title) who called this part of the Free Trade Agreements, "The MacDonaldisation of Culture".

June Goss.



Perfumes sometimes stink

There's one public health issue that never really gets talked about. It's about the effects that perfumes and chemicals can have on some people. I recently read that in a survey of 6,500 people, more than 67% reported negative reactions to perfumes and chemicals, and as I'm one of those people, I thought I'd tell you about a really positive experience I had recently.

Every time that I am near someone wearing perfume or using strong chemicals like floor cleaners, I get dizzy and disorientated and can feel disabled for days. A few weeks ago, I was involved in a workshop at *OWN* when I had a really bad reaction to a woman's perfume. I didn't know her very well and wondered if it would be all right to say something. Anyway, I did say something and was really delighted at her response. She said that of course she would never wear perfume at *OWN* again and appreciated me telling her the effect it had on me.

Ermes Solari

Ten Days in a Hellhole

How could my peace-loving GP, an older woman, have to spend ten days in solitary confinement in a disgusting concrete cell in a Swedish prison with a floor mat to sleep on and a drain hole in the corner? It happened last year and this is the unfinished story as you will see.

Dr. Liz Rickman is passionate about environmental degradation. She is a member of Greenpeace and goes away on a Greenpeace ship as doctor and deckhand for two months each year as a volunteer.

Last year Greenpeace protested about the frequent oil spills (1000-2000 a year in the Baltic) that usually go unpenalised. Their target was the

“Although the spill was deliberate, the local Swedish court decided only to prosecute the ship’s owners for an ‘accidental’ spill.”

Favervik, en route to a port south of Stockholm, which had dumped a large amount of oil in the sea in February 2001. Although the spill was deliberate, the local Swedish court decided only to prosecute the ship’s owners for an ‘accidental’ spill.

The Greenpeace action took place in their usual non-violent way in a rubber Zodiac, painting slogans and hanging banners around the *Favervik*. Dr. Rickman and a German woman, Kristina, got on board and chained themselves to the boat. Swedish police arrested them and put them in prison cells 1.5 m by 3m and held them in solitary confinement.

The cell was disgusting, with walls, floor and mat encrusted with recent faeces and blood. Her watch, her warm boat suit and her gumboots were confiscated and she was issued with cotton pants, a shirt and plastic scuffs. She was denied access to a lawyer and neither could she see or speak to Kristina. All contact with her family was refused and it was days before she was able to make contact with the Australian Consulate.

Being the strong woman that she is, Liz applied herself to staying clear-headed and stable. She exercised regularly and also practised yoga and meditation. The books, music and clothes sent to her by sympathisers did not get through to her, but a sympathetic guard supplied her with pencils and paper. By the time she was released, one whole wall of her cell was papered with drawings and a huge mural of Sydney Harbour.

After ten days the police superintendent came to her cell, released her and apologised for keeping her in a cell designed for overnight use only. She and Kristin emerged to be greeted with acclamation and flowers by sympathisers and well-wishers. Still with no shoes - a large Swede gave her his sandals.

Two weeks later, they were found guilty of aggravated trespass and given a two year suspended sentence. In mid-November, Liz and the Greenpeace lawyers returned to the Stockholm Court with an application to have the whole charge dropped.

Liz learnt, after her release, that during their imprisonment a large export company announced it would not use the *Favervik* or any “dirty ships” for transport! A good reward for a selfless and wonderful stand. Brava!

Muriel Hortin

Fair Go!

We all shop for clothes. We choose our clothes on the basis of fit, style, price, quality and service. Usually, however, we have no idea about where the clothes we buy are made and under what conditions.

In Australia it is estimated that there are over 300,000 home-based outworkers in the textile, clothing and footwear industries. Most of them are migrant women who work from home earning as little as \$2 - \$5 per hour. They receive no superannuation, no holiday pay and no worker’s compensation. Many develop irreversible injuries as a result of their working conditions.

The Australian Fair Wear Campaign, a coalition of churches, community organisations and unions, is working to assist homeworkers to achieve their rights to a living wage, to organise, and to work in a safe and healthy environment.

Another of their aims is to encourage Australian retailers and manufacturers to sign the Homeworker Code of Practice. This code is a way of checking if exploitation is happening and taking steps to fix it.

We can be directly involved in improving the conditions of outworkers in the Australian clothing industry by only buying garments displaying the “No Sweatshop” label, a sign of sweatshop-free production.

We can also ask if stores have signed the Homeworkers’ Code of Practice. Tell them that you will only purchase from stores that provide a guarantee that their goods are not made by exploited labour.

Contact the Fair Wear Campaign www.vic.uca.org.au/fairwear or phone 02 9331 4230.

At and Beyond The Rocks

OWN Sydney

We are happy to say that at the end of the year our membership has grown, in contrast to what we hear of many other organisations.

It was good to hear that Dr. Carmen Lawrence is now the President of the Australian Labor Party, the first woman to have held this position. We have sent our congratulations and we very much hope her presidency will make a positive difference to Australian politics.

