



OWN MATTERS

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

No. 36 December 2004

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What's wrong with 'older'?

Back in the mid-eighties, when OWN was only the germ of an idea in the minds of some feisty members of the Combined Pensioners' Association, a major concern was the image and status of older women in the community. Years on, despite working non-stop to abolish negative stereotypes so prevalent in our culture, we know that the name 'older women' still puts some women off joining the Older Women's Network. It's understandable why many women might reject the term 'older' when the terms 'old witch', 'nasty old woman' or 'silly old bag' are still bandied about and where one of the worst insults for a man is to be called an 'old woman'!

What we need to do is not reject it, but celebrate older, in much the same way that black people now celebrate black. (Could older be the new black?)

The Management Team of OWN NSW has decided that its number one goal in 2005 is to take up this challenge. In many ways the promotion of positive images of older women is already happening. For instance, OWN theatre and performance groups across the state are proving a formidable force as they counter ageist images and pinpoint to audiences discrimination in its many forms, while the Aboriginal Support Circle promotes a view of older women as competent and compassionate. Celebratory events such as *Women Centre Stage* and the publication of *OWN Matters* showcase the tremendously diverse skills and creativity of older women, and Wellness programs promote healthy older women as role models within their communities. And let's not forget our regional groups who work tirelessly to ensure that older women's issues are on community agendas, and through a variety of actions and initiatives, provide wonderful role models for younger women.

But we need to do more... We want members get out on the air-waves, to put yourselves forward at meetings, conferences and other public events, to promote OWN as the only organisation devoted to improving the image and status of older women. We need to convince the world to view older women not as has-beens nearing our use-by date, but as older women enriched by years of experience, knowledge and insight – with lots to offer! If you want to be involved in this enterprise, please contact me at the office or by email at pcarlton@tpg.com.au.

Pat Carlton

Point of View

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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Gloom and doom ahead

Are you having trouble with your household budget? Cannot stretch your pension to include all those day-to-day expenses and repairs? Don't have any left over for a treat for yourself? Then spare a thought for those involved with the US government's budget, because it is sure going to affect not only our Australian economy and our individual lives, but the rest of the world.

You could well be a clever little budgeter with your own money, but how would you juggle a *debt* of \$US6.9 trillion, and growing by millions every day? This is the figure of the US Government's debt quoted in *London Info* No. 3 (159), *What will happen with America after the crash of the dollar? – A scenario of the American apocalypse*. Another fascinating piece of information in the article is that privatisation is so rife in the US that even the Federal Reserve Bank is a private company.

Now that the Howard Government has control of both the House of Representatives and the Senate (from July next year), we will see our country tied even closer to the US economic policies. It is really scary to see the results of the manipulation of the 40.6% of the Australian population. Do they really think we have reached Nirvana and a beautiful, untroubled life lies ahead? Sorry, folks, you are in for one awful shock if you believe the economic fairytales that are being peddled.

Muriel Hortin, in her letter *Letting Off Steam* (November *OWN Matters*), criticised our government's previous social and economic policies. Sadly, it is not likely they will change their spots or fulfil their promises. You already know this from what the Treasurer has flagged.

There is a minority of realists out there who are not bedazzled by the emperor's new clothes. As Baroness Thatcher was wont to say: "Tighten your belts!" I have a sinking feeling there is gloom, doom and some hard fought battles looming on the horizon.

June Goss

.....

• **Welcome...**

• A warm welcome to the 'wordy' women who responded to my Positions

• Vacant invitation in last month's *OWN Matters*. Three new writers,

• editors and proofreaders are now industriously working side-by-side

• with other members of the Team to bring you a monthly newsletter we

• hope you find entertaining, informative and stimulating.

• Last Christmas, in order to expand our readership, we asked subscribers

• to take out a six-month gift subscription, which many of you did. This

• year we are asking you to do it again. Please see the Gift Subscription

• form inside this edition.

.....

Dorothy Cora

.....

OWN NSW Coordinators' Report

This month we were delighted to welcome Hastings Older Women's Network, our 21st group, into the Network. Although they have been meeting for some months, they only recently decided to accept our *Aims and Guiding Principles* which means they can now call themselves an Older Women's Network group. The leading light in the development of Hastings OWN was Anne Lang, previously an active member of Sutherland OWN, who moved into the area and took OWN's ethos and ideals with her.

Pat Carlton, a member of the Management Team and a long-time community activist, has produced a clear process for those of us in the office dealing with requests for members to represent OWN at various seminars and conferences. Coordinators now have an Advocacy Group membership list and a list of members who sit on various State-wide bodies, so responding to these requests will be easier in the future.

Pat would like to expand this list to include members who represent OWN in their local community. Please phone the office on 9247 7046, or mail your details to Pat Carlton, PO Box 847, Hamilton, 2303.

It was so good to catch up again with other State representatives at the NSW quarterly meeting this month. It's always inspiring to hear of their progress, and older women's spirited contributions within their local communities. The next quarterly meeting is on Tuesday, 8 February, so please mark your diaries, as summer holidays can sometimes make us lose track of time.

Peggy Hewett and Lucy Porter represented OWN NSW at a number of regional functions this month, Penrith OWN's tenth birthday celebrations, Blacktown OWN's November event showcasing the Southern Highlands WENCHES, and the fabulous weekend at Myuna Bay, so successfully organised by Pat Carlton (who is on the NSW Management Team) and members of OWN Newcastle. You can read about this wonderful weekend on page 6.

Cate Turner represented OWN at a meeting of the Photo ID Alliance and reported that the RTA and the government are dragging their feet on what the Alliance believes is a simple and straightforward issue – giving older people an officially authorised form of identification that can easily be carried around. Please see the Correction (below) to the information we printed last month.

The Auditor-General has recently published a report on how well the Home Care Service (HCS) assists people to stay in their homes and delivers value for money. If you would like to read the report and its recommendations in detail, please contact the OWN office 9247 7046 and ask for a copy of the Auditor-General's Report: Performance Audit, Home Care Service, Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care.

***Barbara Burnham, Peg Hewett,
Barbara Malcolm and Lucy Porter***

Correction: In November *OWN Matters*, we reported that a Birth Card from Births, Deaths and Marriages is valid for one year. This is incorrect: it is valid for six years. (Ed.)

A Cruel Sentence

Imagine having to go to gaol for a year at age 76! This happened to Newcastle pensioner Elaine Daisley in October. Her crime? Drink driving! So she is now sitting in prison, initially so embarrassed she didn't tell her family what had happened. She ended up in court with no legal aid arranged. Her niece says she has high blood pressure and is just sitting in her cell, staring at the walls. She wants to stop drinking and knows that she needs treatment.

What on earth is the sense in this inhumane sentence? The most sensible punishment would have been to take away Elaine's licence and remove the risk of her being a 'menace on the roads'. Her incarceration for the next year is going to cost the taxpayers of NSW \$70,000. A bed in a rehabilitation unit would have been far less costly, and more likely to have cured her addiction than prison. Elaine Daisley is the oldest person to be jailed for drink driving, but the Magistrate said that because of the guidelines, he had no choice but to send her to prison.

The guidelines for these drink-driving offences were only introduced in 2004 and, similar to mandatory sentencing, prescribe sentences for offences that fall within certain categories.

Sometimes the law is truly an ass.

