
HAVE YOU EVER THOUGHT ABOUT BECOMING A MEMBER OF THE WORKING COMMITTEE?

The role of the Working Committee is to manage the affairs of OWN Inc. in the period between Annual General Meetings. The Working Committee receives reports; plays an advocacy role and makes statements on issues in line with OWN's policies; makes submissions for funding and authorises spending in line with budget parameters; and maintains contact with the membership through meetings and through the Newsletter.

How often does it meet?

According to the Constitution, the Working Committee meets as often as is necessary to conduct the business of the Association. It usually meets monthly with planning and review sessions each six months.

How is it elected?

The Working Committee is elected at the Annual General Meeting. All positions become vacant at that time. Ten members are elected, including two office bearers and a treasurer. Election is by ballot.

The Working Committee may co-op up to five additional members of the Association to serve on the Working Committee. This is done at the first meeting after the Annual General Meeting to take into account areas of OWN which may not be represented by the election process.

Who can serve on the Working Committee?

Anyone who is a paid up member of OWN is entitled to be on the Working Committee. You may be nominated by another member of OWN or nominate yourself.

Being on the Working Committee is not all hard work. It meets in a relaxing atmosphere, reaches decisions by consensus as much as possible and provides an opportunity to get to know other members.

New members of the Working Committee will be offered orientation and support. So, why not get a nominating form from the office and allow your name to come before the Annual General Meeting in August?

Jean Skuse

WANTED

A volunteer Treasurer to join our Finance Team which guides and advises the Working Committee on OWN's finances.

The Treasurer needs to have a background in book-keeping or accountancy and be available for twice-monthly meetings and phone contact.

Please phone Kris Ferguson (our book-keeper) on Tuesday, Wednesday or Friday for more information: 9247 7046

Coordinators' Report

Welcome, Bellingen! This month we are delighted to welcome Bellingen OWN to our Network. Bellingen, situated just down the hill from Dorrigo, is an interesting town, which has become well known for its arts and crafts. Jo Erbacher is our contact there and we look forward to hearing from her and/or other representatives of the group at our next NSW Groups quarterly meeting in August.

Peer Support Advocacy Network (PSAN) Several of us have now completed training in data entry and information retrieval with Justine, our PSAN consultant. A number of other interested members will receive training in July. We expect the database application to be ready to go in August and we are now busy putting together the necessary promotional material and operational procedures. Watch this space for exciting developments!

Administration: Our faithful old photocopier will finally be put out to pasture at the end of June. It has given us over a million copies and has managed to keep going for a year longer than the expected life of such a machine. This speaks volumes for our workers and volunteers who have taken such good care of her. Our new machine moves us from analogue to digital technology (whatever that means) and promises to streamline our Newsletter production line amongst other enhanced functions.

'Ripe for Repetition': Our latest publication is a delightful collection of some of our very OWN members' writings over the years. It is available from the office for \$2.50 or we can post it to you for \$4.

Managing OWN: As you know our AGM is in August and we remind you once again that elections will be held for the Working Committee. In the interests of bringing new ideas and new energies to OWN's management, members are asked to seriously consider nominating for a position on the Committee. All present members of the Committee will stand down at the AGM. Some have indicated that they will re-nominate as members though not necessarily as office bearers eg Jean Skuse and Renate Watkinson will not be re-nominating for the positions of Treasurer and

Chair respectively. Both these positions will need to be filled at the AGM. Enclosed in this Newsletter is a nomination form. Additional forms are available from 87 Lower Fort St. or by phoning 9247 7046.

A date for your diaries: Why not think of a holiday in the nation's capital during the last week of September? We don't need to remind you that Canberra in September is Floriade and that's where and when OWN (Australia) Annual Conference is on this year. Host ACT OWN members are happy to billet interstate OWN members pre, during and post Conference. They promise an interesting time not only at the Conference but also in other joys that Canberra offers in the springtime. Next month's Newsletter will provide program and billeting details.

Before Floriade and all that, however, think WELL!

The Wellness Forum is on in July - an OWN landmark that has the potential of changing the thinking of service providers forever! Be there! Have your say! Registration forms available at 87 Lower Fort St or by phoning 9247 7046.

