

MORE GAINS THAN PAINS?

Our Retirement Forum was an event waiting to happen! Fifty five lively older women turned up on Saturday to what we believe is the first-ever forum focussed entirely on women's experiences, ideas, apprehensions and hopes about their own retirement. Some had been retired for many years, others for only a few and some were still in the paid workforce. Together, we made a heady mix!

Margaret Bridger, as chairperson, introduced our wonderful Theatre Group who, in barely six minutes, managed to stun, woo and enchant the audience with a skit on super woman and her lost super, and with their signature song "Making Whoopi".

Five women generously told their personal stories of retirement. It was interesting that, while the detail of their expectations and experiences were often quite different, there were many interconnecting themes.

Pam Ledden began by reminding us that the usual image of retirement presented to us in the media, and in financial planning and retirement brochures, is of a male person generously supported by large lumps of superannuation and an attractive wife. Pam suggested that the absence of representations of retired (single) women in our culture can actually be a plus since it provides us with an opportunity to reflect on our own lives, and to notice the many transitions from one identity to another that we have successfully negotiated in the past. As older women, we can decide how and what we want to be in our retirement. Pam described four major transitions in her own life and how, in order to survive, she needed to reinvent herself. From senior worker in a busy government department to unexpected and unplanned retirement, Pam now uses her skills and commitment to activism within the Older Women's Network, while she dreams, in odd moments, of making art again.

Janet Grevillea told us that she loves being retired because her life is now more integrated. There were some gasps (of admiration?) from the audience when she said that if some one offered her a fabulous job she wouldn't take it because it would reintroduce into her life a split between home and work – a split that she believes begins on the first day of school. When Janet was employed most of her energy went into work. What was left over, mostly when she felt half dead, was leisure, which included time with friends. Now, every day is lively, full of a variety of home-based activities. Now that the home/work split is no longer there, the concept of 'leisure' has become meaningless for her. The only negative about retirement for Janet was (initially) social isolation, which came not from retirement itself but from moving away from Sydney to live.

Dorothy McRae McMahon, who was our third speaker, invited those of us whose retirement was unexpected to recognise and affirm our right to feel traumatised. After a while, though, we need to ask ourselves 'What didn't

I have time to do when I was working, and what things do I want to do now?' For Dorothy, it was important to decide how much structure she needed in her life and to organise her day accordingly. She also decided she wanted a long life, so found herself a fitness program that suited her needs perfectly. Dorothy discovered after she retired that she could now be an 'innocent' older woman and that she could make comments and ask tricky questions that she couldn't do when she was a worker. We can all, she claimed, be formidable older women - if we choose!

Noeleen O'Beirne suggested that there is no blueprint for successful retirement, rather, it is a creative process depending on the richly diverse needs and experiences of each older woman. Noeleen's personal creative process after retirement included post-graduate studies and the attainment of a PhD last year with a thesis on 'The (Un) Becoming Woman: The Docile/Useful Body of the Older Woman'. Retirement, Noeleen told us, can provide older women with the time and space in which to exercise freedom from the stereotypes produced by the dynamic interaction of psycho-social, biological and cultural factors. What is needed in our society, she concluded, is to foster representations of older women as healthy, active, sexual and acceptable.

Our final speaker, Margaret Bridger, told us a story of a carefully planned retirement that had unexpected outcomes. Margaret was a highly competent executive working long hours in a government department when she chose to retire. She said she had lost her sense of herself, that she felt like a machine working in that environment, and that her decision to retire was motivated by a desire to centre herself and to reconnect with the self she had lost touch with. This could best be achieved she felt, by not filling her days with doing things or seeing people but by spending time alone, reflecting on her self and her life. Trying in isolation, to manage the transition from full-time work to retirement turned out to be not a good idea. As time went by, Margaret felt increasingly isolated and unable to reach out to anyone. In retrospect, she said, it would have been useful to have had someone she could have contacted as a sounding board, or a group she could have joined to provide information and support both before she took the plunge into retirement and afterwards.