What Every Old Girl Should Know – what a morning we had with Margaret Small from the Women's Legal Resource Centre (WLRC) – engaging, funny and with loads of important legal information on what we need to know about as we age. She spoke on issues such as superannuation, wills, directives, Power of Attorney, funerals...life is getting so complex! Her notes are available in the office, so call Joy on 9251 9333. Services at WLRC are for all women so contact 9749 7700 if you need advice about a legal matter.

Robin Murray's talk on the *Psychology of Happiness* was well attended – see report by Marcia Angelo. We have decided to hold a lengthier workshop during Senior's Week and have applied for funding.

At our Quarterly Members' meeting on 17 November, we were pleased to welcome Tanya Plibersek, Federal Member for Sydney. Tanya talked about a wide range of policy issues, for example, public housing, access to quality health care and education. She also spoke about concerns she has about refugees and the trafficking of Asian women. It was a really good morning's discussion.

Those of us who come along to our

Wellness on Wednesdays activities and get so much benefit from them are thankful that we have gained City of Sydney funding to continue with the program. Our last class will be on December 17, and we return on January 21. All newcomers are welcome.

It's time to celebrate the end of the year on Monday 15 December at 87 Lower Fort Street. Please bring festive food to share and we will supply drinks. By special request the Theatre Group will give a repeat performance of the oh-so-tragic opera *Antonio*. As well as a festive lunch, we are also going to hold a mini-fair. Some of the products made by the Creative Ageing group will be available for sale. We would appreciate any contributions of cakes, jams, jewellery and bric-a-brac, but no clothes, please. Drop goods off beforehand to 75 Windmill Street, if you like.

Once again our sincere thanks to volunteers and workers, and for the support of our membership. We wish you all a happy and safe Solstice and we look forward to seeing you at the events in the new year.

Joy Ross and Louise Anike

Please see Notice Page for details of OWN Sydney's forthcoming events.

Wollondilly

Our big disappointment for September was that our planned Jindabyne holiday had to be cancelled, because of lack of numbers. We needed twenty but, unfortunately, were not able to attract that many on the short notice we had to get the advertising out. I would like to apologise to the members of OWN who didn't receive details of the

trip earlier. The people handling the arrangements at the Jindabyne end were very hard to pin down and though we started planning the trip early in the year, we did not get the final details until mid-August, which was miles too late for a September holiday. At the present time we have no plans to try again for a holiday in that region, but are looking at Sport and Recreation camps at Berry and Hawksbury River for the future.

The singing group started last month, and is struggling to find a voice in more ways than one. Despite lots of enthusiasm – we have about twelve in the group – so far we have not been able to attract anyone who will take a leadership role. We have a very lovely member who has offered to play the keyboard and another who has provided sheet music and words of songs. However, without a person with specific skills to form some sort of order out of chaos, we are not sounding too good at the moment. However, we are not ready to give up just yet and are hoping to attract a leader in the near future.

The drummers have been asked to sing at the Buxton Park "Carols by Candlelight" on 29 November, although I don't think it is the right venue for a drumming group. The organisers were very persuasive. We will attend if possible and use it as a means of promoting OWN and the benefits of being a member of Wollondilly OWN.

At our next meeting we have plans to mount a campaign to get better public facilities in our local council area, discuss holiday options for the future and set the venue and time for our Christmas party.

Barbara Malcolm

At and Beyond The Rocks

Nowra

Shoalhaven Coordinator for Community Housing, Margaret Bicskos, talked to members of OWN Nowra about the current situation in public housing. According to Margaret, in the past decade the number of houses owned by State and Federal Governments in the Shoalhaven has increased from 50 in 1992 to 370 in 2003.

Referrals for Community Housing are accepted from the police, community agencies or private individuals. Most people seeking help will have fallen on hard times or have a physical or mental disability, and will probably be in receipt of a government pension. Accommodation, which is usually scattered throughout the community, thus rendering them inconspicuous, varies from single units to hostels, group homes or two or three bedroom houses.

There is a long waiting list for accommodation, with the criteria being for those in most urgent need. Previously, rent for public housing was 25% of a person's income, but it is now estimated at around two thirds. The boom on the housing market has put a strain on rented property and rents have increased up to 30%. These increases may severely affect older people who can no longer work and may lead to isolation as they can't afford to go out. There is an increasing need for two bedroom units and houses.

Domestic violence can be an issue that surfaces more readily where there is poverty and deprivation, and the Shoalhaven is no exception. The Police Department decided that something had to be done about weekend domestic violence, so, following consultations, a Social Worker with extensive experience was

employed to set up a pilot scheme under police protection. This is now in operation with trained personnel offering support every day of the week.

Emergency housing for victims of domestic violence is as unsatisfactory as ever, with basic accommodation being available on a very limited basis in the Shoalhaven and the Illawarra. Lobbying for an increase in services is a priority. Sometimes crisis accommodation is provided in a motel or guesthouse. Another initiative was to establish a mobile home park, but the scheme disintegrated when the developer decided the land could be used more lucratively for up-market housing.