Margaret Bridger, Sam Smart and Renate Watkinson

International Year Of Older Persons

RAISING AWARENESS OF OLDER WOMEN'S CONCERNS

Our wonderful Theatre Group is busy, busy, busy... spreading the word about International Year of Older Persons (IYOP) and earning well-deserved accolades.

As the newsletter 'goes to bed' we're having our Winter Solstice where the highlight will be the launch of 'Ripe for Repetition'. Just on 100 women have RSVP'd so it looks like we'll have a great day with International Dancing, Creative Movement, a Theatre Group performance and twelve different soups plus fruit and cakes for lunch. A big thank you to the soup makers, and everyone else who has volunteered to make it a great day.

The Older Women's Wellness Forum is really shaping up now July 6 and 7.

Three OWN groups are to receive funds under the Healthy Ageing IYOP grants: The Sydney Theatre Group for "Catching Tunes" (\$2,500); Penrith OWN for "Sewing Friendship for Older Women" (\$1000) and Wagga Wagga OWN for the establishment of a "Wagga Wagga OWN Theatre Group" (\$1000).

The Coalition '99 calendar of events (the peak body of community organisations organising IYOP in NSW) shows a wide spread of events being held in July. Please see the 'Noticeboard' for some of them. You will also see the website of the Internet IYOP school programme - <http://www.iyop.nsw.gov.au/>. - quite something, and well worth a look.

A big event coming up is the 'Grey Mardi Gras' parade to be held on Saturday, October 2. The parade will finish with information stalls, entertainment etc., at Hyde Park North. It's for all ages - perhaps OWN participants could make it a picnic/dance for the generations?

Outcome of OWN's Platform for Action Workshop, held June 10.

An enthusiastic group of OWN members began the task of ensuring that older women's issues are included in the Platform for Action (PfA). (See Betty Johnson's article in the June newsletter which backgrounds the PfA discussion paper, produced

by representatives of older people's organisations.) The paper also includes a submission form for groups or individuals to have their ideas included in the PfA and this is what we worked on in the workshop.

Facilitated by Judy Laws of Coalition '99, the group brainstormed a long list of concerns; assembled them into larger groupings and prioritised four concerns. We then began the process of forming these into submissions. Our four selected concerns were attitudes, wellness/wellbeing of older women, older women's participation in decision-making and communication.

We have only begun the process and will finalise the submissions at OWN's next IYOP committee meeting to be held on **Thursday, 15 July, 9.30am at 75 Windmill St.**

If you would like to come along on July 15th, or if you or a group would like to make a submission, please phone 9247 7046 and ask for a copy of the PfA discussion paper and the notes of the workshop. A flyer of the press release and submission is included in the newsletter for your use. As would like to have all OWN members' submissions together, please send us your submission by August 13. We need to forward them on by August 20.

Joy Ross, IYOP Coordinator.

NEWS FROM OWN (AUSTRALIA)

OWN Australia's last issue of "Making Known" came out in June. In view of our impecunious state, due to a drastic cut in our funding, the next issue is rather problematic. We will print, instead, a monthly review sheet to keep you in touch with our national body and what we are doing on a national scale.

* * *

Slowly, slowly women are organising, gathering strength. Another encouraging and positive project has started with Betty Johnson and Noreen Hewett attending, and speaking, at the first Australian Tribunal on Women's Human Rights in Melbourne last month.

The Tribunal was organised by a group of women calling themselves "Women's Rights Action Network". Strong and wonderful women like Magistrate Pat O'Shane, the ATSI Commission in Queensland, various academics, the WIRE representative and others like them, representing many diverse groups are members of the Tribunal, which has been organised in the spirit of the Tribunals held at the Vienna Human Rights Conference in 1993 and the Beijing Conference in 1995.

This tribunal will present testimonies which will form part of the ever-increasing global evidence against the violation of women's human rights.

When Betty stood up to speak, after hearing stories from the other delegates of incredible abuse, exploitation and violence, physical, verbal and institutional, she was forced to compose herself after her tears.

Further information on WRANA (Women's Rights Action Network Australia) and its future projects, we urge our Network Convenors to write to:

WRANA, PO Box 2092, Lygon St., North LPO, East Brunswick, Vic, 3057, or

Website - <http://www.nwjc.org.au/wrana>

* * *

After Meg Lees' cave-in on the GST, a Labor MP was heard to say, "They haven't kept the bastards honest. They've joined the "the bastards".