Following an indulgent afternoon tea, we broke into small groups to allow everyone the opportunity to explore their own retirement issues. On the positive side were time for dreaming and slow conversations, silences, independence, space, pleasure, deciding how to spend each day, wearing what we like, choices, creative endeavours, travel, self-esteem, nurturing, living simply, challenging stereotypes, integration, no restraints, setting own limits, activism, liberation, choosing meaningful

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THEATRE GROUP REPORT

Wow! HOW TIME FLIES! After ten years of coordinating the comings and going of OWN Theatre Group, I feel I understand where the saying, 'Mad as a March Hare' comes from. Every March, when the bookings for performances are requested, it all seems simple enough, but talk about there being 'many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip'! Being fitted into other people's programs can often mean we have to do a lot of 'standing around', not to mention cutting down on time, getting there on time, and altering the time we actually get on to perform.

Our experience of our 2nd March performance at the Premier's Reception for International Women's Day was par for the course. As the day fell on our usual rehearsal day, we decided to move the start of rehearsal time to one o'clock to fit in with the arrival time requested by Government protocol to allow for setting up of our microphones, etc. The performance at Government House was scheduled to start at 5.30 pm. Mind you, it was rather a swish affair - Government House is full of interesting things from the past to catch your eye, and we did enjoy the drinks and nibbles served on the verandah and in the surrounding gardens.

The speeches of two Aboriginal elders welcomed the women, and the few men, to Eora land. They were followed by three politicians, including the Premier. Then we were on. We'd been on our feet for six hours! The performance went over well. Next day, we were contacted by Burwood Girls' High School Deputy Principal, who had been told by one of her teachers that the Theatre Group 'was one on the best things she'd ever seen', and it had 'made her day'. Would we come and perform at their Assembly - for nine hundred girls and one hundred staff? Yes!

Next, it was INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY - what a thrill. Years back, I can remember thinking there was no place for me as an older woman marching on International Women's Day. That was prior to me finding OWN. But in this year of International Year for Older Persons, behind a wonderful new banner, WE MADE THE FRONT OF THE MARCH, and performed at the beginning of the concert in Hyde Park, only for ten minutes mind you, but we all had a great time. The only disappointment was that the media ignored the IWD march and rally. Too busy out at the Homebush football stadium. A very enjoyable day all the same.

Then we were off to Corrimal, and another celebration of IWD. We played to a packed Community Centre Hall to a warm and appreciative audience who clapped and laughed in all the right places. As it was on our rehearsal day, Judith put the group through their rehearsals on the long train journey down there. The guest speaker, Barbara Curthoys, was impressed to see that the emphasis of our performance was on older women which fitted in with this year of IYOP.

We did a quick (six minutes) presentation at the OWN 'Gains and Pains' Retirement Forum where our replacement 'Superwoman' (aka June Goss) tore at their heartstrings when her super was frozen in Antarctica! Lucy, eat your heart out!

I would like, once again, to ask if anyone 'out there' would like to 'give the Theatre Group a go' either by joining us to perform or undertaking administrative work (filing, typing etc), or in any other way. Please make it NOW! We are getting low in numbers and need all the help we can get. Contact Peggy on 9398 2428.

Peggy Hewett

ON THE STEPS

Tuesday, March 2nd, was a lovely Sydney evening, and several OWN women, including the Theatre Group, joined the throng on the steps of Government House for the Premier's reception in honour of IWD. Women's organisations and individual groups were represented, young and old, famous and unknown, glamorous and the rest of us. It was a chance to find old and new friends among the crowd, and it felt like something of a celebration - a gathering of women getting together in the lead up to Saturday's march and rally. Tasty nibbles and plenty of drinks were handed around, and, of course, we were treated to a few speeches. After all, we were there at the Premier's invitation, so it was quite inevitable that this opportunity for electioneering would not be missed.