We found Margaret's information very informative and hope that readers will also find it helpful.

Isabel MacCallum

Penrith

We have been successful in obtaining a grant of \$2,300 from the Positive Ageing Community Sponsorship Grants to sponsor four workshops to encourage us to face ageing positively. Not thinking it is the end of an era, but the beginning of a new phase of life. The workshops will be:

- *Physical* – importance of exercise-well-being as well as having a social time
- *Mental nutrition* – looking at positive thoughts on ageing
- *Nutrition* – diet, plus cooking demonstration and tasting
- *Social* – new skills with old skills revived, card-making course and story telling to local school children.

There's a new Seniors' Computer Club in Penrith and some members of Penrith OWN are attending the classes. Liz Page, as well as being a representative of Penrith OWN on the Senior Citizens' Management Committee, is one of the mentors of the Computer Club.

This year, members of our group have been invited to attend a number of Penrith Council meetings and forums. These have included the launch of the Disability Action Plan, involvement in drafting the Community Participation Policy, having a say at the Penrith Community Transport Forum and being involved in the draft 2003-2004 Management Plan.

We also have a representative on the Penrith Women's Health Centre Management Committee.

One of our members has been asked to promote our Wellness activities – we now have them on four days a week – at Nepean Hospital's Diabetic Unit.

Nine members of Penrith OWN attended the first day of the OWN NSW State Conference on 24 July, and Elizabeth Brooks and I attended the AGM on Friday 25 July as well. Congratulations, it was very well organised.

Planning for our Health Forum on Wednesday 26 November is well under way – we'll fill you in on the details in the next *OWN Matters*.

Thelma Anderson

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE – AVOs and the Court Experience

If you are in an abusive relationship, or another family member is violent towards you, an Apprehended Violence Order (AVO) can help protect you. It can be designed to suit your situation, whether you are still living with the violent person or not. The police can take out an AVO for you, or you can go to the Chamber Magistrate at any local court. You will then have to come to court for the AVO to be made final and effective. Also, an AVO is not a criminal charge. It will only result in a charge if the person ignores it and continues to abuse you.

Going to court can be a daunting and distressing experience for women of all ages and backgrounds. Violent men often try to pressure women into withdrawing the AVO. They may deny the violence, try to justify it or apologise and try to make you feel sorry for them. Your rights, dignity and safety are important – you are entitled to protection. Domestic Violence is a crime!

The Women's Domestic Violence Court Assistance Scheme (WDVCAS) operates at most local courts across NSW. At these courts, there is usually a women's room where you can have a cup of coffee whilst waiting to be called into the courtroom and where you can discuss any problems you have with WDVCAS support workers in privacy.

If the police made the AVO application, they will represent you in court. If you made the application to the Chamber Magistrate, the WDVCAS have a solicitor at court to represent you (for no cost). If you need an interpreter we will organise one for you.

The WDVCAS makes sure you are not on your own in court. The solicitor and the other court assistance workers can help you understand the court process and the meaning of the AVO. We can also give you information and make referrals to other support services in your area, such as housing and financial assistance.

To find out more, contact the DV Line on 1800 65 64 63; a 24 hour, 7 day service for support and referrals. For assistance with an Apprehended Domestic Violence Order to be heard at Downing Centre or Redfern Court phone Lyndal, at Redfern Legal Centre, on 9698 7277.

Lyndal Gowland

Creative Writers Food Forays

On 7 November, lucky seven of us returned to the Bowlers' Club, always a pleasure for the wonderful varied menu and the modest prices. It's hard to stay on a diet. The only drawback is that it is always crowded.

Despite the noise we had our usual wide ranging discussions, the favoured topics being books, movies and the angst caused by our computers. Well, some of them. Wasn't Shakespeare lucky that he only had to contend with quill and ink?

BON VIVANT

Here's Looking at You

For those of you who have been denied service because you don't have a photo identification, there is some good news. Thanks to the efforts of the *Photo Identification Access Alliance*, (of which OWN is an active member), the NSW Government has backed a plan to introduce new ID cards for people who don't have a driver's licence, Proof of Age card, or passport.

Finally, there will be a way for non-drivers do things like send parcels overseas or buy plane tickets. The card would be issued on a voluntary basis to those who desire a valid photo ID.

The new photo ID cards will feature the same security features as drivers' licences, including holograms, watermarks and magnetic strips. The same identification requirements needed to obtain a driver's licence will be required to obtain an ID card.

If legislation to create the card is passed, it will be available for those who want them from Road Transport Authority motor registries from the middle of next year for \$40. It will be interesting to see if the \$40 fee is a one-off or an annual fee. If it is an annual fee, the *Alliance* may want to address the question of affordability.

Phyllis Gorman

Help the hard-of-hearing!

Here's a few tips to remember when talking to someone with hearing difficulties. Firstly, it's important to be aware that they may have difficulty understanding speech, even with a hearing aid.

