



# OWN MATTERS

*Newsletter of the Older Women's Network New South Wales Inc.  
No. 12 October 2002*

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## What Am I?

A stirrer? To bring to the surface of sight  
the muddy intentions of powers that blight  
the peace of our days in the autumn of life;  
who think they know best what is right for the old  
and would still every voice that dares to be bold.

The grit? – in the oyster which legend has it  
produces the pearls which so lustrously sit  
on necks of the wealthy; but also with wit,  
create pearls of wisdom in these days of strife  
to help some problems that plague us in life.

A diamond? Whose hard edge can cut wide and deep a  
swathe through the promises polities don't keep,  
a tool to allow one to try shape earth's heaps;  
make rocks of security, wellness and fun  
and end the disaster of bad laws and guns.

A grain in the sand? By plunderers mined,  
against laws of nature, shorelines redefined;  
used to build monuments which just remind  
us of egocentricity, men of great power,  
how we must be brave – to challenge, not cower.

Do I muddy the waters and sting with the grit  
cut needlessly deep with the edge of one's wit;  
does love conquer all, and should small grains of sand  
just go with the flow and ebb from the land?  
Hell, there's no way I'll change, take me as I am!

**Noreen Hewett**

## **OWN Matters**

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

It is published 11 times a year.  
Subscriptions are \$20.

### **Who Are We?**

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

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

### **Contributions**

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

They can be sent by mail or email  
marked 'Attention – Editorial  
Team'. Please include contact  
details.

Contributions must be received by  
the second Monday of  
each month.

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# Point of View

## **Creating a Stronger Older Women's Community**

Eva Cox, guest speaker at OWN Sydney's first AGM on 23 August, began by suggesting that today's community is different to those of the 30s and 50s. Earlier generations had a belief that things could be better (the United Nations, the Welfare State, scientific discoveries and so on) and they thought they could change things politically. They saw themselves with obligations and believed that by working in communities they could make it happen.

Since the 80s, people have become less optimistic and more uncertain. Scary events in the past twenty or so years have made it harder to be politically optimistic – politicians are distrusted, some are behaving very badly.

Governments are 'demonising' particular groups of people, which creates fear and uncertainty in communities. Rising racism, fear of refugees and calls for 'law and order' can be seen as people's reactions to uncertainty about the future and distrust of those in power. 'Demonising' is very harmful to collective action for the common good because it undermines a feeling of community.

In the Treasurer's Intergenerational Report, older people are presented as a burden, and in the media, older people are commonly presented as 'bloodsuckers'. How to counter this view? We need to work out how to present alternative ideas to young people, to use the level of knowledge that older people have acquired, to produce images that promote the idea that we can have a positive society, that a better society is possible. Eva warmly acknowledged the role of the OWN Theatre Group in presenting positive images of older women.

Not only do we need to reaffirm ideas of fairness, generosity and respect... and respect for difference ... we must celebrate the fact that we are living longer – good on us!

Eva suggested that to create a stronger older women's community, we must face the challenge of how to start using the skills of older women to create a sense that we can trust, that there is reason for optimism, to project ideas about become a trusting community.

Suggestions from members of OWN Sydney included emphasising to governments the volunteer work that many older women are involved in; using our compassion to support those groups being demonised; ventilating our views; forging links to meet new circumstances, writing about our experiences and telling our stories.

Eva finished up with a caution that we must resist governments and others looking at older women as free labour. Older people have many skills and we need to value that. We are being increasingly conscripted into the family as volunteers and need to be aware when we are being exploited. In terms of creating a stronger older women's community, it's a process, and there are no easy answers.

**Reporter: Joy Ross**

# OWN NSW Coordinators' Report

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The 2002-3 Management Team is settling into the rhythm of OWN NSW. It is a new journey for some and a variation on immediate past experience for others.

This month sees some good news on the near horizon for our public liability insurance trials. After all the ups and downs, stories of highly inflated amounts and a roller coaster ride to penury, Kris Ferguson has negotiated cover through Meals on Wheels for another twelve months that approximates last year's costs. OWN NSW owes many thanks to Kris and Pam Ledden for their efforts on our behalf.

Also, the NSW Government has paid the Commonwealth Government's share of the 2002 increase in Social and Community Services Award. An amount of \$2100 was owed to OWN to fund Jan Malley, the Bankstown Wellness Centre project worker for her full salary under the Award. The NSW Government decided to fund the amount so that workers and their community employers were not disadvantaged by the Commonwealth's refusal to fund its share. \$2100 means a lot to a group such as ours that is run on a not for profit basis and where there is no 'fat'.

This month, Dorothy Buckland Fuller, a member of the Management Team, and Dorothy Cora, our Information and

Resource Coordinator, attended a meeting of Greek older women in Ashfield to discuss the formation of an Ashfield Greek OWN. Dorothy Buckland Fuller is Greek and as a result of her involvement in community radio, was well known (at least her voice was!) to many of the twenty older women present.

Coordinator, Mollie Smith, on behalf of OWN NSW, welcomed noted specialist Dr John Yu and others to our premises at Lower Fort Street for the official launch of Medicines Line, a no cost phone service which is available to people seeking information on the medicines that are prescribed for them – see full report page 4.

For the seven NSW groups who are members of OWN Australia, the Annual Conference on 29 September to 1 October at Burgmann College, ANU, is fast approaching. We look forward to meeting friends and colleagues from around Australia.

OWN NSW will also be well represented at the 2002 Bourke Women's Gathering, entitled *Fortitude and Far Horizons*, with the Theatre Group performing and Mollie Smith facilitating a workshop on setting up an Older Women's Network group. We look forward to some positive outcomes.

**Pat Simpson, Mollie Smith, Cate Turner, Anne Warren.**

## Public Relations

OWN NSW wants to put more zest into increasing the profile of OWN groups with government departments and reaching out to older women across the state who are potential subscribers to *OWN Matters* and/or future members of an OWN group.

The PR Committee is seeking new members with expertise and enthusiasm to be part of this exciting development. If you would like to be involved please phone 9247 7046.

## Women of Vision & Action

*Women of Vision and Action* is an organisation based in Canada. It is a worldwide network of emerging and established women leaders from all backgrounds who are dedicated to a vision of positive change for the future and who are actively involved in making their visions real in the world.

They believe that this is a momentous time in history when women all over the world are feeling the call to take a bold stand and demonstrate the face of leadership based on the underlying principles of harmony, peace, balance, partnership and cooperation.

The old story, based on greed, competition, over-consumption, disrespect, disharmony and disempowerment has created an unsustainable, unhealthy, unstable and unsafe planet where no one can truly thrive. The new story will be infused with spirit-based principles of respect, honour, compassion, cooperation, harmony and life-sustaining love for all inhabitants of our planet.