The first two speakers, though, were wonderful, warm, eloquent and gracious Koori women, Auntie Ellie Golding and Auntie Jean Carter. Auntie Ellie welcomed us to her people's land, conveying in her simple and direct manner the sure knowledge that her ancestors had walked across the grass on this same spot years before. Auntie Jean took this well-deserved opportunity to speak of the need for recognition of her sisters and brothers of the stolen generation.

The Hon. Fay Lo Po', Minister for Women, the Premier, the Hon. Bob Carr and, finally the Minister for Labour Relations, the Hon. Jeff Shaw, all reminded us of the Government's achievements on women's behalf. No mention of older women; once again, we were invisible.

Once the speeches were over, everyone was invited to step inside to enjoy the evening's entertainment - yes, OWN's Theatre Group has been invited to perform at the Premier's reception. No doubt Peg will tell elsewhere that the food and drink continuing on the lawn kept a lot of people outside, but those who gathered for another spot-on performance were warmly appreciative. Toes were tapping and smiles widened at the swinging tunes and telling lines. Too bad the Premier didn't stop to listen.

Sam Smart

EXPOSURE!

Our many thanks to all those who have given older women's issues a very public exposure this month, not least our very hardworking Theatre Group.

On March 6, eighteen members of OWN joined 700 other women at the International Women's Development Agency breakfast where Isobel Flick, an older Aboriginal woman from Collarenebri, spoke of her long years of activism. Proceeds from the breakfast go to the Burmese Migrant Women Workers Project and the Women's Action for Change Theatre in Fiji to raise awareness of domestic violence and sexual abuse.

After the breakfast we took to the streets behind our wonderful new OWN banner, made by Jack Draper, and the new International Year of Older Persons banner made by Jack's mother, Edith Draper. Quite a few of us sported IYOP t-shirts which OWN had had designed and made up, one of which is being taken to London by a South African older woman. We also handed out lots of OWN leaflets along the route, so OWN had quite a presence this year.

Two more of our IYOP projects have now been completed: Louise has produced a report of the questionnaire 'Domestic Violence and Abuse against Older Women', which you can get by ringing the OWN office. The second project was the very successful 'Gains and Pains Retirement Forum'.

Older women have had reasonable media coverage this month. You may have seen Betty Johnson on Channel 7's '11am Show', and Renate Watkinson and Irenie Rennie speaking on SBS TV about their participation in the Ella Dreyfus photographic exhibition. This exhibition, of older women's bodies (both clothed and nude) is showing at the Stills Gallery in Paddington until April 17. Margaret Bridger spoke on community radio in Orange and to the 'Women out West' program, and Peggy Hewett spoke on Nowra radio about the performance at the forthcoming conference.

Older women were also a striking presence amongst four groups of older people marching behind the IYOP banner in this year's Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras.

At another level, there has been a tremendous range and number of IYOP activities being by organised and conducted by Coalition '99, the Ageing and Disability Department, and older people's community organisations. The question receiving serious thought is 'what do we want to achieve from the Year?' 'How and who is going to do this?' A steering committee, of which OWN is a member, is to formulate a platform of action for the coming years.

Joy Ross, OWN IYOP coordinator

FIRST CONFESSION

It was a morning for quiet contemplation, it was a morning of apprehension. It was a morning of great importance in the life of a seven year old. It was the morning, almost the hour of the first confession. After months of preparation by nuns and priests the soul was to be shriven in readiness for the first communion.

The child sat in the quiet church where the smell of incense always hung in the air. In that parish the first confession was heard by the priest in the sacristy, not the confessional. Instead of the black soutane the priest would be fully robed as though to celebrate mass. It was a solemn occasion and the space made the confessor much more vulnerable, the ceremony more intimidating. Was it deliberate? The thought was merely a hazy impression in the young child's mind.