Why did the Democrats renege? They had the ball in their court and could have rejected the GST outright!

There are no victors in the battle - not us (the income challenged) or small business or the students - who will be taxed for books. Nobody is happy. The GST hasn't been made law yet, so keep up the pressure and it may just be possible to convince more Democrats to cross the floor - but don't hold your breath.

And don't be seduced by the compensation package. Half of it is just an advance on CPI increases, so only 2% is a genuine increase, and this will be more than gobbled up by GST increases on essential spending.

A further reminder about our 7th Annual Conference, from Monday, 20th September, to Wednesday, 22nd September, to be held at Burgmann College, Australian National University in Canberra.

The women of OWN Canberra and OWN Action have jointly done all the planning and organising for this event which promises to be the best ever.

These members have also extended an invitation and accommodation to visitors who would like to stay on for a day or two after the conference to enjoy the Floriade and see other places of interest in the National Capital.

We are sure interstate visitors will be delighted to take advantage of their generous hospitality.

* * *

We have just received a bundle of press releases from Government Ministers and a pile of big, glossy books outlining their policies and telling us about all the goodies in the budget.

Couched in glowing terms, with hand-on-the-heart sincerity about their 'Commitment to Australian Seniors', these documents have to be read carefully to extract just what we're getting at and what we are not.

The Minister of Health promises 67,000 vouchers for people with hearing loss so they can obtain hearing devices. They are not, however, going to restore free dental care, which they withdrew during the first year of office.

They promise \$614 million over the next six years for medical research, having previously cut the funds for this vital area. We are to have annual voluntary health assessments for everybody over 75 years, access to Community Care services will be made easier through Centrelink, better health care is promised for rural and remote areas, and they are "going to meet the health needs of indigenous Australians" - and much more in this comforting vein.....

Oh yes, and we are to get an extra 100 aged care beds at \$2 million over the next four years!

From the Minister for Family and Community Services, we received a pretty, pale blue, glossy book in which she promises to "strengthen and support Australian families." Senator Newman is against domestic violence, and declared April 26th a "Stop Domestic Violence Day". (We hope that made a few violent men think twice.)

(Continued from the previous page)

Senator Newman is all for allowing older Australians to “participate in and contribute to our society by giving older people choices and a range of support services.”

We are delighted to know that “social security benefits” will now be paid if you are outside Australia. So handy for your next holiday in the South of France.

Also, independent retirees will receive a copy of “Age Pension News” free. This has been only sent previously to real bona fide pensioners, twice a year.

More next month.

Muriel Hortin

The Good Old Days?

On Monday, 21 June, members attending the monthly Discussion Group discussed whether the ‘good old days’ were all that good.

We managed to find a few positive aspects about the past although we didn’t altogether accept that those days were better to live in.

Some of the ‘positives’ mentioned were families lived closer to each other, we felt safer to on the streets and in our homes, popular music was more relaxing and there was less noise. Also, there was a sense of history, of belonging, in the old days, and with very little technology available, we had to do more practical things for ourselves. We compared this with life today and agreed that there were many advances such as women’s liberation, a fairer social welfare system, ‘no fault’ divorce and a greater awareness of social issues due to media reporting.

Next month Jaqui Graham has agreed to facilitate the July discussion group on Monday 19 July at 75 Windmill Street. The topic will be ‘Age and Wellness’.

Joan Hook, Facilitator

GENETICALLY MODIFIED

SEEDS and PRODUCTS

CAN BE DANGEROUS

We must stop Monsanto and other chemical companies who are developing genetically modified seeds from selling them to Australian farmers. These modified seeds include genes that resist pesticides as well as foreign proteins.

Plants grown from these genetically modified seeds can be dangerous for people with certain diseases. Coeliacs are a case in point. Innocently they might choose a tomato that has a protein that they cannot metabolise. We do not know the effect of these seed modifications on the health of the general public.

As these seeds resist pesticides, farmers could use higher amounts of pesticides on their crops. (More business for chemical companies.) We know that plants which are grown organically (without pesticides) are healthier.

We need to stop genetically modified seeds from being sold to Australia. Also the products processed from them. It is important that processed foods clearly identify ingredients that are genetically modified. As consumers, we need to be given the choice to avoid these foods.

The Waverley Council has a policy of prohibiting pre-school centres from using products that have genetically modified ingredients.