Kat Armstrong

Ageing and Vulnerability

In our conservative society, reactionary values generally prevail. OWN members struggle against ageism and sexism and the invisibility of older women in many ways, and judging by the appreciation shown to our Theatre Group, women are listening and taking notice. (The Theatre Group recently performed to an appreciative audience of more than 100 at an event organised by Woy Woy OWN.)

Due to age and ill health, my focus is now a lot more on the frail aged. Our perceived vulnerability, both physical and mental, can tend to attract opportunistic family members and others looking for easy spoils. (I say 'perceived' because these people can misjudge us – we are not as mentally vulnerable as they would like to believe.) From my experience, and from observation, predatory individuals hone in the nearer one appears to be dying. Don't even suggest to me that this does not

happen. If you examine family history or ask around, you will hear examples of how older people and their supportive offspring have needed to combat the greedy, the con artist, the light-fingered and even criminals, who make their move when the way seems open.

It's well known that greedy relatives can easily convince themselves that their elderly parent would be better off in a nursing home, and in the least expensive one they can locate, rather than continue living in a coveted house in a desirable location. If she has antique furniture, a diamond engagement ring, or other valuables, does she really need these any more, especially when a granddaughter can have the ring redesigned?

They may choose to try hints about wills, or suggest that services rendered should be rewarded, even when their actions seem just ordinary consideration

for the disabled. There are other tactics, which have been tried on me (not by family), such as hinting that I have Alzheimer's or Parkinson's (the first was easy to deal with). When we are weak and vulnerable, we could easily be persuaded to take to our beds instead of continuing to get out and about as much as possible. Most of us OWN members are tough cookies, easily able to deal with the vicissitudes of life, but even we could be betrayed by love for our offspring or relatives.

A word of warning though. Please don't become suspicious of relatives, friends and neighbours, as the predatory behaviour I've described is abhorrent to most people. Instead, be sure that your effects are distributed as you wish, and that you departed this life in the dignity and comfort that you undoubtedly deserve. Legal measures are in force to deal with fraud and theft, but I feel that ongoing attention should be given to protect us from other forms of financial abuse as we age.

Enid Harrison

🎁 Gifts that count! 🎁

We live in a country where we often have too much, buy useless items as gifts and have far more 'stuff' than we need.

Last year my friends 'gave' me a pump, solar toilet, and income-generating hens. Well, the 'gifts' actually went to people in developing countries, but I was delighted with the idea and it certainly brought out different responses around the Christmas tree where I sat last year!

Perhaps this year you could buy, or choose to receive, a gift for someone from one of the world's poorest communities. How do you do it? Start by contacting TEAR Australia, freecall 1800 244 986 for a catalogue or accessing www.tear.org.au/giftcatalogue.

This is a gift catalogue with a difference. How about a goat for a poor family in Bangladesh, a mosquito net for a family in Uganda, a year's school supplies for a child in the Sudan, a toilet for a village in Burma, or a clean water supply for a village in India?

For every item purchased, TEAR Australia will send you a gift card to pass on to friends or family. The card has a photo and description of the gift, and a space to fill in the name of the person who will be 'receiving' the gift.

What will it cost? Prices range from \$5 to \$1300. And you will receive a tax-deduction receipt!

Ceri Ritchie

New Medicare services

Under the Medicare Enhanced Primary Care Program your doctor can refer you to a number of allied health services. My GP referred me to a physiotherapist and filled out a few forms. I made an appointment, waved the forms under the secretary's nose, she filled out a few more forms, the physio put a few flourishes at the bottom, presumably his signature, and gave me twenty minutes' professional treatment for sixty dollars. I trotted along to Medicare and got forty-five dollars back.

I can have five visits under the scheme. Other health professionals you can be referred to are - Aboriginal Health Worker, Audiologist, Chiropractor, Chiropodist, Dietitian, Mental Health Worker, Occupational Therapist, Osteopath, Physiotherapist, Podiatrist, Psychologist and Speech Therapist.

Joan Johns

Message from Moree

Some of you might have seen an inspiring film on TV some months ago about Dick Estens, a cotton farmer at Moree, and a dynamic Aboriginal woman, Cathy Duncan, who set up a scheme to train Aboriginal workers and employ them in the cotton industry. At the AGM of the Reconciliation Council of NSW, Cathy and her husband Percy treated us to an enthralling presentation on the success of their scheme, which has now reached Tamworth and Dubbo and is spreading to other towns in these areas.

Their not-for-profit company, Moree Aboriginal Employment Strategy (MAES), has now successfully placed over 90 employees in Dubbo and 69 in Tamworth, full-time and part-time. Many of them are young trainees who had been instructed in personal presentation by Cathy before their interviews. The jobs include agriculture, security, industry, the motor industry and building and construction. They also have retail truck and delivery driving, bus driving, and work in major banks.

Cathy stressed that their strategy works on relationships, not only jobs, and that their aim is to generate respect, and build self-esteem, hope and pride. Mentors from the community, who do not have training, work from the heart with the trainees. Because there aren't enough jobs to go round in country areas, MAES, which now employs 22 people, is looking at training people to run their own businesses, and is planning a woodwork/gallery/coffee shop. They have won the *Best New Business* award in Tamworth and NSW, and were national finalists.

Cathy has been planning five sites in Sydney and has earmarked an office in Broadway. She has approached David Jones, Myer and other large corporations, and says that business corporations definitely do want to help! If anyone has connections to large corporations, Cathy would love to hear from you. I came out so excited, I was on a 'high' all day.

Pat Zinn



Visit to Manly Beach

My African visitor gazed in awe
Yet with a puzzled air,
"How can there be a drought,"
she said,
"Wish all that water there?"

Poem & Illustration
by Halcyon Evans

Dedication

A member of Nowra OWN, Winifred Hilliard MBE OAM, is the subject of a new book, *Ernabella Batiks*, recently published by the National Museum of Australia. The author, David Kraus, is the curator in the Museum's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reparation program.

In 1954, Winifred arrived at Ernabella, a remote settlement in the far north of South Australia run by the Presbyterian Church. She was appointed 'craftwork supervisor' to the Pitantjara women living there and continued in this role for the next 32 years. Winifred had a profound influence on the lives of the women and the development of their creative skills and artistic skills. She realised how important it was to maintain their cultural identity and for them to provide for economic self-sufficiency in their communities.

Batik proved to be an excellent art form for the Pitantjara women and by the 1970s colourful clothing, hangings and accessories in original designs were being exhibited and sold worldwide. Winifred donated many of these unique batiks to the Hilliard Collection, in the National Museum of Australia, when it opened in Canberra in 2000.

Ernabella Batiks is illustrated with photographs of a hundred stunning examples from the Collection as well as telling the wonderful story of one woman's devotion and love. Now in her eighties, Winifred continues to research and write on her life and work. Congratulations from all of us in Nowra OWN – we are very proud of you.

Barbara Robertson

White Privilege

I think white people are carefully taught not to recognise white privilege, as males are taught not to recognise male privilege. Recently I have come to see white privilege as an invisible package of unearned assets that I can count on cashing in each day, but about which I was 'meant' to remain oblivious. White privilege is like an invisible, weightless backpack of special provisions, maps, passports, code-books, visas, clothes, tools, and blank cheques. Describing white privilege makes me newly accountable. I must now ask: "Having described it, what will I do to lessen or end it?"