On 8 March 2003, International Women's Day, they are calling women around the world to gather in parks, community centres, places of worship, open spaces, meeting halls, arenas, living rooms — wherever three or more can gather — to join their energies with the millions of women worldwide who believe there is a better way. They are encouraging women everywhere to participate...to plan local *Gather the Women* events on March 8 and to participate in the week-long activities beginning March 3 to prepare themselves for the March 8 gathering

For more information go to <[www.gatherthewomen.org](http://www.gatherthewomen.org)>

# Theatre Group Report

Our performance on August 31 at La Perouse School was a gala event. It was a surprise party to celebrate Lucy Porter's 70<sup>th</sup> birthday. The family invitation included in-laws and out-laws from Queensland, NSW and Sydney, and the many friends that Lucy has gathered over the years. The Theatre Group was in excellent form and our 45-minute composite performance was enthusiastically received with whistles and foot stamping. Following a fantastic birthday lunch for around a hundred people, a belly dancer entertained us, weaving her way around the hall, enticing and inviting the audience to join her. It was a joyful afternoon filled with love, mirth and goodwill.

Performing for the Illawarra Area Health Service on September 18 means a 'crack o'dawn' start for most of us. This helps us to appreciate the effort Norma Bastock makes to come up from Nowra every week to attend rehearsals and venues.

At long last we have attained a goal we have been working towards for some years. In September, two groups will be performing simultaneously, each with a musician. Ann Cunynghame will play for the group going off to the Women's Gathering in Bourke from 27 to 29 September and Elizabeth Swain is playing for the group at the OWN Australia National Conference in Canberra on Monday night following the conference dinner. This has been possible due to the enthusiastic participation by our group and our director, Louise Anike.

October performances are on Saturday 12 at the Anglican Retirement Village, Castle Hill, at Mountains OWN on Wednesday 16, and on Tuesday 22, we are performing at *Older Women, Violence and Abuse*, a Forum for service providers.

Foreshadowed in last month's report arising out of the Women on Wheels Tour, we now have two definite bookings for December. On the 1<sup>st</sup> we will be in Forster, and on the 8<sup>th</sup> in the Hunter Valley. We have also received an expression of interest from Quirindi to perform in 2003 to TAFE and High School students and from Bowraville where they are considering setting up an OWN group. This gives impetus to the value of OWN's presence on such tours and underlines the need for rural women to know about OWN and its policies.

At the end of October the group will be looking forward to the 'Happy Heart' weekend being organised by OWN Nowra at Jervis Bay.

That's all for now, folks.

**Merle Highet**

.....  
● **Our New (*compassionate*) National Anthem** ●

● *Australians all let us lament, our country's all at sea;*  
● *We've golden soil and wealth for toil, but still it's me, me, me;*

● *Our land abounds in Nature's gifts, of beauty rich and rare;*  
● *We've room for all, so join the call, "Fair go for refugees".*

● Refrain:  
● *Oh Johnny Howard, can't you see, "Fair go for Refugees".*

## Over the counter... Into your mouth... What are you taking?

A new service called Medicines Line was launched at OWN on Wednesday, 4 September. Why was it launched at OWN? Our premises were suggested by NCOSS as a suitable venue for the launch. The Management Team of OWN NSW were approached by the National Prescribing Service (NPS), an independent Australian organisation which supports quality use of medicines, to see if OWN would be willing to provide the venue for the launch. The Management Team agreed.

Medicines Lines will be a non-profit, community service to consumers and will provide independent, accurate information about medicines. This will cover prescription medicines, over-the-counter medicines, herbal and natural remedies. By phoning **1300 888 763** Mondays to Fridays, 9am-6pm (EST) for the cost of a local call, people will be able to speak to a health professional.

In his introduction to the service, Dr Stephen Phillips, Chair of the NPS, said that over 70% of Australians are using medicines at any one time. Close to 200 million prescriptions are dispensed each year, an average of ten prescriptions per person.

In addition to prescription medicines, some 35% of people self-medicate and another 26% use vitamin or mineral products. Dr Phillips said that up to 10% of problems arising from the use of medicines occur due to people not fully understanding their medicines.

Last year people were most interested in information on antidepressants, herbal medicines and medicines for high blood pressure.

Continued page 5

Dr John Yu, who is perhaps best known for being CEO of the Children's hospital for 20 years, and is now Chancellor of the University of NSW, in his speech gave a gracious tribute to OWN, saying that he was pleased that the launch was held at OWN because OWN gives a voice to people who may not normally be heard. He went on to say that many international and national health bodies support the notion of assisting consumers to take a more active and informed role in managing their health and thereby participating in the decision-making process. Increasingly consumers are also demanding better access to health-related information.

A recent Australian study showed that up to 28% of the population is seeking health information via the Internet and this number is increasing. Information available on the Internet and other public resources is not always evidence based and is of variable quality.

Nicola Ballenden the Senior Health Policy Officer with the Australian Consumers' Association spoke about consumers' rights including the right to have clear and frank disclosure in the area of health services.

For we consumers one of the attractions of 'Medicines Line' is that one does not need a computer to access information and a consumer will be able to speak to a real person. There were a number of representatives of various organisations at the launch including The Heart Foundation, and several OWN members. It was good publicity for OWN, with many people at the launch taking one of our brochures.

**Mollie Smith**

## Community Action in Bourke

On Monday, 2nd September, Elaine Telford, our guest speaker, told the group about a recent two-month stay in Bourke, where she and her husband John developed a community action plan. It is compulsory for local governments in New South Wales to work out a social plan every year. Elaine and John have had much experience in this field, having lived in Bordertown, (on the border of South Australia and Victoria), Oombulgarri, (formerly the Forest River Anglican Mission, Western Australia) and Murrin Bridge.

Bourke has a population of approximately 3,000 people, of whom 40% are Aboriginal. Thirty-two external agencies are involved in servicing the community.

Elaine and John consulted with the community to pinpoint major "blocks" stopping future development. One of the main culprits is intrusion from external agencies. Also, people expressed frustration that they were constantly consulted but no action resulted. Journalists and Government agencies fly in and out, issue reports, but don't live in the town to experience real local conditions.

After extensive consultation, a full day workshop was organised with 40 people, half indigenous and half non-indigenous, with five specific foci. The workshop proved to be a safe place for dealing with issues. Seven strategies were developed as follows:

- 1) Growth in respect of each others cultures.
- 2) A community beautification project.
- 3) Two youth representatives on decision-making committees.
- 4) Develop and coordinate crisis and family intervention programs.
- 5) Facilitate/coordinate community development.
- 6) Increase and sustain participation in education.
- 7) Employment/training think tank.

After a thorough search, a person acceptable to the community has been appointed to facilitate these strategies. Elaine expressed disappointment that she and John did not have a chance to teach skills in basic management and leading workshops and meetings.

Ten years ago, reports on Bourke described it as a disaster area. Now there is a women's refuge, an Aboriginal pre-school, several excellent schools, a Tafe, and significant engagement in cultural expression. The Cotton Growers' Association has trained 24 young people who have gone on to other employment. But while there is much goodwill, the town still has to come to terms with racism – there is only one Aboriginal person on the city council, and as yet, no Aboriginal people serve in shops.

Elaine and John's expertise is based on the Institute of Cultural Affairs (ICA), a non-profit, tax-exempt company, which aims to empower and facilitate creative change within individuals, organisations and communities.