We must urge our representatives at the State and Federal level to pass laws to stop the production of genetically modified seeds and food products processed from them. Soy products are a good example.

Furthermore, I urge you to make known to your Supermarket your dissatisfaction at shelves with products not clearly identifying genetically modified contents. We should resist buying these products.

Australia should not sit on its hands; we should know better from our previous disasters with introduced species.

Frayda Myers Cooper

THEATRE

GROUP

REPORT

Where is this year going to – we are already halfway through 1999?!

We've received the feedback forms from the First National Community Educators' Course, and what a range of adjectives they used: "fantastic, wonderful, inspired, exhilarating, emotional, terrific, warm and fuzzy, brilliant, uplifting, vibrant, empowered, fabulous, happy and gutsy, left me smiling, strong, felt humble, energised, they ought to be on TV, great, let's get old...." And these were just a few from the fifty forms we received. A superb finish to the Conference. Wow!

The Wollongong "Older and Bolder" Day was very successful, too. They wrote: "A very entertaining, important and inspiring program, quite professional." The organiser was very impressed at the way we related to the women at the Conference. It was nice to share lunch with them after the show.

We had a bit of drama with transport on the day. June's car got us to Wollongong, and we pulled into a garage to unload the guitar, etc., thinking we'd found the Town Hall, but unfortunately, we hadn't. Guess what? The car carked out and wouldn't kick over. With assistance from the local organisers of the Conference, we carried the props and guitar up the road a bit, and a very obliging mechanic fixed the car up by 3pm for us to return to Sydney. We do have fun, don't we?

Our first High School performance in front of 900 students and 100 teachers was a huge success. It was the biggest audience we've 'strutted our stuff' for yet. Very vocal, they were, too – clapped, laughed. Our shot at the GST fell a bit flat, but they got most of the satire.

The girls sang the Burwood Girls' High School song for us, and we sang the National Anthem with them. They gave all the cast books with the initials, "BGHS - NOT FOR US ALONE" printed on them. They have videoed the performance and are sending us a copy. I have to admit I was pleasantly surprised by the tumultuous applause - it certainly set the pace for the performance. They want us back next year!!

Exciting news just to hand! The Murray-Malley Area in South Australia have just invited us for a one week tour in late September. In November, we are off on an "Off the Beaten Track" tour, organised by the Southern Area Health Service and Wellness Centre representatives, visiting areas such as Cooma, Crookwell, Gunning, maybe Young, Bega and Moruya.

We are getting around, aren't we? Why don't you join us!!

Phew. See you next month. Peggy Hewett

* * *

FILM REVIEW

One True Thing

Meryl Streep gives the performance of her life in this film, which is set in a New England college town. Renee Zellweger in also brilliant as her ambitious daughter, reacting against maternal homemaking skills and values, but forced to come home by the onset of her mother's illness. William Hurt plays the father – a brilliant English professor who, it seems to his children, has always taken his wife's love and support too much for granted.

One can't dismiss this film as just a melodrama or 'weepie'. Beyond its almost anthropological examination of a 'middle-class' lifestyle, "One True Thing" has interesting things to say about family dynamics, death and dying.

Robin Tranter

Heard In Court:

Q: How many were boys?

A: None.

Q. Were there any girls?

* * *

Q: You say the stairs went down to the basement?

A: Yes.

Q: And these stairs, did they go up again?

A VALEDICTION FOR MOYA HANN

(VALUED MEMBER OF GOSFORD OWN)

Moya died suddenly on Wednesday, 2nd June 1999. All the members of Gosford OWN who had been associated with her were deeply shocked. At OWN Gosford's last meeting held on Friday, 28th May, Moya had read her report relating to a meeting held by the Women's Advisory council (WAC) which Moya had attended recently.

Moya and I shared similar interests and attended seminars, etc., together (as representatives of Gosford OWN) where we endeavoured to improve the quality of life for older women on the Central Coast. I admired her true commitment to others' welfare, and it was always a pleasure for me to receive a phone call from her when we could discuss our latest news of any progress being made by the Committees which we supported.

More recently, Moya had extended her interest in Woy Woy OWN and was very supportive of their endeavours when they produced four successful workshops (two held in 1996 and two in 1999.)