- Face the person directly and be at the same eye level whenever possible. Don't shout – speak normally.
- Keep your hands away from your face. Give them every chance to see all of your face.
- Reduce background noise – turn off the radio or TV.
- Be sure that light is not shining in their eyes.
- If you are not making yourself understood, find a different way of saying the same thing.

True Food

Most of us do not want to eat genetically engineered (GE) food. In fact 68% of Australians don't, according to a survey conducted for Greenpeace last year. But how do you know what is and what isn't? Well, the new edition of the outspoken, *The True Food Guide*, available from Greenpeace (1800 815 151), reveals which food companies may be using GE ingredients in their food production.

Over 500 of Australia's most common brands were listed this year in the new edition. Many brands are not willing to label their products as GE. Some companies are still attempting to sneak GE into the food chain unlabelled.

However, there has been a positive shift in the dairy industry with most dairy companies implementing non-GE feed for dairy cows. A number of major pork producers and an increasing number of processed food manufacturers are also actively avoiding GE animal feed. The poultry industry imports more than 300,000 tonnes of GE soy from the US each year which is used as chicken feed by companies like Inghams and other chicken producers.

Here are some comparisons:

What's Hot	What's Not
Tip Top	Tim Tam (Arnotts)
Kellogg's	Inghams
Sanitarium	Woolworths own Brand
Dairy Farmers	Goodman Fielder
Bega	KFC

Muriel Hortin

Bereaved suffer less after Euthanasia

Reprinted from the Voluntary Euthanasia Newsletter November 2003.

Bereaved relatives and friends of cancer patients who die by euthanasia find it easier to cope than counterparts of patients who die a natural death, according to a Dutch study published 26 July in *The British Medical Journal*.

The research is based on interviews with 189 bereaved people whose loved ones had died by euthanasia, and 316 relatives or friends of patients who had been allowed to die a natural death. Among the 'euthanasia' group, symptoms of traumatic grief and stress were respectively five times and two-and-a-half times less likely to occur than among the 'natural death' group.

The team, from Utrecht's University Medical Centre in the Netherlands, speculates that relatives and friends of patients who died by euthanasia suffered less grief because they had a chance to say goodbye. In addition, they were more prepared for the way and moment of the death, and could speak about the death openly. "Our results should not be interpreted as a plea for euthanasia, but as a plea for the same level of care and openness in all patients who are terminally ill," the authors emphasise.

Euthanasia or physician-assisted suicide became legal in the Netherlands in April 2002, after having been tolerated for a number of years. In 2002, there were 1,882 cases of euthanasia, compared with 2,054 in 2001 and 2,123 the previous year. The overwhelming majority of cases are cancer patients.

End of the Day

End of the day. Nice warm bath. Turn on taps. Examine little bottles of Essential Oils, the result of Christmas presents and random shopping. Ah! Wisdom of Women. I shake in a generous amount. I pick up two more. This has melaleuca in it. Love melaleucas. A few more. Rose geranium. That's enough. Delicious aromas tickle my nostrils. I'm relaxed already. About to step in. The phone rings.

Someone wants me to buy a new roof, and they'll generously put a large placard in my garden and give me 20% off. "I live in a home unit," I say calmly, clutching my towel. But does that deter him? No, he has to finish his spiel. "I live in a home unit," I shout angrily, and hang up, puffing with indignation. "Invasion of privacy," I yell, and thump a cushion.

I go back to my lovely bath, and am about to step in when there is a knock at the door. My neighbour, with a bowl of fruit. She is all apologies for disturbing me at such a time. She leans forward to embrace me. We tangle with the door and give up. "Thank you," I say, "Thank you, Xie." (Xie – thank you in Chinese.)

Now, where was I? Ah yes, back to the bathroom, drop my towel – and have a shower! What a nut! What a silly old woman, I say to myself as I let half of the Warragamba gurgle down the drain, wisdom, melaleuca, rose geranium and all.

Joan Johns

Are You Using Medicines Safely?

About 80,000 people are admitted to hospital each year as a result of using medicines incorrectly. Don't let this happen to you!

The Seniors Information Service has a booklet called *Be Wise with Medicines*. For a copy of the booklet phone 13 12 44.

Pain Medicine

Have you ever visited or tried to visit a pain medicine specialist? The Australian Medical Council (AMC) is deciding whether pain medicine should be a recognised medical specialty.

At present, multidisciplinary pain medicine clinics are usually located in major hospitals in large population centres. They are most commonly used by people with musculoskeletal pain, but could also help people with pain due to other chronic conditions such as hepatitis, cancer, HIV or other conditions.

If any OWN members have used, or would like access to a pain medicine clinic, the Consumer Health Forum (CHF) would welcome your feedback on the following questions to inform our input to the AMC:

- What are/were the advantages of being able to visit a pain medicine specialist?
- How well was your care managed? Was it care for you as a whole person or just focused on particular areas of pain?
- What did the role of your GP become when you were visiting a pain medicine specialist?
- What was the access like? Did you have to travel? Was it expensive? How long did you have to wait?
- Did you want to see a pain medicine specialist, but couldn't because of access problems?