**Pat Zinn**

**The next meeting of the Aboriginal Support Circle will be a visit to the Australian National Maritime Museum, Darling Harbour on Monday, 14 October at 10.45 am. We will be having a guided tour of Saltwater - Yirrkala bark paintings at 11am. The cost is \$4.80 per person, which includes entrance fee plus the tour. All welcome.**

## A Valued Volunteer

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For over fifty years Noreen Hewett, social justice activist extraordinaire, has worked with dedication and determination to break down barriers to women's participation in all areas of life. And, at 82, she's still at it!

Two years ago, not long after she relocated to the southern suburbs, Noreen set about establishing an Older Women's Network Wellness Centre in the Sutherland municipality. Undeterred by advice that there was no government money for new projects, Noreen and Barbara Burnham approached Sutherland Council with a clearly reasoned and tightly researched funding submission, were rewarded with a seeding grant for their first year of operation and the centre opened in April 2001. In addition to her voluntary role at the centre, she spends many hours every week resolutely exploring government and non-government networks for funding leads to ensure that the centre can continue to remain open.

In June this year, not content to rest on her laurels, Noreen initiated the formation of a Sutherland Older Women's Network group on the basis that many women attending a Wellness Centre may also be interested in exploring local issues that impact on women's lives.

Despite a lack of formal education and training, and few financial resources, Noreen's history as a volunteer is long and illustrious. From 1948 to 1970, she was an active volunteer with the Union of Australian Women, during which time she was editor of 'Our Women' from 1961 to 1966. 'Our Women' featured many articles on the struggle for equal pay and better working conditions for nurses and women workers in the metal, clothing and textile trades.

During the Vietnam War, Noreen used her political skills and eloquence to initiate the women-only campaign 'Save Our Sons' which fought conscription and Australia's involvement in Vietnam.

During the 80s and 90s she turned her attention to older people's issues, occupying many state and national positions in pensioner organisations. She fought fierce opposition, from men in these organisations, to her demand for the right to establish women-only discussion groups so older women could voice their different needs and develop assertiveness skills.

In 1985, Noreen successfully lobbied for government funding to research issues of concern to older women, and this led, in 1987, to the formation of the Older Women's Network.

Noreen argued persuasively that older women should challenge their invisibility by presenting their lives and political concerns in theatrical skits and satirical

songs rather than in talk-fest style, and this, of course, led to the formation of the OWN Theatre Group.

In 1991, Noreen decided to devote all her time to OWN. She was on the OWN Inc. Working Committee for a number of years and, with her special interest in women determining their own needs, became active in the health group and in lobbying the NSW Department of Health to fund research into women's special health needs.

A few years later, largely through Noreen's vision and ceaseless efforts, the Bankstown Older Women's Wellness Centre was funded by the Department of Health. Not long after that, the Northside Wellness Centre was opened, providing another distinctive, self-designed blueprint for healthy ageing.

Noreen's determination and commitment to women's rights is demonstrated in the creative verse, written by her in 1999, which is on page one of this issue of *OWN Matters*.

**Dorothy Cora**

### What's Popular?

Overwhelmingly the most popular feature for participants in OWN Wellness Centre Sutherland is the welcoming atmosphere. All remark on the absence of cliques, and the feeling of belonging.

We have eight hours of exercises on two days – Gentle Exercises, International Dance, Tai Chi and Feldenkreis. Discussion topics range from books, women's health, laughter therapy and poetry, to women and children in detention camps in Australia – the latter showing differences but no angry divisions. 'Our Psyche' is a popular topic facilitated by Vianney Hatton. Adele is hooked on haiku. She researched its history, made haikus mentally every day, and helped run a poetry session.

We have volunteer teams for Management, newsletter, Caring/Catering, library, risk management, program design, session monitors, and more. Women have written to MP's to lobby for the Centre, and helped get donations from local organisations. Now we have a training program for group leadership and other skills, part of an outreach project into the Shire localities.

We're also cooperating in a project on women's health over the age of 65 with a Health Research Unit in South East Sydney Area Health Service.

**Noreen Hewett.**

## A Good Example or a Horrible Warning

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Your health is in your hands. This was the message given by Diana Russell, Nurse Educator from Diabetes Australia, at a very interesting diabetes information day held on 7<sup>th</sup> August. Diana patiently led us through the facts and explained, if we are diagnosed with diabetes, how to manage and control it.

Diana explained that Type 2 diabetes is a lifestyle disease strongly associated with family history. It is the fastest growing disease worldwide. Risk factors of the disease are a family history of diabetes, abdominal obesity, heart disease, high blood pressure and age. Lifestyle behaviours which may contribute to the onset of the disease are inactivity and diets high in saturated fats and highly processed foods. Type 2 diabetes accounts for 85% to 90% of all cases of diabetes. There are over one million cases of diabetes in Australia with an estimated 50% not yet diagnosed, so it is essential to see your doctor and have a fasting blood glucose test (not a finger prick) to find out if you have the disease.

Diabetes is present when there is too much glucose in the blood. Glucose, a form of sugar, is the main source of fuel for our bodies

and comes from food containing carbohydrates. Insulin is a hormone that lowers glucose levels in the blood.

Diabetes occurs when the pancreas (the organ responsible for producing insulin) is either unable to make insulin or the insulin is unable to work effectively. Without insulin doing its job, glucose builds up in the blood leading to high blood glucose levels. It is a metabolic progression and if left untreated your health will suffer. Uncontrolled and untreated diabetes can lead to strokes, heart attacks, kidney disease, blindness and amputation of limbs.

How to live with diabetes? Working with your GP or diabetes clinic to formulate a progressive management plan with constant monitoring and awareness is essential if you are to maintain good health. Permanent lifestyle changes need to be made with exercise and diet. Diabetes Australia (Phone: 1300 136 588 or 1800 640 862) have a lot of information available to assist you, and remember if you have diabetes you can be a good example or a horrible warning!

*Lucy Porter*

## Depression may 'worsen' age-related macular degeneration

Depression, although not actually responsible for worsening underlying eye conditions, makes a person's vision seem worse than it is, say US researchers.

Age-related macular degeneration (AMD) is a common cause of deteriorating vision in older people. One-third of participants were depressed at the start of the study. They also had significantly greater levels of physical disability than non-depressed patients.

When they were re-evaluated six months later, the researchers found that those patients whose depression had worsened also had a decline in *self-reported* vision function, regardless of *actual* vision deterioration.

The study concludes that worsening depressive symptoms are related to *perceived* vision function. They suggest that as depression is a treatable disorder, people with AMD should be able to look forward to improved outcomes.

From: [www.surgerydoor.co.uk/news/detail.asp?offset=2639](http://www.surgerydoor.co.uk/news/detail.asp?offset=2639)

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## Spots, Floaters and Flashes

Spots or floaters are small, semi-transparent or cloudy particles within the vitreous, the clear jelly-like fluid that fills the inside of your eyes. They are quite common and usually, but not always, harmless. Appearing as threadlike strands or cobwebs, floaters are most visible when you look at a light background, such as the sky. It is common to have spots or floaters after having cataracts removed.

Spots and floaters are caused by: deterioration of the vitreous fluid, which is part of the natural ageing process; certain eye diseases or injuries; small flecks of protein or other matter trapped during the formation of the eye before birth.