Peggy McIntosh

A Wickedly Wonderful Weekend

Newcastle OWN is delighted to announce that its weekend gathering at Myuna Bay Sport and Recreation Centre, on the shores of lovely Lake Macquarie, was an enormous success. Thirty one women from six OWN groups came together to relax, talk, laugh, dance, exercise, eat and drink – and be very, very merry! (Irritants such as mosquitoes, missing signs, and late buses without PA systems were totally insignificant in the overall positive atmosphere.)

The weekend included early morning walks, discussions about the composition and logo of OWN NSW, a bus trip around Lake Macquarie and Newcastle, and an evening of riotous entertainment on Saturday which included a belly dancer, and a 'wicked woman' competition. First prize in the 'wicked woman' dress-ups went to Jenny Baird for being the *Most Outrageous* and to Shirley Murphy for the *Silliest*. The *Cleverest* went to Pat Carlton, the *Most Authentic* to Maisie Tucker and *Sexiest* was awarded to Barbara Murtagh. A

fine collection of colourful scarves, feather boas, jewellery, beads etc., encouraged everyone to enter into the spirit of the dancing which followed the performance of the belly dancer. It particularly gladdened our hearts to see the blossoming of the Greek women from Ashfield OWN, and the pleasure with which they entered into the spirit of the night.

On Sunday we enjoyed a talk on healthy ageing, followed by a gentle exercise class. Throughout the weekend, we had a lot of free time too, which was greatly appreciated. Particular thanks to the wonderful Anne Warren, who kindly provided massages to all who asked – and there were lots!

The feedback on evaluation forms tells a very special story. For example, "The friendly atmosphere, the wonderful company, the beautiful setting. The choice of venue was perfect to set the mood for a very enjoyable and relaxing weekend." "The way we bonded from the first to the last

day. The mixture of old and new members of OWN – it was particularly encouraging to have Greek OWN members. Loved the company – I live alone." "The company of older women." "I hope that the creativity and spirit can be shared throughout OWN and thus into the community."

Suggestions for future OWN weekends away included holding these weekends every quarter, making it an annual event with other groups being invited to organise and host it, and planning ahead to raise funds for those who find the costs onerous and cannot participate. (The full evaluation, including suggestions for improvements, is available from OWN NSW for any group planning a similar event.)

I must commend the Myuna Bay Centre as a great place for an event such as this and hope that another OWN group will soon start planning to bring us all together again.

Pat Carlton

A Taste of Christmas

It's funny how the passage of time seems to speed up as you grow older. Remember how, when you were a kid, it always seemed like ten years between one Christmas and the next?

For me, the first hint that Christmas might indeed come again within my lifetime used to happen about September. I'd swing my bike through the back gate after a day's struggle with long division and the whereabouts of Vladivostok and there, fluttering bravely on the clothes line, would be the pudding cloth, its fabric a rich batik of honourable stains from Christmas puddings past.

And there on the corner of the tankstand, a tea-towel-covered tray bore a beguiling burden of fat raisins, golden sultanas and beady black currants drying out in the afternoon sun. (In hindsight, I guess my Mum noticed a certain stickiness on the lips that kissed her hello, and chose to hold her peace.)

Next day I'd race home from school knowing that the mixing bowl would need a good licking – one of life's riches must surely be the spicy, fruity, wickedly alcoholic flavour of your Mum's Christmas Pudding mixture.



Having supervised the addition of the all-important silver threepences, it was time for me to perform the Tasting Ceremony. My finger would expertly sweep the smooth walls of the bowl and reverently lay the creamy batter across my tongue. Life was good.

Peace at last... for while the pudding contentedly plop-popped in its boiler on the big old fuel stove, I could assure myself that, yes indeed, Christmas was definitely going to happen again.

Helen Young

I see...

*I lost my glasses
at the Concert Hall*

*I rummage my handbag
twice
the case is there
but empty
my pockets likewise*

*Relax and think
where did I wear them last?*

*Had them on the bus
had them reading program notes
had them sipping wine at the bar
check at the bar if they're found*

Interval

*I meet a friend
"Long time no see," she says
"Oh yes," I say, "Afraid I can't stay,
lost my glasses at the bar."*

*My friend gives me a puzzled glance
"If, as you say, your glasses are lost
then what on earth is that
on your
nose?"*

Trudy Davis

Let the blood flow...

I am expecting someone to call to take a blood test. She rings the day before and asks if it is OK to call at 7.45am, as she will be in my area. I protest, "Can it be later?" We finally agree on 8.30am.

Next morning, I am ready for her to call at 8.30. Nine o'clock comes. Nine thirty. Where is she? I find the phone number of the local branch of pathologists. They contact her and I'm told she is in the area, and she is on the way to me. Ten o'clock. I ring again. They call her on her mobile phone again. She is on the way...

She turns up at 10.30. I ask what happened. She proceeds to give me several different, implausible excuses, all at the top of her voice.

"Why are you shouting?" I ask.

"I WANT TO BE SURE YOU HEAR ME," she shrieks.

I persuade her not to shout. But she still does. I tell her I have phoned her office twice to ask where she was.

"HOW DID YOU KNOW THE NUMBER?"

"I can read," I tell her, "I learned when I was four years old." Nevertheless, she insists on writing down the number, exactly the same as the one I had rung.

"I WILL WRITE YOUR NUMBER DOWN, TOO," she screams.

I remark that I do know my own number. She understands! She doesn't write it down. She takes the blood, complaining all the time, *sotto voce*, that she has had to drive from Randwick because I wouldn't let her come at 7.45.

"Why didn't you ring me when you knew you were going to be late?" I ask.

"I THOUGHT YOU MAY BE SLEEPING, I DIDN'T WANT TO WAKE YOU..."

I tell her that the answering machine would have been on, she could have left a message, and that anyway I'm always up at 7.45, reading the paper in bed and having a cup of tea.

"SO WHY DIDN'T YOU LET ME COME AT 7.45...?"

"Because I didn't want you to," I reply gently.

"OH, AT LEAST YOU ARE HONEST..." she says, not quite so loudly.

I tell her I never want her to come again if I do need another blood test, because she is so rude.

"AND YOU ARE TOO IMPATIENT..." That was her parting shot.

Renee Simons

PS She had to come again the following week, but not a word passed between us... We didn't even look at each other.

Letters to the Editor

Acceptance, not judgement!

I was shocked and dismayed to see, in a letter in November *OWN Matters*, that someone was described as a 'nice, fat, Indian man'. Not only was the tone of the letter condescending, I felt it was against the whole spirit and ethos of OWN.

Since we are about supporting women in an environment in which we hope not to be judged by our age, size, appearance, race, and our 'niceness', I think it behoves us not to breach the spirit of the NSW Anti-Discrimination legislation, particularly in anything we publish in the name of OWN.

The Theatre Group works amazingly hard and well to counter all the stereotypes about 'old ladies'. It seems very sad that we could be accused of being sexist and racist in the Newsletter.

I certainly would not quietly accept being called a 'nice, fat, Jew', even if I did not know how to pronounce 'Bach'.

Monika Law

(A 1938 Jewish refugee from Vienna)

Breast screening

From my own personal experience, regular breast screening is essential for women. At the age of twenty-eight, I had to have both ovaries removed at St George Hospital in 1944. I was put on hormone therapy, and told to examine my breasts regularly for any sign of lumps.

Seven years later I discovered a lump in my left breast, which was removed shortly after. Fortunately, the biopsy proved it was non-malignant.

Ever since, I have had a mammogram every two years, and

the results are still showing no sign of trouble. I am now 88 years of age.