Please contact Beth Micklethwaite with your response on 02 6273 5444 Ext. 205 or email: b.micklethwaite@chf.org.au

CHF will use the responses provided to prepare a submission to the AMC on pain medicine as a medical specialty.

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Cha-no-yu

On a recent visit to Japan, I was honoured to be invited to a *cha-no-yu* or tea ceremony. The Japanese regard *cha-no-yu* as a craft that has been part of their history and culture for 800 years. Unfortunately, what should have been an afternoon of calm serenity turned into a series of embarrassing Senior's Moments for me.

First, I arrived twenty minutes late, thus confirming that we *gaijin* (foreigners) are an uncouth lot. Japanese regard punctuality as an honourable virtue and, like their transport system, are never late. I was welcomed courteously and invited to sit ... but where? The other participants, some in beautiful kimonos, were in a closed circle on the floor, their backs straight as ramrods in an attitude of humility and quiet reserve. I felt distinctly agitated.

Trans...Marley Zelinka

It was difficult to sit, but I enjoyed the ceremony.

With some rearranging, a place was made for me and I attempted to copy the others, who were sitting with their legs tucked beneath them. Now I am quite strong when upright but my arthritic joints make it difficult for me to lower myself, first to kneel and then to sit on my heels. Soon every muscle was aching and I broke another rule by wriggling, trying to find a more comfy position. A small cushion was kindly passed to me.

The ceremony resumed. I was approached by my hostess and her senior student to admire the ancient kettle, bowl, bamboo whisk, ladle and formal flower arrangement. All this was in Japanese, of course, and was part

of the prescribed pattern of the ancient ritual made up of at least fifteen different steps. As I was offered each separate article, I was expected to respond to the accompanying greeting, in Japanese. Now I have never been able to master even the smallest part of another language and with a progressively worsening hearing loss, it has become even more difficult. I tried to mimic the responses each time I was given a tea cup, a pot of green tea whisked to a froth, the tiny 'cakes' and the chopsticks. I made an attempt to drink my tea, but was motioned to wait, not yet. More embarrassment... This was supposed to be a time of "withdrawal from the cares of the world" and here I was, anxious about what would happen next.

Now I'm back in the world of "Time for a cuppa?" Fill my favourite big, blue mug, zap it in the micro-wave, jiggle round the tea-bag for a couple of seconds, sit back in a comfy chair and relax. Yes, one needs to have had such experiences while travelling to really appreciate the pleasures of home.

Barbara Robertson

Have you had an adverse reaction to medicine?

There is now a phone-in service for members of the general public who suspect they have experienced an adverse medicine event.

The purpose of the reporting is to provide an opportunity for the appropriate authority, either the Adverse Drug Reactions Advisory Committee of the Australian Council for Safety and Quality in Health Care, to provide feedback to health professionals of common medication dangers and provide advice on reducing medication hazards.

The Consumer Number is 1300 134 237 and it will operate from Monday to Friday 9am - 6pm.

Grandparents

There are more grandparents in the world today than at any other time in history. In Australia the number of grandparents raising children is growing. This may occur because of family breakups, teenage pregnancy, sickness, death, and/or alcohol or drug abuse.

The role of grandparents is blurred – are they parents who have to take full responsibility or grandparents who can be indulgent and permissive?

Grandparents play a huge part in family life, but their contribution is often unrecognised. In general, they are doing more than 55% of formal and informal childcare, which is a huge saving for the government. They also play a big part in family life when both parents are working. They can be a positive influence in a rapidly changing and destructive world, and the different generations can learn so much from each other.

Grandparents may suffer in a number of ways, for instance, by

having their goals and dreams of freedom thwarted, possibly leading to mixed feelings of resentment and love; their social life may change and friends disappear. They might not find it easy to relate to young children and other young parents in a society which has changed since they raised their own children, and the fun side of being a grandparent is removed (the luxury of simply enjoying their grandchildren). This may lead to a great heaviness and anxiety. Grandparents may be required to attend court and ultimately give the children back.

Grandparents who have care of grandchildren should be eligible for government support such as that given to single and foster parents. They save the government millions of dollars through the childcare they perform. They need a voice in society, respect and financial assistance.

At the other end of the spectrum, an increasing number of

grandparents in Australia do not have visiting rights to see their grandchildren. This is often due to separation and divorce, particularly when the custodial parent is the in-law. Grandparents can apply to the Family Court for access, but this can be costly, frustrating and often insoluble. Laws have been changed for contact and need to be more accessible for grandparents. As this is a grieving experience, support groups have been formed, but need to be recognised. Legal proceedings can be very expensive – grandparents often find it difficult to fund their own retirement, or are dependent on pensions. They need financial assistance to gain access to their grandchildren.

Helene Gonski

Helene has written, *Grandparenting – a new challenge*, and helped the Council on the Ageing (COTA) to set up *Grandparenting NSW*.