Ten commandments, sins of omission and commission, every sin must be confessed. There was not a sound from the other children. Each one was isolated by expectation. At last the moment came and the child walked hesitantly into the sacristy. Here the smell of incense was much stronger. The walls were lined by cupboards which held the sacramental robes. The priest in his embroidered chasuble, his biretta still on his head, sat behind the prie-dieu.

Oh good, it was father Dando, her favourite priest. She knelt. "Bless me father for I have sinned. "Yes my child", he made the sign of the cross, "take your time". His smile was kind, as always. Then, with bent head, his hand shading his eyes, he waited.

"Please father, I've told lies. I've missed my morning and evening prayers, I've missed mass on Sunday, but only when I've been sick, and I put my fingers in the jam when my mother wasn't looking". He nodded waiting. She searched her mind. It all seemed so dull, surely there must be some sin so mortal it would endanger her soul. She thought over the commandments. "And father," she blurted. "I committed adultery."

There was silence. She ventured a glance. Head bent, shoulders shaking, the priest sat. He seemed unable to speak. Was he shocked at the enormity of her sin? At last he ventured in a shaky voice "Do you know what adultery is little one?" "Oh yes Father it's the sixth commandment." "Just so," he said. "just so. Is there anything else?" I don't think so father, except I quarrelled with my best friend, but I'm sorry." "Well now I'm sure you are sorry for all your sins and will try not to sin again. As a penance you can say an extra Our Father and a decade of the Rosary. I absolve you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, and remember what the good Lord said "and a little child shall lead them."

Judith Mustard

What have you forgotten?

Some time last year I took part in a memory survey organised by Judith Wiles of Killara and Janet Wiles of the University of Queensland. They posted their survey to U3A (University of the Third Age) members of the Northern Region of U3A.

Early this year I received their Summary of Responses and since I found it reassuring to find out that my particular type of forgetting is very much part of the norm, I thought it would be good to share it with you.

Most people (97% of respondents) reported forgetting at least some things. The most frequent types of memory losses were: 1. Names of people or things; 2. Things they were going to do; and 3. Routine actions such as forgetting where they had put their glasses. Other categories included forgetting information read, reason for telling a story, forgetting messages etc. Since I've done some of these all my life I'm not overly concerned about them now as I'm getting older. I'm sure we can all add to that list. Interestingly not all the respondents were worried about their lapses, and their coping strategies varied.

To the question: "if you remember later what prompts the remembering?" many people apparently use the one which works best for me, which is to stop trying and some time later it pops up.

The next part of the survey asked for tips or strategies or memory aids people used. The situations were mainly around remembering names and faces, phone numbers, remembering whether you locked the door, or remembering to take something when you are going out. And the solutions obviously vary for individuals and depend on their way of operating, however relaxing about it and relying on it popping up later is fairly frequent. Then there are: word association or visual association and in the case of remembering whether you locked the door, actually saying out loud "I am locking the door", this last certainly helps me. Making lists is an obvious one, but then you have to remember to look at the list! In summary (and I quote) "These strategies fall into two types: the first (and most frequent) is to impose additional structure on our lives,... such as lists, diaries, white boards and putting things by the front door. The second type are direct prompts for specific information, like the use of photos to remember names."

The authors of this survey and subsequent report underline, that this is very much a preliminary report and that they are working on a more detailed publication. They point out that there are some very good books written on the subject and they add some references:

BADDELEY, Alan, *Your Memory: a User's Guide* PRION, Lond., 1996

SCHACTER, Daniel L., *Searching for Memory: the Brain the Mind and the Past* Basic Books, N.Y., 1996

SARGEANT, D. and UNKENSTEIN, A., *Remembering Well*, Allen and Unwin, St.Leonards, 1998

These are just some of the references.