My niece, who married an American over thirty years ago and raised her family over there, comes back to Australia every year for a family holiday. In Brisbane, she saw the mobile screening van in her mother's suburb and suggested they go and have a check-up. Her mother agreed, and the result? Mother is fine, but niece had cancer in her left breast, and some had spread to the lymphatic glands. My niece was operated on in Brisbane, and after six weeks of radiography returned home to Oregon on 30 October. Luckily, we spent some days with her in Brisbane before she left.

Maureen Windsor

(Breast screening is available free at the Rose Clinic, 3rd floor, David Jones' Elizabeth Street store, phone132050)

Urban myths

Ever wondered if something is true or a tall tale? Check it out at one of the urban myth sites – my favourite is www.snopes.com.

Dorothy Cora

Easy shopping

Can't go shopping, don't want to go shopping? If you have access to the internet, check out Ezibuy at www.ezibuy.com.au.

You'll need to register, and eventually (they take their time...) they will send you a catalogue. Or you can order on the Net.

It's a good service, and you can return the stuff for whatever reason and they make it easy for you to do.

A satisfied customer

Ageist Sexism – nothing new

The low status of older women hasn't improved in the last 100 years, at least in the minds of some men.

Louisa Lawson, who edited *The Dawn*, the first Australian feminist journal 1888-1905, wrote:

There is no contemptuous epithet in more common use among men than this: 'An old woman! A regular old woman!' It has come down from an earlier generation. It is indeed a phrase that summarises the past history of womankind. It is not alone because the poor creature is 'old', but also because she is a 'woman', that her name serves as a derisive epithet, along with other types of contumely, like 'goose' and 'donkey'.

More recently, the Dean of Sydney, Phillip Jensen, berated the Anglican evangelical group, Reform, as 'a bunch of old women', and Frank, a 2UE listener to Mike Carlton, described John Howard as 'a mealy-mouthed old woman' (*Sydney Morning Herald* 16-17 October).

What an outcry there would be if, instead of 'old women', these men made those remarks about people of a different race or culture in the same context!

Louise Anike

The wrong way

Australia's vote would decide
About the man who had lied.
Much money spent,
Both houses went,
When I saw the result my heart died.

I mourn my country's plight.
Conservatives won the fight.
I don't think it's need,
But fear and greed
That has swung the vote to the right.

Lorraine Inglis

Letters to the Editor

Good company

Last Monday *OWN Matters* came at the same time as my *Sydney Morning Herald*. After a depressing week I was heartened to read the letters of so many members who were also distressed by the results of the two elections, which doomed us to 'more of the same'.

In his column in *SMH*, Robert Manne likewise lamented those incomprehensible results. But he has urged those who think about the things we hear and see on non-commercial radio and television, and read in our few independent newspapers and magazines, to continue to work quietly for the issues we care about – peace, refugees both from war and natural disaster, endangered species of every kind – all the things forgotten by governments whose aims seem unclear to most of us. He designates us 'left-liberal intelligentsia'. I can think of no better company.

Helen Monaghan

Magic memories

When, one night recently, there was a loud explosion outside our house – obviously illegal fireworks – memories came flooding back of long-past Bonfire Nights, held on 25 May each year to celebrate the Queen's (Victoria's?) Birthday.

One year at Grandma's farm, my father's younger brothers built a huge bonfire in the middle of the lucerne paddock, then made it into town with our precious pocket money to buy penny crackers. In the cold, clear night, we three small children set off for the bonfire, warmly wrapped and very excited, with lanterns to light our way across the paddocks. I was

four, and still remember the feel of Grandma's firm, strong hand in mine and the rustle of her long, black skirts against me. How safe I felt with this warm, strong farm-woman. (At sixty, she was considered 'an old woman'.) There were many Bonfire Nights in later years, but none left the magic feeling and memories of that night.

Nancy Brown

Still active

Gwen George (a founding member of *OWN*) has always been fiercely independent, and determined to look after herself at home. With the wonderful help of her local doctor and a number of carers, she managed to do this until early this year. However, with her blindness and increasing frailty, she found it more and more difficult to manage, and is now in the Weroona Nursing Home, 39 Mary Street, Leichhardt.

Though initially Gwen was not at all happy about this turn of events, she has accepted that she needs help, and appears to be reasonably content now. She has even discovered an old activist mate in the next bed!

She'd love to hear from her old mates at *OWN*.

Bronwyn Campbell

Witch's brew

A few weeks ago I was enduring the misery of a urinary tract infection. On Sunday evening I was watching the program *Rewind* on ABC TV, with a heated wheat-bag clamped to my lower abdomen.

The story concerned some archaeological finds in The Rocks. Articles were found which had been placed there to repel evil spirits – old shoes, pieces of material or lace, as well as some small earthenware bottles used specially to discourage witches. To find what went into the bottles, searches had to be made in the northern counties of England, where they were more familiar with witches than here in Sydney. The contents of the bottles had to be urine, male or female, heavily laced with tin tacks.

Well! Anyone who has ever had an acute UTI will understand.

Helen Monaghan

Networking!

Just a quick note to say that I am still reading and enjoying the newsletter, which I now circulate to colleagues in Austria and Germany. I also wanted to let you know how impressed I was with what I had read in the newsletter about members of the Theatre Group being interviewed on TV about domestic violence. So, earlier this year, when we held our International Women's Week (IWW) celebration in Lewisham – the focus was domestic violence – we used your slogan, *You can't beat a woman*.

Love to Joy Ross, who visited us many years ago, and to Betty Johnson and others who may be still around from Beijing. Eileen Pittaway and I also met in Beijing and she took me to one of the Australian gatherings to hear your then minister, Carmen Lawrence, speak so warmly of Australian NGOs, and *OWN* got a particular mention. We are still a long way from that here in the UK.

Elizabeth Sclater

At and Beyond the Rocks

Sydney

It's been a good year for OWN Sydney, despite the lack of positive support from governments. Planning by the Working Group and members has been ongoing, with new workshops and a wide range of speakers. Although we have not attracted funding this year, we have had some generous donations to keep us going. We're looking forward to greater opportunities for member involvement next year, but first we need our summer holiday!

We have had positive responses from many members, representatives of local organisations, and Sandra Nori, NSW Minister for Women, to our *White Ribbon* morning tea to mark the UN event on the Elimination of Violence Against Women. We have made white ribbons to sell on the day.

The reprint of our smart OWN Sydney brochure is now available. We welcome members' support in having them displayed in libraries and community centres, and passing them on to friends. Phone 9247 7046 and we will have some posted out to you, or drop in and pick some up.

Do come to our End of Year party on 10 December – there'll be time for lots of chinwagging, wonderful BYO food and the drinks are on us.

Our last *Wellness on Wednesday* is on 15 December, then most activities will be returning on Wednesday 19 January. Feldenkrais will return on Wednesday 2 February. Please see the Diary and Notices for more information.

Season's Greetings to everyone.

Louise Anike and Joy Ross

Ashfield

Seven members from our group joined Newcastle OWN on a weekend trip to Myuna Bay. What a trip it was! So much fun and relaxation. It's great to be involved with other groups from OWN. We were warmly welcomed and very well looked after.

What does it mean to be an older woman? It means maturity, wisdom, respect and knowledge. To our members, this is what OWN is all about.