Seeing flashes or streaks of light usually means that the vitreous is shrinking. It may become detached from the back of your eye. This is common and rarely leads to serious eye problems.

It is very important that these flashes are checked immediately as it may also be a symptom of retinal detachment, which although rare, requires urgent treatment.

Although spots and floaters are usually harmless, you should see your optometrist for a thorough eye examination when you first begin to see them or when you notice changes or increases in them.

[www.eyefloaters.com](http://www.eyefloaters.com)

# Letters to the Editor

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## Refugee Appeal

I am writing to thank you for your generous donation to our Friends of Zainab appeal. Your donation will help Zainab complete her HSC this year and will contribute to the education of other students on Temporary Protection Visas.

All funds are held in trust in the school accounts and are allocated according to need. In 2002 we have used these funds to pay Zainab a fortnightly allowance in lieu of the Special Benefits (students on Temporary Protection Visas become ineligible for benefits if they remain in full time education after their eighteenth birthday), and provide our younger refugee students with essentials for schooling.

Thank you again for your contribution. A receipt is enclosed.

**Dorothy Hoddinott**  
Principal, Holroyd High School

## Another View

An answer to Jan Carroll's letter to the Editor, September issue, *OWN Matters*. Whilst Jan's anger at the current HRT scare is understandable, I did exactly what she suggested, "Work if out for yourselves". (Myself). The actual increase in the number of breast cancer cases was eight in 10,000 patients. My GP said that the dosage given was *double* that prescribed for most Australian women. The age group was mainly 60-70. No distinction was made between smokers and non-smokers, drinkers and non-drinkers (two glasses per day is a contributing factor for breast cancer). Other factors, such as breast feeding, were not considered, and anecdotal evidence would suggest that more Australian women were breastfeeding in the appropriate time frame than US women.

As I approach the age when my mother began to have fractures (two wrists, ankle and hip), with a good bone density reading, I won't be giving up HRT or the wine either!

Perhaps we should shift the blame from drug companies and doctors and think of the savings to the Commonwealth Government's Pharmaceutical Budget if hundreds of thousands of Australian women come off HRT. This may explain our Health Minister's silence.

**Annette Butterfield**

## Alive and Well

Do you remember the film, *Cunnamulla*? It portrayed the seamy side of this small Queensland town 150km from the NSW border, population 1500.

Cunnamulla is an attractive town with turn-of-the-century timber buildings and massed petunias flourishing in the main street, nourished by artesian water. The dust bowl begins at the edge of town.

Two hundred students attend the local school where they can continue to secondary level. About 70% of the students are of Aboriginal descent. The school is a pleasant place, well equipped and progressive. Students are encouraged in personal development skills and also learn farm management on the school's farm nearby. Student artwork on the noticeboard gently mocks the teachers, which shows the kind of relationships they have. The parents of the Aboriginal children used to be scared to visit the school but now that fear has broken down. There are 45 people employed at the school, including some Aboriginal women.

Some of the Aboriginal children go to University in Toowoomba,

although many of them find that leaving their comfort zone is too much to cope with. Family ties are so very strong.

Cunnamulla is alive and well. Yes, it has its problems, drug abuse and all that goes with it, but what town or city does not?

**Joan Johns**

## Free Legal Advice

I am writing to introduce myself as the new Principal Solicitor at Inner City Legal Centre. Our Centre provides free general legal advice by appointment to people living and working in the city, inner city and eastern suburbs, and ongoing representation to marginalised and low income people in the areas of discrimination, employment, victims compensation, some criminal matters and some consumer and civil matters. We run a gay and lesbian legal advice service in association with the Gay and Lesbian Rights lobby, and we have a special interest in the needs of transsexual and transgender clients. Phone 9332 1966

**Natalie Ross**  
Principal Solicitor

## The Best Laid Plans ...

Do you remember the article I wrote in August *OWN Matters* re payment of doctors in public hospitals?

I pointed out that they earn only \$40 an hour and it went into print as \$90! A very different kettle of fish – more than twice as much! My four looked like a nine, hence the mistake. I would not have written the article if the figure had been \$90, and I apologise to all the doctors concerned. The best laid plans of mice and me (sic) went astray.

Any comments from readers about our value system in this society?

**Joan Johns**

## Leaving Secrets Behind ...

Edith was 75 and had lived the last 20 years of her life on her own in Cootamundra, since her daughter and two sons had married and left home. Her husband had deserted her soon after the birth of her third child, so she was used to being alone, but she had an active social life in various community groups.

She was mystified by a letter she received from the Benevolent Society which read, "We have received an enquiry you may be able to assist us with – it is a personal matter, but is not urgent". After a few days of puzzling, she rang the social worker who had written the letter, and was absolutely stunned to hear that her first child, a daughter who had been born when she was 17, two years before she married, was making enquiries about her. Edith had vivid memories of the horrendous experience of getting pregnant, being sent away by her parents to an unmarried mothers' home and giving birth under the judgmental eyes of nurses who gave her little time and nil sympathy. She only saw the baby briefly and signed the adoption papers because she had no other choice.

She coped with it all by trying to forget, but so often she'd watch the TV or pick up a women's magazine and there was the dread word "adoption". She was always relieved that she'd never told her husband, so her children had never found out about an experience she felt deeply ashamed of, although in her rational mind she knew she had done the best thing for herself and for the baby, given her parents' attitude, and given the complete lack of services to help her in the 1940s. The father had been in the services, and he'd been sent to New Guinea even before he knew she was pregnant. She never knew

what happened to him.

So there she was, faced with a huge decision – how could she open up something which had been closed for so long – how could she ever tell her kids, and her grandchildren that there was "another one"?

And why would a 58 year old adopted woman suddenly come looking for her? Edith discovered that her daughter, Janelle, had waited until her adoptive parents had died to make any enquiries; but she'd been an only child and was longing to know if she had siblings – and was anxious to have some medical history. After many long talks with the social worker, Edith sent Janelle a letter and received back a letter and photo, which showed a woman so like Edith's aunt that she knew this was 'for real'. It took Edith nearly a year of thinking, crying and talking (she took her oldest

friend into her confidence) before she decided, "I've got to tell the family and I've got to meet her". She did both, and a very gradual friendship is growing between them, and between her "kept" daughter and Janelle who live only an hour apart. Despite the difficulties of the past year, Edith now has a feeling of relief that Janelle had a good life, her children did not condemn her – they just said, "But why didn't you tell us before?" – and that she has three more grandchildren to add to her collection!

Since adoption information legislation gave mothers and adopted people rights to information, many many older women have "come out of the closet" and discovered the freedom of leaving secrets behind. We welcome enquiries, anonymous or not; by phone, email or letter. The Post-Adoption Resource Centre is a service of The Benevolent Society. Phone Petrina Slaytor on 9365 3444.

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## I Got it Wrong...

I was looking forward to a lovely easy day. I looked at my calendar, just to check. Shock, horror! An appointment with a specialist for a check up in a couple of hours. How could I have forgotten? How could I get there in time?