The Psychology of Happiness

Robin Murray, a psychologist, was our guest speaker at a discussion on the *Psychology of Happiness*. Robin shared some quotations from ancient philosophy about what brings happiness. Amongst them, “Wisdom brings true happiness. We must study how to live fully and fairly” (Epicurus), and “...lack of self-absorption, giving freely of affection” (Bertram Russell).

Some positive emotions to help us live a happier life include gratitude (some of us preferred the word “appreciation”) for things in our past, and forgiveness. In suggesting that we let go of the idea that the past inevitably determines our future, Robin gave us the example of twins separated at birth – living with different families, the twins still grew up to have similar interests, even similar workplace position, so their environment wasn’t a huge influence.

Optimism, practice regularly, can become a worth-

while habit, while having hope and challenging negative beliefs can be an immunisation against depression. Suggestions for contentment include acceptance, pleasure, humour and living fully in the present, which is not only beneficial for us, but also for those communicating with us. We should try to treat regrets as life experience and challenge negative thoughts by writing them down in a journal. Trying to develop a more positive interpretation of people’s behaviour towards us is helpful.

Robin also remarked that grieving is not the same as depression, although it has to be acknowledged and accepted. She suggested that resentment is a poison we drink ourselves while waiting for the other person to die! How about that?

At the conclusion of the workshop, in talking and listening to each other, we felt a great sense of friendship and connection. Thank you, Robin.

Marcia Angelou

Topless on Delwood

Water and bare bodies go well together. I've thought so ever since those high old times in the big bath with my siblings, and the carefree summer days at the riverbank with Mum and her mates and their little covey of preschoolers. Except of course as a burgeoning teenager when my hair was too straight, shoulders too narrow, hips too big...oh, the shame of those awful words, "child bearing hips". But then along came maturity, and to hell with such nonsense. We may as well learn to love our bodies, imperfections or not. So, I went happily naked into billabongs, dams, rivers, people's pools, wherever possible.

One memorable day, my sister Margaret and I were visiting a country property with two farmer friends, all in our twenties...just after the war, it was. The blokes went off to examine some flyblown sheep, so we, understandably, chose to go down to the river to bathe. Sunbaking on towels, her hand fell upon Alf's camera. We took photos of each other, lying on our fronts (as a concession to modesty), bare bottoms showing. Didn't mention it to Alf. On collecting the films at the local photographers, Miss Parady said to Alf, "Some of these are rather over-exposed!" What a naughty thing to do in those stitched-up '40s.

Many years later, now a longtime resident of our beautiful Manly, I realised I had never gone naked on

a Manly beach. Reef Beach, yes, before its untimely demise as a nudist beach, but a Manly beach...no. And so my latest challenge was born. I just had to go topless on Delwood! Ah, Delwood! The little gem of a beach just down from my place. You could pass by and not notice, so it seemed to belong to just those sea-dipping, snorkel-wearing locals who know about it. And topless would be less brazen. And I had to admit a certain reluctance to full frontal at my advanced age! But, what to wear? No such thing as a

topless swimsuit. I tried the dive shops...got me some board shorts. Now comes a long wait for the right day. It came at last...a dull, cloudy one. Not your dazzling, sizzling day to attract the hordes...just me, my friend, her grandchildren and their father, the perfect excuse...both my cossies were wet. So, down to Delwood I went. "I'll take the kids in," I said. With one long, slow movement, I took off my T-shirt...with long, slow steps, I made my dignified walk to the water's edge, first snatching a look at their father's face. He was horrified, embarrassed, amazed! But the little kids didn't turn a hair, and in we went for a leisurely swim. Unforgettable, it was.

Now, I wonder what my next challenge will be?

Dorothy Cox

Facts aren't always right

It is time to elect a new world leader and only your vote counts. Here are the facts about the three leading candidates.

Candidate A – Associates with crooked politicians and consults with astrologists. He's had two mistresses, chain smokes and drinks eight to ten martinis a day.

Candidate B – He was kicked out of office twice, sleeps until noon, used opium in college and drinks a quart of whisky every evening.

Candidate C – He is a decorated war hero, a vegetarian, doesn't smoke, drinks an occasional beer and never cheated on his wife.

Which of these candidates would be your choice?

Check list:

Candidate A
Franklin D. Roosevelt.
Candidate B
Winston Churchill.
Candidate C
Adolph Hitler.

Third-age

*Sometimes I'm lost
as words spin off
free fall.*

*Folding in on myself
thoughts implode
into black holes.*

*Light years zoom –
the past flashes
nebulae.*

*With nature on rewind
I'm tempted
to press*

eject.

Brenda Saunders

Staying Active, Staying Safe

One in three people aged 65 and over falls at least once per year and over half these falls occur within the home. The good news is that strength and balance can be improved. If you would like to do some exercise at home, you might consider buying the *Staying Active, Staying Safe* kit. The kit consists of a booklet and audiotape containing nine sitting and six chair-assisted standing gentle exercises. The exercises are simple, but very effective if done regularly.