If we had to address all the issues concerning all the women, it would take a lifetime. Women are physically the same, but when it comes to social problems and cultures, we really are different. After so many years, tradition becomes part of our lives and it is very hard to break the mould. OWN is helping us to be liberated and to see that life is really worth living.

As I found out on my trip, we think we know people, but we don't really. When we share each other's company, we discover a lot from one another. With all my years of experience dealing with so many women's issues, groups like OWN are needed. Let's hope that OWN will never die.

Maria Camelin

Sutherland

As we head into the new year, our group has 36 paid-up members, a substantial increase on the previous twelve months. We are maintaining our program of bi-monthly meetings, alternating with either lunch and discussion sessions, or outings. Added to these are the events and functions we undertake with the Management Team of our Wellness Centre.

Involvement of the OWN group with the Wellness Centre makes for better and stronger partnerships. For instance, we are cooperating with North Sydney Health in an evaluation of Wellness through a story-telling project. We have been represented at meetings with North Sydney Health Promotion Unit, which is funding OWN to employ Cara McDougall as a coordinator. Its scope depends on getting extra funds from other sources.

In October we were all very involved with the *Annual Seniors Arts & Crafts Exhibition and Fair*, a long established local event. The funds we raised will be a boost to both our groups, providing financial support for more events or activities as we grow. A lot of hard work went into this once-a-year-event, but it is very useful in ways other than fundraising. For instance, our performance group, *The Sutherland Strutters*, provided an item of entertainment during the Fair. They did us proud, exhibiting International Dancing skills acquired through popular sessions at our Wellness Centre.

OWN and Wellness are both contributing financially to the

At and Beyond the Rocks

continuation of our successful Supportive Neighbourhood discussion luncheons for isolated women with disabilities. Together, we have applied for two grants – one from Sutherland Shire for aqua exercises, and the other from Seniors Week 2005 to fund the creation of a local Performance Group. The Seniors Week event will have two objectives – to establish intergenerational relationships with secondary schoolgirls, and to learn to write and perform material which will advance the OWN Model of Wellness.

With a one-off grant of \$40,000 from NSW Health, we have employed an experienced worker for Sutherland Wellness Centre three days a week for one year. After a brief orientation period, Ellen Huntly is busy finding her feet and also updating a previous submission to NSW Health for ongoing funding, for which the local Reference Group is giving us its full support.

We've enjoyed some fun events over the past couple of months. Our *Name the Hat and Tell a Story* event in September was followed by an all-together lunch at Sutherland Combined Services Club, a very pleasant function with a difference. Next was an enjoyable outing to Birkenhead Point. More recently, five members attended the Myuna Bay weekend, and were inspired by Newcastle OWN's brilliant organisation and hard work. Thanks for the lovely environment and activities which enabled us to renew our vitality, friendships and strength with other OWN women.

**Barbara Burnham and Noreen
Hewett**

Blacktown

Our group now has representation on the Seniors Advisory Committee (Blacktown Council), and maintains contact with the Aboriginal Community in Blacktown and the Multicultural Group in Lalor Park.

We had a very successful Melbourne Cup Day at our Centre, with about thirty-five members turning up. We generally receive phone calls about once a week about our group, which indicates we are becoming more widely known in the area.

Two of us attended the last State conference and enjoyed it so much we are planning to raise funds so that more of our members can attend next year. On Saturday 6 November, we had a Market Day and raised \$500, which was a bit disappointing, although it was a fun day.

At our special November function a good crowd turned up to see and hear the talented WENCHES from Southern Highlands OWN. Lily Hephher, performance poet extraordinaire, who is with the WENCHES, was a big hit with the audience, as was our belly dancer.

Blacktown Council continues to be supportive, and Pam Hawkins, their Aged Care Planner, is always so helpful. We would like to thank OWN NSW for ongoing help and support, in particular, Dorothy Cora and Kris Ferguson.

Penny Hilton

Parramatta

We are fast approaching 18 months of age! Our membership of 50, from different nationalities, work and life experiences, enjoys interacting cooperatively and harmoniously with each other, and also with the friendly and supportive staff at the Harris Park Community Centre, where we hold our meetings.

At our recent Melbourne Cup lunch, which was hilarious, one member who had recently become an Australian citizen and works tirelessly with refugees and for Aboriginal reconciliation, won the 'box' trifecta. Well done, friend!

Some of our group attended Penrith OWN's tenth birthday party and enjoyed the fantastic performance by the Southern Highlands OWN WENCHES. A most enjoyable day.

Helen Barnes, one of our members, has invited us to visit St Joseph's Convent at Baulkham Hills in November, to have lunch and a tour of the convent and its lovely grounds.

Our Christmas party at the end of November will be our last official function this year, though we may plan something for the holidays as many older women are at a loose end during January. Our first meeting for 2005 will be on 24 January. Next year we'll be looking for new funding, more interaction with local groups, and involvement in regional meetings.

And remember – people who stay involved stay alert longer!

Maureen Gaudry

At and Beyond the Rocks

Macarthur

It's always sad when a high profile founding member of a group relinquishes the reins, but our catering supremo, Marge Bosley, has decided to pass on the Wiltshire knife to Pat Carter. Marge's selfless dedication to alleviating the isolation of the older woman in the community has encouraged many of us to continually draw attention to the countless benefits of being a member of OWN

Our October bus trip to the Micro Research Centre at North Sydney was an informative and interesting day, and one of the best outings we've ever had. The combination

of science, technology and biochemistry proves to be life-saving, in both the physical and mental sense, for a lot of people. After lunch, the Clydesdale Pavilion was open to our group. The Carlton United Brewery has excellent facilities and the animals are very well cared for. A stunning display of memorabilia brought back memories of the Penfold's Dray delivering stationery in the city. Our November trip will be a roundabout excursion to Birkenhead Point, to indulge in some Christmas retail therapy.

One of our members, Glenda Fletcher, will present a craft demonstration in November to show some of us who haven't got a

clue, how to create cunning, nifty, gifts for loved ones. We are looking forward to it very much. Our Bingo days are proving very popular – they're the only quiet time at OWN meetings! Another *Buy and Sell* event is on the agenda after our birthday on 10 November.

The Christmas Women's Refuge Appeal will take place again this year, with members donating gifts for our sisters in two of these havens. The Exodus Foundation will also be a recipient of members' donations. This time of the year can be a most difficult one, but, with compassion and kindness, we can do our small part to help others.

Our Wellness program, *Time for Self*, commenced with a great effort, after one of the hottest October days in Sydney – perhaps an indication of things to come.

As this will be my last reporting for *Beyond the Rocks*, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Dorothy Cora for her patience and forbearance. What a blast it's been!

Best wishes to all our sisters for a happy and peaceful Christmas.

Helen Standing

Newcastle

Thirty-one women, plus three from Newcastle who visited for part of the time, attended the Myuna Bay weekend in early November. Our industrious and inventive Craft Group provided decorated welcome bags for participants, and the diverse program went over well. For an overview of the weekend, see *A Wickedly Wonderful Weekend* on p. 6

The weekly exercise class has moved to Salvation Army premises in Hamilton. This new location carries a cost, but is a much better community setting, so we hope to expand to other activities. The Craft Group will move to the same location in the new year. We will continue to hold our general meetings at Trades Hall, as this venue is free.

We have just printed a booklet, *Older Women of the Hunter Region Telling their Stories*, which features nine stories told as part of our celebrations for Seniors Week in 2003 and 2004. We are hoping that OWN members from other groups may be interested in purchasing copies of the booklet – cost \$4 each, plus \$1 postage and packing.