I made the bed, washed up, tidied up as best I could in the little time available. I showered and dressed, fixed my hair and rushed out. I forgot to turn on the answering machine, but no time to go back. I drove to the station and parked the car (of course, this happened a couple of years ago, before I had my fall), just missing the train that would have got me there with a little time to spare. The next train eventually arrived. Fortunately, just a short journey to Macquarie Street, but that was the easy part. Up the first escalator, up the second, up the steep stairs into Macquarie Street, breathless and worried because it was such a long walk from there to the doctor's office. I went as fast as I could. It started to rain. I had no umbrella. I'd left it in the car...

I arrived at the doctor's office, panting, red-faced, breathless, happy to see there were no other patients waiting, so I would be attended to fairly quickly. And I was on time, believe it or not! The receptionist greeted me pleasantly. "I just made it in time," I said. "How do you mean?" she said. "Do you mean I got the time wrong?" I asked. "No," she said. "You got the day wrong. Doctor is overseas on holiday. Your appointment is in two weeks' time...."

*Renee Simons*

# At and Beyond the Rocks

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## Nowra

At a recent meeting of OWN Nowra we enjoyed sharing the "Bees in our Bonnets", and what a buzz that stirred up! Twelve members participated, all with something to 'get off their chests'.

Barbara C. was first, and she could hardly contain herself – the distress, indignation and anger she feels over the treatment of asylum seekers. What makes her so incensed is the attitude of many Australians in their readiness to believe the untruths spread around concerning refugees. Other members joined her with incidents they have heard of, stories 'hyped up' by the media, and the comments by (dare we say 'racist') politicians. We all had plenty to say – a vocal and passionate lot.

Winifred's bonnet is buzzing because of another inaccuracy. She wants the inhabitants of the United States of America to stop calling themselves 'Americans'. "What about Canadians, Brazilians, Mexicans and so many others who also live on the American continent?" she asks. "Those who live in the USA could call themselves 'Usans' and not take such a proprietary attitude."

Most of us had a say on the constant inane and insincere remarks like "Have a nice day", "Absolutely", "No worries", "No problem" and "She'll be right", all quite unnecessary. Also the derogatory and conciliatory manner used by many when referring to older persons.

Faye added that there was no excuse for the bad grammar and incorrect pronunciation that is often used by those persons who are frequently heard on the airwaves. And why do they adopt

such an exaggerated and over-dramatic tone of voice when reading their plain and simple stories? And the TV ads are also presented like melodramas!

Val was also hostile about the media and the 'beat up' they give to news items on topics such as 'nutrition' and 'advances in medical science'. "TV and radio 'experts' give far too much information that is shallow and misinformed," she feels. "This can be dangerous, and gives out false hope to sufferers."

The lack of honour and respect paid to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists is a source of irritation to Everal. She feels that they are not shown the recognition they deserve. "Unlike those who succeed in the sporting

field, Aboriginal dancers, painters, composers and actors are not seen as deserving praise in modern day Australia, and the white community should confront its own racism on this," she reminded us.

The use of mobile phones, especially on trains; 'road rage' directed at women; those large toilet rolls where the follow-on sheets are impossible to get at; windfalls of fruit left lying on the ground to rot rather than be collected and shared. These were more of the topics that had us all abuzz.

A stimulating afternoon. Why not try it in your group. You may be surprised at the subjects that cause a stir.

**Barbara Robertson**

## Kiama

Kiama OWN has taken the first steps to make the group exciting and enjoyable by forming a committee of sorts and also mapping out some future 'directions'.

As part of our new direction, we had a coffee morning at Yvonne Kingsford-Archer's home in August followed by a coffee morning at the Bookshop coffee shop in Kiama in early September.

Earlier in the year we joined Illawarra OWN at Corrimal Community Centre for the Biggest Morning Tea – a delightful day with entertainment by their singing group and a wonderful morning tea. Everyone was so friendly and warmly welcoming. We travelled to Corrimal by community bus, picking up members from Shellharbour OWN on the way.

Since then, members of Illawarra OWN have been to visit us during our July meeting, giving us helpful advice to stimulate more interest in our Kiama group. Their singing group has also entertained Kiama Probus Club.

My experience of getting to know about OWN was at a meeting in the Kiama Community Centre where the OWN Theatre Group entertained us by singing songs and keeping us in stitches laughing at their clever words to well-known melodies relating to our lives as older women.

The aim for OWN is to maintain the health and wellbeing of older women and showing how age is no limit when one is involved in making it happen.

**Jean Grosse**

# At and Beyond the Rocks

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## Shellharbour

Shellharbour OWN has been very busy networking and enjoying guest speakers and outings including joining Nowra OWN in celebrating their 10th anniversary.

Members who live alone regularly meet on the last Sunday of the month at Nan Pitt's for a BBQ. This provides an opportunity to enjoy Nan's beautiful garden and outlook as well as catching up with members who have become good, supportive friends.

Some members of the group have travelled to the UK or within Australia for holidays and to celebrate the Queen's Jubilee we took a 'right royal trip down memory lane'. We recently commenced holding regular discussions on topics that are provided by members and each person is asked to express their view on the topic.

Guest speakers have included Dianne O'Brien who spoke on an adult mentoring scheme for school children, and Valli Beattie, the consumer advocate for Illawarra Health, who discussed her role and that of the local Healthwatch group. Some members of the group were interested to hear that Valli will represent and support consumers with any issues they have with local health services.

Outings have included a shopping spree with Mission Australia to all their shops in the area. Members were chauffeured to each store and, in between finding many bargains, were fed morning tea and a delicious light lunch. Some members went to see *Chicago* and had a champagne lunch at a local club.

Future events include speakers on self-healing and HRT. At the end of September the group is looking forward to a visit to Bowral to see the tulips.

Reported by **Caroline Davis**

## Penrith

Thelma Anderson wrote a successful submission to the Department of Sport and Recreation requesting a grant for classes in gentle exercise, yoga and drumming.

Penrith OWN has classes in Tai Chi on Mondays, aquarobics on Tuesdays and international dance and table games on Wednesdays. Every third Saturday, there is a meeting to which a guest speaker is invited. A recent speaker demonstrated silk painting.

Members of the group enjoyed a bus trip to Port Stephens on Saturday 14 September for a dolphin cruise and a picnic lunch.

Volunteers from Penrith OWN helped set up a Women's Wellwise Cafe at Windsor Library, run by Hawkesbury Community Health one day a week. Thelma spoke at the official launch and has now got local volunteers to take over the running of the centre.

Reported by **Caroline Davis**

## Wollondilly

The Wollondilly group has organised a trip to visit the Observatory at Campbelltown during October, following a talk given at their August meeting by Richard Everett who is a well-known astronomer in the area. We were invited to visit on 17 August when only one member was brave enough to face the freezing conditions that prevailed on that evening. We all felt terrible about letting Alicia go on her own and have promised that no matter what the weather, come October, when we have again been invited to attend, more of us will be there. Alicia reported that the evening, despite the cold, was very enjoyable and that the stars seen through the telescopes that were made available to her, were truly beautiful and well worth the trip out in the cold.

October is going to be a big month here as our drumming group will be performing at two festivals, Multicultural Women's Day, on the 12th and Shire day on the 20th. Shire Day is always a big day in Wollondilly and will be our first local event that we can use to promote our OWN group.