It kit costs \$16 and can be ordered by phoning the Healthy Lifestyle Unit, NSW Health, on 8877 5322.

A Tale from Yesterday

Reminiscing with my sister the other day, we recalled a story our mother had told us that happened during the depression years. We were living in a shack which my father had built in Happy Valley at La Perouse, next door to the NSW Golf Club.

During the depression years, the access road to the golf links was lined with the shacks of the unemployed. They were constructed out of whatever was handy – flattened kerosene tins, sugar bags and bits of wood. There was no electricity and only one tap to service approximately two hundred families. The people were poverty-stricken and were dressed in whatever they could scrounge. The only things in abundance were children.

The good ladies from the Golf Club, whose sensibilities were offended by these sights (especially the profusion of children) decided in their benevolent way to do something about it. They contacted the camp committee and explained they would like a meeting called, which only women could attend, to give them something of great importance.

The great day dawned. The women were all curious and excited. What could it be? Warm clothes for the children? Extra food? Jobs for the men? Two big, black limousines drew up and six elegant well-dressed women alighted carrying a big parcel. They congregated under the trees where the unemployed women had placed a motley arrangement of chairs.

The six women sat down, leaned forward and smiled sympathetically as their spokeswoman proceeded to explain the benefits of (pre-pill) contraception. Then, with a flourish, they unwrapped the parcel and removed one solitary douche can and an exercise book and pencil. They explained to the women that if the can was kept in a central position, all two hundred women could have access to it, especially if each one recorded in the book whose home the can was in at all times.

The women were dumbfounded. The golf ladies, experiencing a warm inner glow at their good deed, departed. The women laughed and started collecting stones on which to place the douche can as a permanent monument to the good ladies from the golf club.

Lucy Porter

Got a burning issue?

If there's a burning issue that concerns you as an older woman, raise it with the NSW Ministerial Advisory Committee on Ageing (MACA). MACA advises the Government, through the Minister for Ageing, the Hon. Carmel Tebbutt, on matters affecting the needs and interests of older people in NSW. The Committee, which has 14 members appointed as individuals on the basis of their expertise and experience, meets once a month at the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care.

The Committee gathers and exchanges information, consults and listens to older people, and fosters debate about issues affecting older people and options for change. It also monitors and evaluates policies, programs and changes that affect older people and provides recommendations to inform and assist Government policy.

To contact MACA, phone its Executive Assistant, Nancy Brunetti, on 8270 2154, email coa_info@dadhc.nsw.gov.au or write to Dr. Dawn Linklater, Chair, NSW Ministerial Advisory Committee on Ageing, Level 13, 83 Clarence Street Sydney NSW 2000. For more information, check out www.coa.nsw.gov.au.

'Trafficking' has a woman's face

Most of us assume that slavery is a thing of the past, but this practice is with us today according to the International Women's Development Agency (IWDA), and growing even uglier than it was in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

People trafficking is the forced transportation of people for slavery and slave-like work. It has grown dramatically in the last decade, thriving where there is inequality, poverty and oppression.

Trafficking *affects four million lives* each year – the majority of them women.

IWDA is an Australian non-government organisation working with women in developing countries to support their efforts to improve their life choices.

The death of trafficked woman, Puangthong Simaplee, in the Villawood Detention Centre in 2001, briefly focused Australia's attention on the plight of the victims of international sex trafficking. Puangthong Simaplee had been a slave for fifteen years, a slave, here in Australia! She was twenty-seven when she died.

It could be said that slavery was her addiction to heroin and that heroin took away her freedom.

But this young woman had never known what freedom was. She grew up in Thailand, in awful poverty. When she was just twelve years old, she was sold and forced to leave her family and was smuggled into Sydney, where she became a sex worker.

Donations to IWDA are always welcome. Please send them to PO Box 64, Flinders Lane, Melbourne 8009. More info at their website www.iwda.org.au.

Joy Ross

NOTICES

Bequests to the Older Women's Network

If you would like to include a bequest to OWN in your Will, the following options will guide you in its wording.

Please specify which Older Women's Network you wish to be the recipient of your gift:

Older Women's Network NSW

or the

*Older Women's Network,
Sydney.*

Option No. 1

I devise the sum of \$
to the Older Women Network
for the general purpose of the
Older Women's Network OR
the specific purpose of

.....
such purpose being consistent
with the aims and objectives of
the Older Women's Network, to
be administered by the Older
Women's Network.

Option No 2

(for a proportional bequest)

I give to the Older Women's
Network for its general
purpose or the specific
purpose of
...% of my estate (or ...% of
the rest of my estate).

**The gift you make to the
Older Women's Network
will be an enduring record
of your generosity.**

Incontinence Conference

12th National Conference on
Incontinence

Manly Pacific Hotel

3-6 December 2003

For more information phone
(07) 3855 3711) or visit
www.continence.org.au



Coralie's Class

People who have limited
movement and those who would
like to remain active and supple
are welcome to a new dimension of
gentle movements and exercises
for the body and mind
incorporating creative movements
and imagination, together with
new insights into dance
choreography, imagery and
expression.