Since many of their respondents had expressed concern about recognising Alzheimer's Disease they added a most reassuring section to their report where they point out that "Memory changes with Alzheimer's Disease differ from everyday memory complaints, but the boundary is not clearly defined". And they quote from the book by Sargeant and Unkenstein:

Everyday memory problems can be frustrating, but they don't pose a threat to your ability to function independently. People with Alzheimer's disease often require assistance with everyday activities that they used to do by themselves. They might forget how to do things that they have always been good at (for example where to post a letter, how to knit, or how to write a cheque). They sometimes cannot remember the names of close relatives, or they may get lost while driving a familiar route." P.59

I certainly look forward to their more detailed work and will inform you of it when it turns up, if I remember!!

Renate Watkinson

MORE ABOUT AGED CARE PACKAGES

Community Aged Care Packages are intended to provide a higher level of support than can be provided by Home and Community Care Services.

To decide whether a person is eligible for a Community Aged Care package, an Aged Care Assessment Team will visit to assess that person's needs.

Community aged Care Packages provide a range of services tailored to meet a particular person's needs. The services offered will be decided in consultation with the person eligible to receive them. People using Aged Care Packages receive an average of seven hours of care services per week.

There is a charge for Community Aged Care Packages which is decided according to your ability to pay. For older people on the maximum rate of pension, the fees must not be more than 17.5% of that pension.

For more information about the rights of people who use Community Aged Care Packages and the services to which they are entitled, contact:

The Aged-care Rights Service Inc. (02) 9281 3600 or 1 800 424 079

Aboriginal Support Circle

We are changing the name of our group from OWN Aboriginal Study Circle to OWN Aboriginal Support Circle. Our Aboriginal members have requested the change of name because many Aboriginal people are put off by the idea of a 'study' circle.

We shall continue to study Aboriginal history, culture, religion and art and listen to Aboriginal speakers who give so generously of their time, their experiences and emotions. We have felt in our hearts the pain of many brave women.

We've joined the marches, vigils and demonstrations, written letters to government ministers, and attended courses, seminars and forums. Some of us are also members of the National Aboriginal History and Heritage Society, the Indigenous Social Justice Association, as well as reconciliation groups in the areas in which we live. OWN's name is now well known throughout New South Wales due to Lyn Pollack's devoted publishing of "What's On" detailing events in the Aboriginal calendar each month.

Betty Little is one of our co-ordinators this year. We look forward to an exciting and productive year in 1999 as the Aboriginal Support Circle, a name we are proud to use.

Pat Zinn

Discussion Group

The monthly Discussion Group again provided us with a stimulating two hours as we enthusiastically discussed "Living in a Materialist World - What is Important for Older Women".

Some of the ideas shared in groups of three were:-

Materialism is about essentials for living and exists to make life comfortable. A continuing review of our needs is important, for example, to an older woman immobilised through ill health, a computer could be an essential possession. Saving for material needs can be satisfying, and not being able to afford material things can be a challenge to our inventiveness. An excess of material things can tie us down, and it is preferable to rid ourselves of possessions we no longer need. (A difficult task, some of us thought.) 'Keeping up with the Joneses' was of no interest to any of us. Whilst many more pertinent comments were made, the general consensus was that "relationships are more important than things".

Next month, the topic is 'Personal Space and Boundaries'. Come along and join us.

Joan Hook

A CASE OF MISTAKEN IDENTITY

This happened way back in time, in England, where the winters are decidedly colder than they are in Sydney.

We lived in a lovely little two-storey home, semi-detached, as so many of the houses are in England, with a pretty garden back and front, tended by our faithful gardener. Shrubs and flowers abounded around our tiny lawn, daffodils, tulips, roses, marigolds, dahlias, azaleas - a sight to behold. Winter was on the way. Our gardener was going to be away for a while, and gave me instructions to dig up the dahlia bulbs when they'd stopped flowering and store them in a cardboard box in the shed, so that the frosts wouldn't get to them. Which I did.