Wollondilly covers a huge area and there are a lot of women out there who, at the moment, do not know we exist. Shire Day will help us reach out to more of them.

One of our drummers, Elizabeth Ottessen, will miss the first day, as she is using, for the first time, her free rail pass and visiting Broken Hill for a week's landscape painting. She had visited there many years ago and was entranced by the sunrises

(Continued page 12)

# At and Beyond the Rocks

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(Continued from Page 11)

and sunsets and promised herself that one day she would return with her easel and canvas to try to capture the beautiful visions she saw so long ago. We are all looking forward to seeing her paintings when she returns, but will miss her on Multinational Women's Day.

Elizabeth and two other members of our group are going to join the Southern Highlands group on Saturday for a day of singing a cappella. That's one excursion I would love to have gone on, but unfortunately I will not be able to make the trip to Mittagong for the day.

Our Tai Chi group is now self supporting and that, added to the workout we do with the local gym instructor, followed by Scottish Country Dancing, makes Wednesday a very busy and healthy day for Wollondilly OWN members.

We are also in the process of setting up a drop-in day at the Picton Community Centre. I have volunteered to work each Tuesday at the centre and it will be a great opportunity to invite our OWN members to meet for a cuppa and at the same time other residents of the shire, to learn a little more about our group. I have the poster ready to go up as soon as I get the go ahead from council, which I expect in the near future.

And that's Wollondilly OWN's news for this month.

**Barbara Malcolm**

## Sutherland

Sutherland OWN is planning early for International Women's Day, 2003. At its monthly meeting on 19 September, speakers and venues were discussed. A committee is to

propose a program and explore a budget for an event. The committee will also consider a submission for the event under Sutherland Shire Council Grants program.

Meanwhile, Ann Lang has organised a raffle for our Group. A beautiful crocheted rug, a specially minted coin (commemorating women's suffrage), and costume jewellery pieces are the prizes. Two Wellness Centre participants offered prizes and others are offering items for raffles or a stall for the Wellness Centre and the OWN Group.

Four members are attending the National OWN Conference in Canberra. We're also having 'Fish on Friday' at Cronulla RSL on the 4 October.

After that we're looking at publicity for the Group to add to the nineteen members on our list.

**Noreen Hewett**

## OWN Sydney Highlights

OWN Sydney held its first Annual General Meeting on 23 August. Eleven members were elected to the Working Group and our new Guidelines were accepted. A brief version of the Guidelines is included in this *OWN Matters* and we will also send it to all new members.

In her address at the AGM, Eva Cox, well-known social commentator, evoked a lively response to a number of current issues. A summary of her talk is on page 2, *Point of View*.

Good news! OWN Sydney's Wellness Day last November has borne fruit! We have received \$4297 from the NSW Department of Sport and Recreation to hold gentle exercises and tai chi classes. With the drumming group, this will give us a 'wellness day' on Wednesdays.

We plan to publicise the classes widely in local areas to attract new women, so if you are interested in coming

along, think about bringing a friend with you, and register early! Please see the enclosed flyer.

Remember I mentioned the 'Right to Safety' quilt that was initiated at the state conference? Well, we are now looking for members who are interested in quilting – please give me a call on 9251 9333.

Whilst on the subject of violence and older women, Louise Anike will be a speaker at an 'Abuse of older people: More common than we think!' Seminar on 23 October (please see flyer) and Margaret Sargent will be a speaker at a forum 'Older women and violence in the home' which is being held for workers on 22 October.

OWN Sydney has submitted a number of recommendations for delegates to take to the OWN Australia conference in Canberra on September 30-October 1. The principle recommendation addresses the lack of a formal role for State OWNs, of which there are now three – WA, Queensland and NSW.

**Joy Ross**



## Luddite? Who, Me?

Writing, by putting pen to paper, has always been a pleasure for me so it took the peer pressure of some older women friends to drive me to acquire a computer and to start learning about it. It was also vanity, I suppose, not wanting to be one of 'the oldies' left high and dry when modern technology was all the go.

Now, however, the walls have come down and my attendance at computer classes at TAFE has finally breached my resistance. Don't get me wrong. I cannot sit longer than an hour at a time at the computer and when I switch on the Internet I certainly don't trawl through all the detritus of ads or chat shows or randomly 'surf the net'. Thanks to the Internet section of this TAFE course I can now access the most interesting information. I feel like "Some watcher of the skies/When a new planet swims into his ken".

How else can I describe my delight at stumbling into Parliament and being able to read the text of the latest Bills before the House, or being able to print out that wonderful recipe of Ian Parmenter's that I missed last night, or reading Kerry Nettles' fiery maiden speech to the Senate last week about land clearing, GATS and War on Terrorism. It's wondrous. I have the world at my fingertips.

This renaissance is due to OWN who organised for us a course on computers, one of the many innovative programs offered by OUTREACH at TAFE colleges in NSW. These programs are designed to meet the needs of the educationally disadvantaged, funded by the NSW Department of Education and offering many different courses at venues throughout NSW.

Fifteen women from Sydney OWN attended Enmore TAFE on

Saturday mornings and completed the first session of six weeks of Computer Studies. We have now commenced a further seven weeks course which includes Internet Studies. We feel privileged to have had the opportunity to go to these classes with such an expert and patient teacher and at no cost.

Thanks to Joy and Dorothy, who organised the program for us, OWN has again come up with the goods for our members and fulfilled a need.

After class, our lot adjourn to the gorgeous patisserie in Enmore Road for coffee because, as usual, OWN women manage to turn any gathering into a happy occasion for socialising.

The ease with which I have come to terms with my hitherto monster of a computer has reinforced my firm belief that cognitive ability is not affected by age. It is still possible to learn completely new subjects, although I find that, for me, I must recapitulate and practise the newly learnt skills several times as soon as I have learnt them because the 'curve of forgetting' begins more quickly now.

*Muriel Hortin*

## To Sisters under the Protheses – Birdseed is Best

In a recent speech to parliament a female member related the difficulties many women experience in obtaining protheses after a mastectomy. She described the substitutes some have had recourse to: padding bras with old stockings, cotton wool, disused shoulder pads and birdseed.

Some do without altogether, relying on loose clothing.

Birdseed is the best substitute as it provides sufficient weight to counterbalance the remaining breast. In the days before manufactured protheses it was the prothesis of choice. Mastectomy patients were advised on discharge from hospital to "get a bag of birdseed, dear, and pop it in your bra".

In the seven years since my mastectomy I have had recourse to nearly all these substitutes. The expensive prothesis, for which, after much haggling and needing to identify myself, as one of the disgracefully improvident would-be-free-loading aged, I obtained a \$200 grant, is now almost unusable. After four years it lost its shape and elasticity and is a heavy, unsightly lump. So, whenever possible, I dispense with it, but at a cost.

We are warned, post-operatively, that the prothesis, which seems too heavy, is necessary to prevent 'back problems' caused by uneven distribution of weight. This can cause spinal damage and I am told that the peripheral neuritis, which afflicts me with discomfort and much inconvenience, could be the result of this imbalance.