12 – 1 every Thursday during
school term.

Holdsworth Street Community
Centre.

Cost is a gold coin donation.

To register your interest please
phone the Holdsworth Street
Community Centre Monday to
Friday on 9363 1513



Sydney Dreaming 2003

The Rainmaker Creating Story

December 6 and 7 at the Overflow
at Olympic Park. A free event for
the whole family

Arts, crafts and food stalls from
6.30 pm...Performance at 7.30.

More info 9714 7545

FREE TICKETS

Premier's Christmas Gala Concert

Sydney Entertainment Centre

**Tuesday 16 December 2003
10.30am**

**20 tickets only – available
from OWN to first callers –
maximum of two per caller**

9247 7046



Join me on a holiday?

I rent from a family member a villa
on the Costa del Sol in Spain,
between Malaga and Granada.
It's very cheap – \$550 per week
which works out at around \$50 a
night per person for 5 people.

I am planning a holiday in April or
May for one month and would like
four other members of OWN to
join me. Please reply to Jacinta
Martini, 23 Milne Street, Ryde
2112



Factual? Useful?

Are you interested in checking
websites for value to health
consumers? The Consumer Health
Forum is seeking volunteers to
review requests to link to external
sites to ensure that they are factual
and useful. A checklist will be
provided to our reviewers to assist
with this task. Please register your
interest with Emma Awizen on 02
6273 5444 x 204 or
e.awizen@chf.org.au Consumer
Health Network

NOTICES

A great gift idea!

(Oh dear, not *more* naked older women!)

The Older Women's Network in Western Australia has produced a *Water Babes* pocket calendar featuring various members of the group who have "dared to bare".

It is a beautiful production, with glowing photographs of older women in various stages of undress. Water features prominently in each photograph – after all, 2004 is *International Year of Fresh Water*.

The *Water Babes* calendar is a fundraiser for OWN WA.

It is a 12-month calendar, from July 2004 to June 2005, and costs \$5 from Erica Gamble, 20 Tenterden Way, Gosnells WA 6110. Phone 08 9398 5142.



Gleebooks and ANTaR proudly present ...

Kevin Keeffe, author of *Paddy's Road: Life Stories of Patrick Dodson* in conversation with PATRICK DODSON

Thursday 4 December, 7:00pm

Valhalla Cinema 1, 166 Glebe Point Road, Glebe

\$8/\$5 conc.

To book, please phone 9660 2333 or email books@gleebooks.com.au

Paddy's Road: Life Stories of Patrick Dodson is the biography of one of the most influential Aboriginal voices in Australia of the past three decades.

OWN Sydney

Film Discussion Group

Film lovers are most welcome to come and put their views at 1.30pm each second Monday of the month at 75 Windmill Street, Millers Point. The films we've chosen for discussion on 8 December are: *Le Divorce*, *In the World* and *Spellbound*.

Wellness on Wednesdays

The program of gentle exercise, drumming and Tai Chi will break on December 17, and return on January 21.

End of Year Party

Our finale to a busy year is a fun day at 10.30 on Monday, 15 December '87'. The day will include a madcap presentation by the Theatre Group, a mini-fair with cakes, jams, jewellery, bric-a-brac for sale (please, no clothing) and a raffle. Please bring a festive dish to share for lunch.

To start 2004

Discussion Group

Friday 9 January, 10.30am, at 87: guest speaker, Lorna Parker, *Well, Wise and Wonderful: the destiny of older women*. Bring a sandwich and stay for lunch.

Fish Lunch

Wednesday 14 January. Join us for a fish lunch in Watson's Bay. Catch the 11.10 or 11.40am ferry from Circular Quay or meet us at Doyles take-away.

Guest speaker and workshop

10 am, Friday 16 January, at '87' – guest speaker and workshop. Michelle Cavanah will give a talk, *The theatre of life and its complexities*.

Brought up in a theatrical family, her father an actor, Michelle has worked most of her life in theatre as an observer. She is currently writing a book. Michelle's talk will be followed by a Theatre Skills workshop with Peg Hewett and Lucy Porter, so come along to learn something and have a laugh.

Bring a sandwich for lunch.

Please Note

All activities of OWN groups advertised on the Notices page of OWN Matters are open to members of all OWN group in NSW. If you would like your activity advertised in OWN Matters, please ensure it is received at the office by the third week of each month.

DISCLAIMER

The opinions expressed in ***OWN Matters*** are those of the writer and not necessarily those of the Older Women's Network.

NEWSLETTER TEAM

Judith Mustard, Ermes Solari, Joan Johns, June West, Polly Gow, Renee Simons, Mary McCusker, Jacqueline Schofer, Dorothy Cora, Phyllis Gorman, Caro Davis and Wilhelmina Van Dorp.

**SURFACE
MAIL**

**POSTAGE
PAID
AUSTRALIA**