Draft changes to our Constitution have been circulated to all members, and we will be holding a Special General Meeting in February to officially approve the changes. Rather than introduce a category of Associate Membership, we will charge non-members slightly more to attend our activities, e.g., exercise classes.

In brief: In October, we held a fundraising visit/morning tea at a local art gallery. A small walking group, meeting every Friday, is proving popular. Two members gave a presentation about OWN to a Carers' Week gathering near Maitland in October. We are still awaiting news of a funding submission for Seniors Week 2005.

Pat Carlton

Mary Mary

My daughter was preparing her class of kindies for Christmas by explaining the story of baby Jesus.

The story went, "...and there was no room at the inn, so Mary went into a stable and there she had a baby boy." Up shot a little hand, "And she also had a little lamb."

Barbara Malcolm

Penrith

Over 100 guests attended our tenth Birthday Celebrations. Guests included the Federal Member for Lindsay, Jackie Kelly, and State Member for Penrith, Karyn Paluzzano. We also welcomed the Mayor, Jackie Greenow, and representatives from Penrith City Council, Penrith Community Health Centre, Wentworth Area Health, Nepean Food Services, plus Peggy Hewett, Lucy Porter and Barbara Burnham from OWN NSW.

Some guests travelled from further afield: former members, Mary Stockton from Coff's Harbour and Dorothy Mullins from Narrabeen, plus our former Feldenkrais teacher, Zoran Kovich, who travelled up from Croydon for the day. Our Wellness activity leaders and many, many OWN members also joined us to celebrate this very special day.

The performance group, the WENCHES, from Southern Highlands OWN, travelled up to entertain on the day. They were wonderful. Thanks also to members of Penrith OWN who performed some International Dances.

The year of planning for this event paid off. Thank you to our members who helped decorate the tables the day before. The hall looked lovely with purple tablecloths, purple, mauve and pink balloons, and bears and fairies holding the table numbers. Thank you to everyone for making it such a memorable celebration. (The pink ribbons we sold for Cancer research on the day netted \$150.00.)

Thelma Anderson

Gender and Difference

We know we are different from men, but do we really know just how different we are?

Scientists delving deeper into research on women's health are at last discovering that men and women are even more different than anyone realised! A quiet but revolutionary change is infiltrating medicine as a growing number of scientists realise there's more to women's health than just the anatomy that makes them female, and that the same diseases often affect men and women in different ways.

Until the 1990s, scientists frequently excluded women from medical research, including drug studies, largely out of concern over effects on reproduction, but also because of a long-standing belief that men and women were biologically the same except for their reproductive organs.

Recent discoveries suggest that genes, hormones, and lifestyle may be behind many of the differences. For example:

- Heart attacks in women frequently don't involve chest pain and may involve more vague, flu-like symptoms.
- Women who don't smoke appear to be more susceptible to lung cancer than non-smoking men.
- Women also tend to get lung cancer at younger ages than men, and they appear to metabolise cancer-causing substances differently from men.
- Women are less likely than men to get oral cancer.
- Women are more prone to auto-immune diseases, including lupus, rheumatoid arthritis and multiple sclerosis, in which disease-fighting mechanisms mistakenly attack the body's own tissues.
- Women's symptoms for inflammatory bowel disease, which encompasses both Crohn's disease and colitis, vary each month, requiring frequent medication adjustments. But, as in many areas of gender-based medicine, many important questions remain, including how ageing affects inflammatory bowel disease.

On the other side of the gender equation, it's well known that osteoporosis affects women, who lose the bone-protecting effects of oestrogen at menopause, but did you know that 20% of people with osteoporosis are men? (I wonder if the preferred prevention option for men is to give them hormone replacement therapy?)

In recent months, two medical textbooks devoted to gender differences in all areas of medicine have been published. One re-emphasised the neglected fact that lung cancer, not breast cancer, is the No. 1 cancer killer among women, and the other announced the first-ever heart disease prevention guidelines tailored specifically for women.

Lorraine Inglis

Edited from an article in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*

Speaking of Fat...

On the excellent Health Report on ABC TV there was a recent discussion on the vexatious question of margarine and whether it contributes to macular degeneration. According to Dr Peter Clifton, Research Director of Nutrition at the CSIRO in Adelaide, we can stop worrying about vegetable fats in this regard because Australian margarine does not contain trans-fatty acids, unlike margarines from America, where a lot of data about macular degeneration comes from. (Although Australia uses a different margarine manufacturing process to the US, it is still unclear whether some aspect of seed oil production may be causing the vision problem. And there is still much study to be done on the worrying and increasing problem of macular degeneration, which could even turn out to be a lack of zinc or other trace elements.)

In Australia the processing of margarine and vegetable oils was changed five or six years ago because trans-fatty acids were found to behave like fatty acids, and it is fatty acids that increase cholesterol and are associated with heart disease. After some Australia studies seeking a possible link between diet and eye disease, no association has yet been found.

Then there's the vexatious question of margarine, butter and cholesterol.

Margarine contains plant sterols, the plant equivalent of cholesterol, which occur in small quantities in vegetables, nuts and seeds, and which has been found to lower cholesterol by 10% if you eat somewhere between 1.5 and 1.8 grams of margarine every day. However, plant sterols are also known to slow absorption of the anti-oxidant compounds found in fruit and vegetables, thought to protect against heart disease, so

it's important to ensure that fruit and vegetable intake is adequate by consuming five serves of fruit and vegetables each day.

And butter? Dr Clifton doesn't think there's anything particularly good about butter except that it tastes nice! The fat in butter is saturated and will put your cholesterol up. It will also make your platelets stickier and it doesn't really have any particularly healthy attributes.

Margarine, on the other hand, will definitely lower your cholesterol, and studies have shown that eating margarine, particularly a canola-based margarine, actually reduces the rate of heart disease, which butter does not do.

Dr Norman Swan concludes the program with a succinct, "Mind you, that stuff (margarine) is still loaded with calories!"

Muriel Hortin



Who is this old lady?

A very weird thing has happened. A strange old lady has moved into my house. I have no idea who she is or where she came from, or how she got in. I certainly did not invite her. All I know is that one day she wasn't here, and the next day she was! She usually manages to keep out of sight, but whenever I pass a mirror, I catch a glimpse of her.

The least she could do is offer to pay part of the rent.

Every once in a while I find a dollar stuck in a coat pocket or some loose change under a sofa cushion, but it's not nearly enough. I think she is stealing money too. I withdraw \$100 from the ATM and a few days later it's all gone. I certainly don't spend money *that* fast, so I can only conclude the old lady is pilfering from me.

And money isn't the only thing she's stealing. Food is also disappearing at an alarming rate – especially the good stuff like ice-cream, biscuits and lollies – and she's really packing on the kilos. She's also been tampering with my scales to make me think I'm gaining weight, too.

She likes to play nasty games, like going into my wardrobes when I'm not home and altering my clothes so they don't fit, and messing with my files so I can't find anything. She also mucks with my VCR so that it doesn't record what I've programmed.

She has found other imaginative ways to annoy me. She gets into my mail, newspapers and magazines before I do, and blurs the print so I can't read it. And she has done something really sinister to the volume controls on my TV, radio and telephone. Now all I hear are mumbles and whispers.