Personally, I have lost a good friend, and as I come to terms with the shock of her sudden death, I recall many happy occasions we shared, and I know that I shall miss her kind, compassionate, caring, concerned qualities – all too rare in today's society. She had a calm presence and an ability to impart (in a gentle but urgent manner) the vital issues that needed support in our community.

So I farewell Moya. I am glad we shared some time together on the sea of life, but she has sailed away, and I have to accept my loss.

Adele Alldis

Ripe for Repetition

*An Anthology
published by OWN*

*Available for \$2.50 from the office
or \$4 posted.*

OWN ABORIGINAL SUPPORT CIRCLE

Seventeen members attended a Healing Ceremony with Mrs. Maisie Cavanagh, a Wiradjuri woman from Cowra. Mrs Cavanagh is the author of the book, "The Rock and the Tree". She, Father Phil Medlin, her niece and her sister, met us at Penrith, and drove us to this site on the Hawkesbury River. We were taken into a bush area about three kilometres long surrounded by permanent and holiday housing, but separated by tall rock hills. In the centre of an open area stands a Port Jackson fig tree which appears to grow out of a circular boulder standing more than two metres tall. The tree, whose branches reach thirty-three metres across, provides shade in the open space. Nearby is an obelisk dated 1952 with an inscription honouring the Hawkesbury Aboriginal People.

Maisie Cavanagh pointed out that this place has been used by Aboriginal people, who have lived in the region for a very long time, as a place for their celebrations. In the 1980s, the Durrribbin Land Council applied to the Government to have this site granted to the Aboriginal Community. Initially, the application failed.

In 1992 Mrs. Cavanagh told us that a spiritual story "came to her," about this huge tree whose enormous roots are lovingly wrapped around the Rock. It was not until 1995 that she was persuaded to write her story down.

When the Aboriginal Community was encouraged to appeal the decision of granting the land, it was suggested to include Mrs Cavanagh's story, "The Rock and the Tree" in the documentation. This site is now Aboriginal land.

Bell birds were singing all about us. There was a special feeling about the place of tranquillity and peace. It is a spiritual place for both Aboriginal women and men. We felt very grateful that Mrs Cavanagh and her family were willing to share this wonderful site with us.

The community have already cleared away rubbish and pulled a lot of weeds. Native trees are regrowing in these cleared areas. They have built a fence and a gate to keep cars from driving into the area. However, those living nearby are invited to use the site for picnics and bush walking. The story of "The Rock and the Tree" is the first item in the book, "The Rock and the Tree", which can be purchased from Pauline Books, Castlereagh St.

Frayda Cooper

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

Most of your Platform for Action applied to all, but could we move away from so much welfarism and alter some of the emphasis to self-funding retirees? There are plenty of us about, without concessions and paying full high price for everything. Four and a half thousand dollars* for a hearing aid has just shocked me to a standstill.

In due course, the government will be unable to afford all these welfare handouts, and the many working women will have paid for their own superannuation, or should have done so. I know there are problems about this. As I see it, people in this retirement village who are "on the pension" have no difficulty in running cars, taking holidays, getting HACC services, just like anyone else.

The Prime Minister is obviously aware of various abuses of the system, and may be able to do something about it. However, what we need is a change of attitude; we should be glad that we are able to pay our own way without welfare handouts, even be proud of it. We have paid our way all our lives, so we should be proud, not whingers.

The PREAMBLE article horrified me enough to write to Mr. Doherty about it.

"WHAT TO DO WHEN SOMEONE DIES - 'Notify Solicitor' should be one of the first actions, if only because some people put directions about the funeral in their will; he will have to be called in some time.

I loved "THINGS PEOPLE SAY IN COURT" and hope it is OK to use it in the Village bulletin.

Margaret Mayo

A vociferous woman of OWN
Whose ideas were very well known
She argued and debated
And loudly orated
That vociferous woman of OWN

Judith

Dear Editor,

I was disappointed to see that in your account of the Edna Ryan Award to Noreen Hewitt (richly deserved) in the last edition of the newsletter, no mention was made of the fact that these awards were initiated by the Women's Electoral Lobby. They organise the events and make the awards

I find it sad to think that women's organisations do not give each other maximum support. I look forward to a correction of this omission.

Yours sincerely

Cate Turner. Member OWN and WEL.

Eds: I agree! We think WEL's initiative definitely deserves recognition, and we apologise for not acknowledging them in last month's report.