Snow and ice came, as it usually does in winter in England. Washing froze on the line, chilblains returned to our toes and fingers, smoke arose from our chimneys. Came the spring, birds sang, foliage reappeared on the trees. Life returned magically to the garden, leaves and buds everywhere. Joyfully, I replanted the bulbs to the best of my ability, and was delighted to find that within a very short time, the plants grew very tall and masses of green leaves appeared. But no sign of blooms.

In the course of time, our dear gardener came back. He surveyed the scene, assessing what needed to be done. "I don't know what's the matter with the dahlias," I said. "I followed your instructions, but there's no sign of flowers." He stared at the plants, looked back at me in disbelief. "They're not dahlias," he said, "You've planted bloody potatoes....."

Renee Simons

THE STREETS OF PETERSHAM

The small boy rocks his siter in her pram,
She laughs and claps her hands.
He bends, bottom in air,
Then jumps up shouting "Boo!"
Her face crumples in fright.
Mum flies out,
"Don't tease your sister."
He stares, downcast.
He can't explain.

Mums, dads, grandparents
Sit on benches or stand in the playground
Waiting for the bell.
There it goes.
The children erupt from classrooms
Like doves from a cote.
Fly down steps,
Shouting, dragging bags,
Bursting with energy, Returned to a small freedom.

Judith Mustard

Brougham Street Blues

Stamp! Stamp! Stamp! Mrs. Loxie's skinny feet, in fluffy slippers, flattened the garbage bags as she jumped up and down in the big metal bin.

"These tenants make me sick. They're too lazy to pack down their garbage. Just chuck it in any old way. I'm not their servant."

Her remark was addressed to Mr. Loxie but aimed at me, a guilty tenant, slinking down the front steps. The handsome Mr. Loxie winked at me as I scooted down Brougham Street towards the Butlers' Stairs. His wife's tirades were the last thing I needed on my way to work.

Mrs. Loxie, or "Foxy Loxie" as she was known to her tenants, ruled over a two-storey establishment of serviced rooms. Mr. Loxie escaped each day to an office job.

Her nickname suited Mrs. Loxie. She had a foxy look with permed ginger hair framing sharp features and pale eyes, which missed nothing. I never saw her without an apron indoors and when not engaged in garbage treading in slippers, she wore pointy-toed shoes with high stiletto heels. Bossily, she click-clicked around her domain in her out-dated footwear.

One major source of irritation for the female tenants was that the male tenants were rarely persecuted for misdemeanours. Mrs. Loxie had been known to wash any dirty dishes they left in their sinks, without even leaving them a "Please....." note.

I decided to leave the "no win" situation as soon as I finished some exams. All my friends who were perched around the Cross in tiny "bird cage" flats urged me to escape from what they regarded as the worst renting nightmare, serviced rooms and a landlady on the premises.

Eventually I found a bachelor flat I could afford at The Gordon" in Macleay Street. Its only view was into the gloom of a light well, but what freedom! I rediscovered the joy of uninvaded privacy and no more menacing notices. My Spanish lady posed in haughty freedom on the dressing table. It was heady stuff, even though the morning walk to the city took longer and I missed my nightly view of the "Loo".

Later I learned that Mrs. Loxie was a poker machine addict who fed most of the rent money into the "one-armed bandits", as they were then called. While Mr. Loxie toiled in an office, the rents were her "pin money". I also heard afterwards that she injured her head in a tumble down the steep back stairs. Her behaviour to the tenants grew more bizarre. Finally, the Loxie's sold up and moved away from the 'Cross' to suburban living. I wondered if she missed having tenants to spy upon and to feed the pokies.

Helen McMaugh

A Fragment from a Wartime Childhood

The day Britain declared war on Germany, I was 7 years old, on a flower-picking outing to the Bluebell Woods. I loved wandering beneath those huge trees, with the branches almost touching the sky, and the carpet of deep blue under my feet. It was sheer heaven!