Just when I thought she couldn't get any meaner, she proved me wrong. She came along when I went to get my picture taken for my driver's licence, and, just as the camera shutter clicked, she jumped in front of me! Who is this old lady?

Contributed by Connie Downes



I Don't Do Lunches On Monday

"What's for lunch, Darl?" I am watering my patio plants when my husband asks me that question. I look over my shoulder at him. He is wearing his weekend look: shorts, sandals and a two-day beard. Three-day beard actually . . . today is Monday.

It has been quite a weekend, starting with his last day at work on Friday, and then the farewell dinner on Saturday night. Everyone from his floor at PJ Prescott's, all the executives and their wives, being jolly and sad in alternate insincere bursts. At least Prescotts have lifted their game with the presentation gift. A wife can get much more fun out of two return tickets to Noumea than with a set of golf clubs or a gold watch.

Sunday was the usual family barbecue that we have whenever there is something to celebrate.

"I'll cook, Darl," he says, as he always does. "No need for you to slave away in the kitchen." So he cooks—the sausages and the steaks—while I have spent the morning making strawberry cheesecake, "You make the *best* cheesecake Darl," and potato salad and slaw and then lamingtons for afternoon tea. And something to nibble with pre-lunch drinks—"Make some of your special prawn pastries, Darl. I'll run down to the fish shop and get some prawns. I'll get nice big ones, they'll be easier for you to peel."

It was a successful barbecue as these things mostly are. He was the star of course, and he beamed happily under his silly chef's hat as the children and grandkids arrived with their presents and funny cards. They fussed around him while I changed their babies' nappies and played horsie with their toddlers and kept their rottweiler from mating with my little poodle.

When the last four-wheel drive had rolled out of our driveway, he stretched out on the lounge with the Sunday papers and a whisky. A couple of throaty coughs – "I'll give up smoking now I'm retired

Darl," – and he was asleep, snoring his way through the Sunday night movie while I emptied the second load from the dishwasher and set about the 'thoughtful disposal' of the disposable nappies and cleaned the sticky mess made by spilled milkshakes and chocolate crackles.

So now it is Monday morning. He has read the paper, done the crossword, had coffee and left-over cheesecake at ten, and now, at eleven thirty he is asking, "What's for lunch Darl?"

I put down the watering can and turn to face him. "I don't *do* lunches on Monday."

He looks surprised. "What do you mean?"

"Just what I say. I don't do lunches on Monday. Or Tuesday or Wednesday or any weekday for that matter."

"But — don't you eat lunch?" surprise still etched on his face.

I think carefully before I answer. "If I happen to be home, I make a sandwich."

Relief relaxes his face. "Oh that's alright then. Sandwiches are fine. I'll just nick down to the deli and get some nice fresh bread. And how about some ham?"

"You make great ham sandwiches. Just the right amount of mustard."

He's at the door of the car now, and turns, looking as pleased as a puppy who has just dug up his lost bone. "And shall I get some cream? Scones with strawberry jam and cream would go down well for afternoon tea."

Oh dear. This, it seems, is going to be harder than I thought.

Pat Lindsay

The eyes have it

If you are one of the 80% of people over 60 who have vision problems, did you know that you are entitled to a Medicare subsidised eye examination and appropriate glasses?

The NSW Spectacle program helps you obtain free glasses and visual aids if you are a permanent NSW resident who meets means test requirements.

Over 700 providers, optometrists and optical dispensers, take part in the program across NSW. Phone 9344 4122 or 1800 806 851 for non-metropolitan callers.

A free fact sheet on vision problems may be obtained from Seniors Information Visioncare NSW by phoning 13 12 44

Treat Asthma with what?

Naturopathic doctors treat asthma with *onion juice*, and say it works like a charm. That's because onions have compounds that mysteriously relax the bronchial muscles involved in asthma.

Of course this remedy must always be used in conjunction with proper medical treatment.

Recipe: Blend two ounces of onion juice with two ounces of carrot juice, then drink this blend twice a day.

From *New Choices in Natural Healing*

BOOK REVIEW

The Magic Doll

A true story by Gitta Thieberger,
with illustrations by
Maria Courtney

In this brightly illustrated story book for young children Gitta Thieberger distils memories from her childhood. The author's brief biography gives us a glimpse of the story's context. In 1941, seven year old Gitta, with her mother Tilde, fled to Russia from their homeland in Moravska Ostrava in Czechoslovakia, then occupied by the Nazis. They were evacuated on to Siberia and spent six years

there. They settled in Australia in 1952.

In their escape from Czechoslovakia, Gitta and her mother could only take what they could carry. Gitta had to choose just one toy, and her choice was Lizzi, her favourite doll. Mother and daughter were leaving family and friends, country and language. The book does not dwell on the hardships of the journey or on the raw determination required for the search for refuge. Instead it is about Lizzi, the doll who became Gitta's greatest friend and constant companion. Lizzi soothes Gitta's loneliness, distracts her

when she is hungry, helps her communicate with other children when there is no shared language. Somehow Gitta's needy imagination releases Lizzi's magical powers. But the real magic is in the love that is exchanged between the doll and the girl. Even parting with Lizzi brings necessities to Gitta and her mother, and surely adds to the intensity of the memories which are vividly brought back to life in this book.

The Magic Doll would make a great gift for four to eight year olds. It is available from Gitta Thieberger, PO Box 6212, Kangaroo Valley, NSW 2577.

Meg Coulson

Rules for Teachers

Duties

Wash windows and clean classroom with soap and water (once a week)

Check outhouses daily (*Plenty of old catalogues are available at School Board Office.*)

Apparel

(Forbidden Wear in Public at All Times)

Women:

- (1) A bathing costume
- (2) Bloomers for cycling
- (3) Skirts slit to expose ankles
- (4) Bustle extension over 10 inches

Men :

- (1) Detachable collar and necktie removed from shirt
- (2) Shirt sleeves unlinked and rolled
- (3) Hair closely cropped (*unless bald or have disease of the scalp*)

Conduct

(Cause for Immediate Dismissal)

- Smoking of cigarettes, use of spirits, frequenting of pool or public dance halls.
- Marriage or other unseemly behaviour by woman teacher
- Joining of any Feminist Movement, such as the *Suffragettes*

H. Warren, Superintendent, Sept 15 1886

my plea

*not for me
this vile stuff*

*hate and crime
child porn, car bombs, wars*

*day in day out
that's all you get on the news*

*quakes, fires and floods
kids who starve to death
all caused by our rape of the earth*

*I plead
for the truths of old*

*love, faith and trust
make friends not foes
spread smiles and cheer
help those in need*

that's my bid for peace

Trudy Davis

(This is a poem composed entirely of one-syllable words.)

All the way at 80 plus!

We were off, Doug and I, on trip number one hundred and nine in our campervan. We must be the oldest grey nomads travelling around Aussie. This time, we 'went all the way' through outback NSW, Queensland, the Red Centre, Western Australia, South Australia and Victoria, visiting our favourite places and discovering new ones.

The heat was enervating throughout inland areas, so what a relief to experience the welcome sea breezes of Broome. The town was buzzing with tourists – thousands of them. They'd come to see the amazing phenomenon of 'the stairway to the moon', an occurrence which happens only when there's a ten-metre tide and the moon is full. We had been to Broome before but never seen this wonderful spectacle. The champagne corks popped, there was an expectant hush, and the moon rose slowly, dramatically, its beam casting a golden ladder across the rippled mud flats. Truly heavenly.