Dear Editor,

I really appreciate your support in publishing a notice about my Tai Chi classes in the OWN Newsletter. I have had at least three OWN members in my classes with several others wishing to enroll next term. Thanks.

Judy Laws

Eds: Judy runs 'Tai Chi for Arthritis' classes in Glebe, Haberfield, Balmain and Lilyfield. Phone 9564 1528.

Those put upon women of OWN
Were sitting here having a moan
When Judith comes in
And says, "Now, begin
To compose something funny
But don't expect money

Jean and Muriel

GREEK OWN HELPS TO RAISE FUNDS FOR CANCER RESEARCH

The 24th May is a day that will be remembered for a long time by Greek OWN members.

More than seventy people were gathered at the Multicultural Day Care Centre in Bankstown to take part in Australia's biggest morning tea, to help raise funds for cancer research, education and support programs for patients and their families.

The members of the Greek OWN brought plenty of traditional Greek goodies to make the event more enjoyable. We started at about 10.30 am with a few words to introduce ourselves. Then Robyn William, from the Women's Cancer Support group at Bankstown Community Health Centre, explained what the aims of this Community Service is and the wonderful job that it does.

Dr Christina Gotis-Graham, G.P., said a few words about what cancer is, how we can prevent some types of cancer, for example, by stopping smoking, regular exercise, and eating nutritional food. She also answered a lot of questions asked by the group members.

Ken Ranking from the Cancer Council spoke next with his unique presentation skills. He talked about the wonderful job the Cancer Council has done over the past 40 years.

We warmly thanked all our guest speakers, because without them we could not have the success we have had.

I am glad that the Greek OWN had this opportunity to express interest and concern for the wonderful job that the Cancer Council is doing for the community.

The morning had a very good effect on all our members: they felt very proud of their achievement - raising \$2,000 for the Cancer Council, and they proved even more that older women can offer a lot more, not only to their close families, but to the community in general.

Chris Gotis-Graham

HOW I LOVE THEM AND HOW THEY OWN ME

The phone rang late. "Mum, Okay if we pick up the wardrobe tomorrow morning?"

"Hmm..., I won't be home, have to go to the city..."

"Oh, shucks....well, we have a key, we'll just let ourselves in....."

"Okay, don't forget the alarm is on...."

I would rather be home - however can't just change my plans to fall in with their timetable. When I return home that afternoon, the wardrobe, and numerous other pieces (stored for an initial few months only) now, ten months later, are gone. There is space.... I have my home again. I revel in it.

That evening, I switch on the light in the garage, but darkness remains. I grab a bulb... No fitting left to put it in....

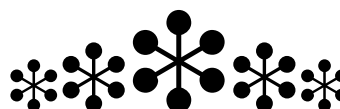
"...very sorry, forgot to tell you, accidentally knocked it when shifting the wardrobe. Need to get a part...will fix next time I'm around..."

Of course, as a Mum, I am very understanding; they are extremely busy.... and doesn't time fly? Two weeks later, I am still waiting. It's not that urgent really. I can manage as I don't often go out at night.

"Mum, come over and see how things are coming along? We're getting the carpet tomorrow..." I am thrilled with the progress. It looks grand, congratulations, you have worked so hard for it... really made do for months while building....great, fantastic....still lots to do of course, but you do that as you go along, now that you are on the spot. Let's celebrate.

That evening I return home glowing with pride. I open the garage. I am still in the dark!!

Hedi Roggeveen



QUICKSILVER

I suppose I must have been about eleven or twelve. I was at the Notre Dame Convent School in Northampton, a small town about 80 miles north of London, where we lived for about five years. I was at the Notre Dame School because the secular Secondary School (we didn't call them High Schools in those days) couldn't take any more pupils. I loved the Notre Dame School. I was the only Jewish girl there, and my parents wouldn't allow me to take part in the prayers, but they gave permission for me to play the piano accompaniment for the hymns in the mornings.

Most of the teachers were nuns, in the full habit of those days. They were of all ages, some pretty and young, some quite elderly. Our French teacher was Sister Monica, young, beautiful and serene. Our Science teacher was Sister Joseph Julie, middle aged, short and plump, very strict, but likeable. Today was Science, and we went into the classroom, (a different one for each subject and a different teacher) and waited for the Sister's arrival. "Good morning, Sister Joseph Julie," we chanted in unison when she arrived, according to the rules. We were taught to behave like ladies. We wore hats and gloves in the streets, and bowed when and wherever we met one of the sisters, on the staircases, in the streets, and said, "Good morning (or afternoon), Sister." We learned our manners.