Returning home, arms full of bluebells, we found a chaotic scene: people were running around everywhere, talking excitedly, some sobbing and crying, and the church bells were ringing loudly. Our flowers forgotten, we dashed to the safety of our homes, half believing the enemy was on our doorstep.

That was my initiation into a wartime childhood. Soon rationing was introduced, then came air raid and gas mask drills. Then the bombs came and in one very bad raid, a street close to where I lived had a direct hit. Once the word got out, people came from everywhere to help totally unprepared for the devastation and carnage that met their eyes. Death from sickness was commonplace in those days, but not this kind! People you had talked to only that day were now dead, including three of my school friends.

A short time later, my brother, sister, and I were evacuated to the North of Scotland. Carefully labelled, we set off by train on our wonderful adventure. Upon reaching our destination we were herded into the town hall to await our billet family. Sadly for us, we were separated, our brother going to the family next door to ours. He was the lucky one. My sister and I had a hard time with our family: the food and clothing parcels we brought with us were confiscated never to be seen again; we were not allowed to play with school friends; we had to work before and after school, and our mail was censored.

We pleaded with our brother to let our parents know of our plight. At first he was hesitant, but finally agreed. Within a few days our mother arrived on one of the coldest, wettest Scottish winter nights imaginable. She was ushered into a room where a large fire blazed in the hearth, and a kettle was put on for a welcome cup of tea. When she announced her intentions of taking us home, the kettle was removed from the hob, and our mother was shown the door.

Fortunately, she was given shelter next door at my brother's billet. The next day, after signing all the necessary papers, my mother, my sister and I travelled back to Auld Glesga and remained there for the duration of the war.

Janet Waters

board

TAKE A BITE OUT OF LIFE

A statewide 2-day conference on Nutrition and Healthy Ageing is being held by COTA on 26-27 May in Sydney. The cost of \$15 per day for older people includes lunch. For more details and/or to register, please phone COTA on 9299 4100.

People's Summit

Reclaiming Democracy: The People v Global Finance
9.15 am, Sunday 11 April 1999
Gallery Function Centre, Level 6,
University of Technology, Broadway.
For more information, or to register,
please phone
Frances Milne 9810 7812

Tai Chi for Arthritis and Health

Judy Laws is an OWN member who is conducting friendly and supportive Tai Chi classes (developed by Dr Paul Lam) in Balmain, Haberfield and Lilyfield.

The cost is \$60 (\$50 concession) for a 10 week term.

Judy, who is a qualified Fitness Leader, is offering one free place to an OWN member in celebration of International Year of Older Persons.

Please phone Judy on 9564 1528 for more information.

Dear Prime Minister

Amnesty International are asking us all to write to the Prime Minister, the Hon John Howard C/- Amnesty International Private Bag 23, Broadway 2007 requesting that his government supports an Optional Protocol for the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women currently being negotiated in the United Nations. Enquiries 9281 4188 or 9211 3566.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE OLDER WOMEN'S NETWORK INC. IS OPEN TO ALL OLDER WOMEN.

Annual fees:

Membership (\$4) and Newsletter (\$11)....\$15.00

Newsletter only (for Gov't Depts.
institutions and organisations\$20.00

Send your cheque, name, address and phone number to:

Older Women's Network
87 Lower Fort Street
Millers Point NSW 2000

Tel: (02) 9247 7046
Fax: (02) 9247 4202
email: ownnsw@zip.com.au
Web site: <http://www.zip.au/~ownnsw>

There are lots of groups operating in Australia, each one with its local currency which roughly equates to a dollar. A National Conference is being held in November this year in the Illawarra region. If you are interested in finding out more please phone Penny 02 4285 0088.

Laws on 9564 1528 for more information.

(POLLY, PLEASE MAKE THIS DOG ONE A FAIRLY DOMINANT ADVERT. AS SHE MADE A LARGE DONATION FOR IT.)

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