Therefore, my sisters of the prothesis, be warned. If you don't have a comfortable prothesis, birdseed is best and to most of us would be preferred to one recycled and grudgingly offered by an insensitive health-care bureaucrat.

*Helen Monaghan*

### Taking Off

I could fly,

I could fly,

I could eat Tim Tams 'til I die,

I'm a great grannie!

*Joan Johns*

## Dental Health

As we keep our teeth longer, and look forward to having them for life, the wear of our teeth becomes an area of concern.

Three major categories of wear are recognised:

Attrition – loss of tooth structure from grinding teeth;

Abrasion – wear resulting from friction between teeth and another object, eg brushing with excessive force or using an abrasive paste;

Erosion – dissolution of tooth structure by the action of acid or other agents.

Tooth wear may be slow at first, though once it has progressed through the enamel surface and exposed the soft internal dentine, the rate may increase dramatically.

Some of the causes of erosion are:

- \* citrus juices, carbonated beverages, sports drinks;
- \* vinegar and pickles
- \* vitamin C tablets (chewable)
- \* certain cough suppressants and inhalers
- \* extreme weight suppression
- \* gastric reflux and/or repeated vomiting.

It is important to attend to these problems as early as possible as early detection can often mean simple solution, looking after our teeth can reduce dental costs and we will enjoy a better quality of life.

While adding fluoride to the water supply has been important, good nutrition and eating habits also play an important role in preventing tooth decay.

Dairy foods play an important role in dental health. They provide protein, carbohydrate, vitamins, minerals and anti-decaying properties such as casein, calcium and phosphorus. So, if you snack on foods such as milk, yogurt, fish, fruit, peanuts or eggs, you reduce the risk of tooth decay. Did you know that eating cheese before and after meals with a high sugar content helps reduce damaging acid production by increasing the calcium level of the saliva?

*Marjorie Moffat*

## Call me “darling”

Nobody called me “darling” until older age. Now men and women of all ages who help me into cars, buses and across roads acknowledge me as darling. Also waiters and waitresses call me “darl”. Even my family doctor calls me “darling”.

After a waitress did this, my American cousin asked, “How do you like being called “doll”? I corrected her and said, “She did not say “doll”, she said “darl”... I don’t think she got it.

OK, I don’t mind at all, it is a damn sight better than some of the other labels I get any day.

After all, I KNOW I am a darling.

*Enid Harrison*

## A Peanut Butter Diet?

Peanut butter is among the foods that a lot of us crave. It’s rich, it’s sticky, it tastes like roasted peanuts and it’s ready whenever we are. But all those calories! Two tablespoons contains 190 calories. And all that fat! A 2-tablespoon serving has 16 grams of fat – about the same as in a hamburger.

However, although peanut butter is high in fat, most of it is mono-unsaturated, the same ‘good fat’ that’s found in olive oil. Recent studies suggest that a diet high in mono-unsaturated fat from peanuts and peanut butter could actually be good for your heart, and perhaps even better than the low-fat, high-carbohydrate diet most health experts recommend.

But there’s a hitch. Unless we’re experienced in nutrition, designing an eating plan that includes peanut butter plus all the nutrients we need without going overboard on calories can be extremely tricky. Check out the Peanut Butter Diet at [www.prevention.com](http://www.prevention.com).

## WAS? WAS?

You ring up to make an appointment. Says the voice at the other end, “And what was your name?” Was? Was? What does she mean, “Was”? Does she mean your name before you were married? The name your schoolmates called you? The nickname your friends gave you? What?

You calm yourself. Your head is full of crushing reprimands. But you don’t say any of them. You just say stiffly, “My name was, and still is, Renee Simons...”

## No holiday

Last September, my long-awaited fortnight at Norfolk Island turned into a bronchial nightmare. The morning after the return flight home, two hefty ambos came to my call, plonked a ventilator on my unbreathing nose, and carried me, and the equipment, down the stairs. And that's all I remember of my entry into Manly Hospital.

Lost in drug-induced limbo is my refusal to get into bed, my threats to throw a chair out the window, and their attempts to restrain me. Temporarily losing all hearing that first awful week made the whole experience surreal and frightening. In that huge, humming hospital, I heard nothing...so knew nothing. Hearing slowly returned, and I'm out of intensive care and into a ward already occupied by a seriously ill stroke victim in need of constant care. Plenty of light and noise from then on...not to forget the icy blasts from nearby window. No one, not even the specialist to whom I complained in desperation, could cure that. It seemed a small thing in the presence of so much busy-ness of the staff. It seemed to me that ringing for help was a waste of time...the response was usually, "I'll be back later"...and later never came.

I hate to tell you this, but the night the catheter was removed, leaving a large urine build-up, I struggled out of bed on hugely swollen feet and legs, to use the pan as instructed. Twelve times I used that same pan, and had to ask for its removal next morning! Full to the brim...

My incredible Sister came twice daily, bearing warmth...hot water bags, extra blanket, etc., food I could eat, and good cheer. Her assurance to the doctors that I'd be well cared for at her home hastened my departure, but not before a whole day was spent

waiting for papers and medication. She waited at the Nurses' station, we waited at the lifts, all the time hearing, "Won't be long". A kindly soul chatted to her at the lifts. "Oh, how nice," she said, "You're taking your MOTHER home!" We laughed all the way down in the lift to the Pharmacy (I'm two years older!) and finally home.

But where is the motor I'm supposed to use to run the nebuliser I'm supposed to use four hourly? She rang the hospital Pharmacy. Closed. Down the street to the local chemist, where she and the friendly pharmacist between them learnt to operate the bloody thing! And that was my departure from Manly Hospital!

About a month later, I was phoned by a person from the Hospital, wanting to know about my time there. So I told her. She thanked me...said she rarely got an honest answer.

I know I should be grateful not to die of pneumonia, but I sometimes wonder...wasn't it once known as "The older people's friend"?

**Dorothy Cox**

## Walking on Air

The risk of deep-vein thrombosis is definitely increased on long plane, bus or car rides. Taking short occasional walks is said to decrease the risk which is easy if you're in the car and can take a break, but not so easy in the cramped confines of a bus or in economy-class on a plane.

An inflatable foot cushion called the Airwalker allows you to 'walk' without leaving your seat. Another option is called the Pushcush. You move your feet on top of the cushion, contracting and relaxing your calf muscles to keep blood circulating. Apparently

five minutes of foot pumping is equivalent to a 200 metre walk! They're light and compact when uninflated, which makes them ideal for popping into your hand luggage.

**Extract from Choice magazine**

NB: A member of our Editorial Team uses the Pushcush as a back support when driving her car ... recommended by her chiropractor. It's fabulous for her lower back problem!

## What's in a Name?

I've had an obsession with 'names' for years and years. Early next year I'm conducting a series of lectures for U3A on the subject of 'names' – their origins and personal meanings. I will be including pet names and house names.

If you have a pet, what is it called, and why did you choose that particular name? Or maybe you had a pet in the past? For example, I once talked to a child whose duck was called Moby Duck. There was also a girl who named her kitten, Ben, and then found out it was female so renamed it Ben Hur.

Has your house got a name? Have you once lived in a house with a name? If you answer yes to any of these questions, I would love you to phone me so I can find out some more. My telephone number is (02) 9449 9006.