Today's lesson was wonderful. She demonstrated and talked about Mercury, or Quicksilver, so interesting. At the end of the lesson, she said, "Now, I'm going to give this little blob of mercury to one of you, who shall it be?" And to my delight and surprise, everyone called out, "Renee, Renee....."

The mercury was in a little round box with a glass lid, and I shook with excitement and pleasure all the way home. I cherished it. There were so many lovely things I could do with it. I could turn this little silvery globe into tiny, separate blobs, then shake it gently till it all came together again in one glistening bead. I could grate some red shavings from a crayon into the box and roll the bead around in it, a beautiful, shiny red orb. Or blue. Or green. Or purple. Whatever I chose. I'd never had anything which gave me so much pleasure.

I kept it in a safe place. Or so I thought. I came home from school one day to find my brother, five years younger than me, looking very furtive and worried. "What's up, Stan?" I asked. "Is something wrong?" He burst into tears. Through his sobs, I managed to make out that something had happened to my beloved quicksilver. Tears sprang to my eyes. "What, what?" I screamed. He took me into the dining room, and there, to my horror, was my beautiful mercury in a narrow carved slit in the dining room table, now myriad minute blobs, glistening, unattainable. I was inconsolable. I suppose I must have been angry, must have lost my temper with him, but I don't recall.

In later years, somebody told me I could have retrieved it with a magnet. But I didn't know. I didn't know then that it was a metal as well as a liquid. I don't know what happened to it, but I always remember it with pleasure.

Renee Simons

WHAT PRICE FREEDOM OF OPINION?

2SER-FM, as part of the Healthy Seniors Initiative funded by the Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care, have produced nine 30-minute audio tapes entitled 'The New Age'. The tapes are an IYOP project aiming to challenge stereotypes and community beliefs about aging.

Topics covered were Myths and Realities, Preventative Health, Managing Poor Health, Carers and Caring, Skills and Abilities, Creativity and Learning, Relationships and Social Contacts, Grief and Loss, Housing and Accommodation and Reminiscences and Moving Forward. One hundred older Australians from many different backgrounds talked about their views and experiences and have created a fascinating picture about what it means to be old.

There were meant to be ten tapes. The producers explained at the launch of the series that the comments and opinions expressed by older people (one from OWN) on 'Managing Finances' did not meet with the approval of the funding body. Rather than modify or censor the tape, 2SER chose to remove it from the series.

We have a set of the tapes in the office, which can be listened to in the office or, possibly, borrowed.

Renate Watkinson

DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE CHANGES TO THE AGE PENSION?

The pension has increased for both singles and couples – the maximum single rate of Age and Veteran's Affairs Pensions has risen by \$4.10 a fortnight, while the partnered pension has increased by \$3.50 a person. The deeming rate has also changed. The amount of investment money above \$30,400 for single and \$50,600 for couples is now deemed at 4.5% instead of 5%.

If you claim the pension, there are a number of concessions available, such as discounts on hearing aids and prescriptions and a telephone allowance (paid in January, March, July and September.) Some local and State government departments also discount household bills. There are also concessions for healthcare and travel.

Footnote: *From personal experience, I know that very good hearing aids are available under \$1,000, with a two year guarantee. The MBF gives a \$500 rebate once every five years towards the purchase of a hearing aid. I'll be glad to give further information if required. Renee Simons*

The Carer Allowance

The Carer Allowance is a new payment to people caring for someone who has a disability or is frail aged, or chronically ill. From 1 July 1999, this payment will replace two of the payments that are currently made to carers: the Child Disability Allowance and the Domiciliary Nursing Care Benefit.

On 1 July, 1999, responsibility for the new Carer Allowance will be transferred from the Department of Health and Aged Care to the Department of Family and Community Services, and will be delivered by Centrelink.

People who are already receiving either Domiciliary Nursing Care Benefit or Child Disability Allowance will continue to receive the same amount of money but it will now be called Carer Allowance. Current recipients will not have to do anything, as transfer to the new Carer Allowance will occur automatically.