We were fourteen years younger the last time we clambered down into the great Hamersley gorge in the Kimberleys. The roads are still wickedly corrugated, and we bounced and rattled along, envying those four-wheel drives whizzing past, leaving us in a fog of dust. Older, and somewhat wiser, this time we just peered down into the gorge, said "Wow!" and walked its rim amongst the spinifex and white-trunked gums. This was wildflower season and as we continued down the coast they dazzled us – pink, blue, white, purple, yellow daisies, clinging to the red earth with the fluffy Mulla Mulla bush above them.

We called in to Shark Bay, on the central coast of WA, where we revelled in the mind-boggling sight of the rocks that aren't quite what they appear to be. They are living things, stromatolites, direct descendants of the first living organisms on earth. When stromatolites first appeared on earth, about 3.5 billion years ago, there was little or no oxygen in the atmosphere. It was through the oxygen-generating activity of stromatolites that other plant and animal life on earth was able to develop. Now there are only two places on earth which still have the right conditions for their survival, Bermuda and Western Australia. It was awesome to walk on a platform above these black mushroom-like 'objects' and try to get our minds around 3.5 billion years of living rock beneath our feet.

Then, on the way across the twelve hundred kilometres of the Nullabor Plain, we watched the Southern Right Whales flapping their tails in the Great Australian Bight. Fifty tonnes of mother whale floated past us several times, proudly showing off her month-old albino baby.

The shock of South Australia's cold weather after nine weeks of sun was hard to take. So we did a trip through Victoria, including a ride on a paddle steamer on the Murray and a couple of nights camping on the banks of that great old river, before heading home.

Another journey, worth every jolt and bounce.

Joan Johns

Battle of the Boys

The following is the transcript of an actual radio conversation in October 1995, between a US Navy ship and the British authorities, off the Scottish north coast.

The transcript was released by the British Ministry of Defence on 10/10/95.

British : Please divert your course 15 degrees to the South, to avoid a collision.

U.S. Navy : Recommend you divert YOUR course 15 degrees to the North to avoid a collision.

British : Negative. You will have to divert your course 15 degrees to the South to avoid a collision.

U.S. Navy : This is the Captain of US Navy ship. I say again, divert YOUR course.

British : Negative. I say again. You will have to divert your course.

U.S. Navy : This is the aircraft carrier USS Lincoln. The second largest ship in the United States' Atlantic Fleet. We are accompanied by three destroyers, three cruisers and numerous support vessels. Demand that you change your course 15 degrees north. That's 15 degrees north, or counter measures will be undertaken to ensure the safety of this ship.

British : We are a lighthouse. Your call.

From the Internet

Way to Go

Life should NOT be a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving safely in an attractive and well preserved body, but rather to skid in sideways, chocolate in one hand, martini in the other, body thoroughly used up, totally worn out and screaming "WOO HOO what a ride!"

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.**

N O T I C E S

Heart attack, stroke or high cholesterol? *Let us help you.*

Would you like to find out about your risk of having a heart attack or stroke caused by high cholesterol without leaving your own home? Or maybe you have had a heart attack or stroke and would like to find out about managing your cholesterol better.

You can do this and help answer an important research question at the same time. All you need to do is log on to the Internet at www.cholesterolcheck.info and answer a few questions on 2 or 3 occasions.

If you don't have access to the Internet why not ask one of your family members to help you or visit the local library? The trial is being run by a group of doctors at The University of Sydney and all advice given to you is in line with the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme and National Heart Foundation Guidelines. Help us to help you.

For more information please call Nicola Lewis on 9845 7990.



Entertainment

We have a few tickets for the Premier's Gala Christmas Concert at the Sydney Entertainment Centre

**Wednesday 8 December at
10.30 am and 2.30 pm.**

If you are interested in attending please contact the OWN office. 9247 7046.

Be a star!

We are looking for people over the age of 40 to be part of the liberation scene in a film, *Betty & Joe* - a subterranean comedy.

Please register, and pass on this request to friends

**Friday - Sunday
10 to 12 December**

Location: Around Central Station

To become an extra on Sunday, December 12, please contact us (for insurance purposes) by Tuesday December 7.

Email: bettyextras@yahoo.com.au
Phone: Vanessa Meagher
0416 158 887
Martha Ansara, Lecturer
Media Arts Production, UTS



Jessie Street National Women's Library Lunch hour Talks

Thursday 17 February

in the Marconi Room

12 noon to 1.30 pm.

\$15 (members) \$20 (non-
members.)

Sandwich lunch included

Dr Anita Heiss

Words Are Weapons!

Anita Heiss is a member of the Wiradjuri nation and one of Australia's best known indigenous authors. From everyday conversations to government policies, words have been used as weapons to harm individuals and indigenous peoples collectively. Anita will show that, through indigenous storytelling, words can be used in a counter-attack to heal a nation.

You must RSVP on 9265 9486
or email:

info@nationalwomenslibrary.org.au

OWN Sydney Notices

Wellness Activities

Wednesday, 1 December, 9.30-1.30pm, regular program.

Wednesday 8 December, regular program (except no drumming) and a Xmas morning tea.

Wednesday, 15 December There will be no Tai Chi or Feldenkrais, but drumming will be held at 10.45 for all those interested.

Please note: drumming is now one hour only.

Wellness activities will return on Wednesday 19 January, however Feldenkrais will not return until early February.

Discussion Group

10.30am, Monday 6 December, 75 Windmill Street. 'The Pod', for those interested in the psychology of happiness. Bring a sandwich and stay for lunch.

Workshops

10.30am-12.30pm, Tuesdays 7 and 14, at 75 Windmill Street.

Two continuing memory training workshops, *Stretching Your Mind* with Joan Gemmelli. Charge of \$3 per workshop.

Film Discussion Group

Tuesday, 14 December, the film discussion group will attend the film, *De-Lovely* at Hoyts Theatre in George Street, and have the discussion over lunch.

Ring Yetty – 9665 2050 – closer to the date for film session time and luncheon venue.

Party

OWN Sydney's End of Year shindig.

Please bring festive food to share. Drinks on us.

11.30am, Friday 10 December at '87' Lower Fort Street

All welcome.

January – welcome to 2005!

10.30am, Wednesday, 12 January

87 Lower Fort Street, Sydney

Guest speaker: **Shirley Fitzgerald**, City Historian, City of Sydney, on *The History of The Rocks*.

Come at 10am for morning tea.

Shirley's current work as City Historian involves researching and writing about the history of the City, providing historical advice to Council and supervision of the City's ongoing historical publications program.

Shirley gives radio interviews, lectures and talks. She also answers endless historical questions from the public who, she says, think she knows a lot more than she does!

Her publications include: *Rising Damp: Sydney 1870 – 1890*, 1987; *Sydney 1842 – 1992*, 1992; *Minorities: Cultural Diversity in Sydney*, with Garry Wotherspoon (joint editors), 1995; and *Red Tape, Gold Scissors: the story of Sydney's Chinese*, 1997.

Older women tell their stories

OWN Newcastle is pleased to announce the publication of

Older Women of the Hunter Region Telling Their Stories

This book features nine inspirational stories told at Seniors Week events in 2003 and 2004.

Copies are now available for \$4.00 (or \$5 including postage)

Orders and cheques/money orders to The Treasurer, OWN Newcastle,
PO Box 847, Hamilton, NSW 2003 (telephone 4988 6026)