The changes will make things easier for carers, particularly for those caring for people with dementia, or an intellectual or psychiatric disability.

(People who receive a Carer Payment should check whether they are also eligible to receive a Carer Allowance.)

For more information, phone Centrelink on 132 717

WILLS

There is a difference between a will and a 'living will'

How do you make a valid will?

Your will must be in writing and signed by yourself and two witnesses. To ensure that your wishes are carried out you should appoint an executor (who can be a beneficiary or the Public Trustee).

What will it cost to write a will?

You can write your own will by purchasing a standard will kit for minimal cost from a newsagent, but it is usually best to seek the advice of a solicitor.

What is the difference between a will and a 'living will'?

While a will states your wishes when you die, a 'living will' outlines your wishes while you are alive.

It usually contains the following:

- ❖ Who you want to make treatment decisions for you
- ❖ The medical treatment and procedures that you object to
- ❖ If you are unlikely to recover, that no medical help be given to prolong your life

Although living wills are not legally binding in NSW they are likely to have a strong influence on your medical treatment. It is important that the documents are kept in a safe place, and your executor, friends and family should know where they are kept.

If you would like more information about wills or 'living wills' contact the **Seniors Information Service 13 12 44.**


If anyone would like a copy of my 6-page report on the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women session in New York, March 1999, please ring me: Margaret Sargent 9660 5925 or 9523 9558.

The Report will also provide a background for those interested in the Beijing Plus 5 meeting to be held in Sydney in July.

NOTICE

LOSS AND GRIEF IN LATER LIFE

National Association for Loss and Grief (NALAG)
One-day conference Monday 30 August
9 – 4.30 at the Masonic Centre, Castlereagh Street
Cost: \$95
Phone 9988 3376 for more info

*Can the contributor of a short, recently submitted article called **GETTING OLD, BUT....** please contact the Editor on 9247 7046?* 

Please help!

After six years and over a million copies, our trusty old photocopier has finally karked it!! The new one has cost us \$16,000, which means we're skint!

We are asking for your donations to help us get back on track.

Please send your donation - large or small - to
OWN, 87 Lower Fort Street, Millers Point 2000

CONNECTIONS IN COMMUNITY CARE

Health HACC Interface
3 – 4 August 1999
8.30 am registration
Cost: \$165 conc.
Wesley Centre, 220 Pitt Street, Sydney
Phone NCOSS 9211 2599 for more information.

INTRODUCTION TO COMPUTERS

FOR WORKERS & VOLUNTEERS IN COMMUNITY CENTRES

Sydney Institute of Technology
A FREE course at Randwick TAFE
3 hours per week.

For more information call
Randwick Campus, 9469 8539

**Accept that some days you're
the pigeon,
and some days you're the statue.**

BOARD

WEBSITE FOR SCHOOLS

An colourful and eye-catching website for schools has just become available, "The Journey of Life".

It lists:

Teachers Resources, What is IYOP, Get Involved,
Don't call me Granny, Send an ECard, Facts about Ageing...

<http://www.iyop.nsw.gov.au/>

OTHER IYOP EVENTS:

- | | |
|------------|---|
| July 7 | Seniors Variety Concert, Sydney Town Hall, 11am, \$16/\$12, ph. 9524 2458 |
| July 5-26 | Koori Art Exhibition 'Our Elders' Casula Power House |
| July 6-7 | Older Women's Wellness Forum, ph. OWN 9247 7046 |
| July 14 | Hornsby Shire Council Seniors Driver Refresher Program, Central Library ph. Ms. Linda Kirk 9487 6535 |
| July 19 | Ageing and Active: Australia in the 21st Century, one-day conference on social, financial, health and lifestyle issues. Dr. Diana Olsberg 9385 2396 |
| July 21 | Aged Accommodation Options Seminar: Chatswood, bookings 9448 3904 |
| July 20-23 | 4-day Generational celebration Sutherland Entertainment Ctr., Eton St., Sutherland, Maree Hutchens, 9710 0422 |
| July 21 | Premier's Seniors Achievement Awards to honour the contributions of seniors in community activities, Sydney Town Hall, 9273 6611 |
| July 27 | Old Time New Vogue Tea Dance, Paddington Town Hall, free 4754 4861 |

**I don't suffer from
stress
I'm a carrier**

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.com.au/~ownnsw>