**Joyce Chapman**

## Limerick

*She obtained an old run-down computer,  
Which confounded the cleverest tutor.  
It has its own quirks –  
And at times even works,  
But mostly just serves to confuse'er.*

**Trudy Davis**

## Thumbs up for herbal remedies in dementia

Aromatherapy with balm oil is an effective treatment for agitation in people with severe dementia, a UK study concludes. Preliminary trials have indicated the positive effects of aromatherapy on behavioural and psychological symptoms in dementia, such as agitation, but this is the first to provide conclusive placebo-controlled proof of the effectiveness of the treatment, say the researchers.

Researchers from Newcastle General Hospital looked at 71 patients to assess the effect of aromatherapy on dementia-associated agitation. The patients were evenly split between those treated with lemon balm aromatherapy oil and those who were given the placebo sunflower oil. Caregivers applied the designated ointments to each patient's face and arms twice a day. Sixty per cent of the patients who received the active treatment experienced a 30 per cent reduction in symptoms compared to only 14 per cent of the placebo-treated group.

*From [www.surgerydoor.co.uk/news/detail.asp?offset=2478](http://www.surgerydoor.co.uk/news/detail.asp?offset=2478)*

## Food Allergy and Food Intolerance

### What's the difference?

You have a food allergy when your immune system reacts to certain food. The reaction usually occurs within minutes, and generally what happens is that your body creates antibodies to the food. When these antibodies react with the food, histamine and other chemicals cause hives, asthma, or other symptoms of an allergic reaction.

Food intolerance or sensitivity is an adverse reaction to a food that doesn't involve the immune system. It may cause discomfort and pain, such as the bloating and stomach pain associated with lactose intolerance, but it's not potentially life threatening in the same way as many food allergies.

You may grow out of allergies to some foods, but an allergy to peanuts or seafood will generally last for life.

*Extract from Choice Magazine*

## Arthritis

The disease process of arthritis damages joints. Inflammation is present to varying degree in all types of arthritis. It causes swelling, redness, local heat, loss of movement and pain.

If you have arthritis, there's a lot you can do to help yourself. Exercise, plus pain and stress management may decrease the pain. Pain, distress, fatigue and depression are all closely connected and each very much affects the others.

Exercises, massage, relaxation and heat and cold treatments can nearly always break the pain cycle. You must find the balance between exercise and rest, and also become aware of the way you hold your body.

Keeping a positive attitude and becoming well informed about all the choices available is the best way of setting up a program for managing the pain caused by arthritis.

*Seniors Information Service*

## Wrap With Love

If you love to knit, crochet, patchwork or quilt, why not consider our cause? We are knitting, crocheting and creating warm, comforting wraps for those who need it most – the cold, the hungry, those stricken by natural or man-made disasters; those who live overseas and those who live next door. We create our wraps to bring them comfort, warmth and solace.

You can work from home; we respect your privacy. You do as much or as little as you like, from knitting a square to creating a whole wrap!

We are ten years old this year! We are based in Sydney, BUT... There are over 20,000 Australian *Wrap With Love* workers throughout the country. There is a contact person in your area who can help get you started.

Not religious, not political, not a charity, just a mission of mercy. We are situated in South Sydney area, in premises provided by South Sydney Council. Call (02) 8399 3000 for more information.

### ***Have Your Say on Your Telstra***

The Independent Member for Calare, Peter Andren, has called on people to register their support for a NO-Telstra Sale. He claims that although a recent Newpoll survey found that two-thirds of people are opposed to the sale of Telstra, the government dismisses the numbers and wants the sale to proceed.

*Call this NO-Telstra-Sale phone number and leave a message: 02 6352 4411, or send an email to [Peter.Andren.MP@aph.gov.au](mailto:Peter.Andren.MP@aph.gov.au) or visit the 'Have Your Say' section of his website at [www.peterandren.com](http://www.peterandren.com).*

# NOTICES

## Bequests to the Older Women's Network

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

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

### Spare Room?

Helen, a former member of OWN Adelaide, would love to spend more time with her daughter in Sydney.

If you have spare room, or would like to house swap, please call her on 08 827 1 8114 or phone Heather, her daughter, on 9326 5313.

For a reference call Peg Hewett, 9398 2428.

### Laughter Clubs

Balmain, Shirley 9879 4865

Belrose, Judy 9972 7139

Carlingford, Alex 9874 8422

Cronulla, Robyn 9523 7551

Hornsby, Jan 9477 3730

Hunters Hill, Shirley 9879 4865

Manly, Maria 9412 2430

Newcastle, 4951 2084

Newtown, Rowena 9519 2522

Queenscliffe, Maria 9412 2430

### Reclaim the Night

#### Friday 25 October

6 pm Rally at Town Hall

6.30 March begins

Celebration at Hyde Park North from 7.30 to 9 pm.

### Home Library Service.

Do you have special needs and live in the North Sydney Municipality?

If you do you will be interested to know that the Stanton Library provides a service, which involves the delivery of library resources to the person's home on a four weekly basis.

For enquiries regarding this matter, please contact Laurene Marriott-Brittan or Cathy Mark direct on 9936 8429 during business hours.

### Recommended Websites

[www.facecampaign.org/](http://www.facecampaign.org/)

Face to Face is an international campaign for the health, rights and equality of all women. In particular it promotes the needs and rights of women in the developing world.

[www.phrases.shu.ac.uk/](http://www.phrases.shu.ac.uk/)

It's a phrases thesaurus. Type in a word and it returns a list of phrases that are related to your word in some way – often in ways you wouldn't expect.

[www.womens.gateway.nsw.com.au](http://www.womens.gateway.nsw.com.au)

This is the NSW Department for Women's website. It includes thousands of items of interest to women and to organisations.

### **Fish Lunch and Movies at the Ritz**

Friday, 18 November 2002

Take bus 372, 373, 376 or 377 and get off at the second bus stop in Belmore Road, Randwick. Meet at the first entrance to the Royal Randwick Mall at 12 noon.

We can eat in for \$14.50 which includes wine or soft drink or have take-away in the park for \$8.50. The movies cost \$4.

# NOTICES

## **Getting to know your computer - A basic guide**

This manual is a practical, easy to read guide, specifically developed for community organisations to help them make sense of computer use and maintenance.

[www.communitybuilders.nsw.gov.au/linking/internet/hacc\\_cm.html](http://www.communitybuilders.nsw.gov.au/linking/internet/hacc_cm.html)

## **Representing OWN**

The Aged Care Rights Service (TARS) is seeking new board members. TARS provides advocacy for people receiving Community Aged Care Packages and for people in nursing homes, hostels and retirement villages.

If you would like to talk to them about what's involved, please contact the manager, Leisa Simmons, on 9281 3600.

## **Get a Life Project**

Refugee girls and women in are desperately in need of re-usable sanitary napkins. What would you do if you had nothing to cope with this most basic of feminine needs? You can make a donation to the Get a Life Project by sending your cheque payable to ANCORW, and send it C/- Centre for Refugee Research, School of Social Work, University of NSW, PO Box 973, Kensington, 2033

## **The Rights Stuff Workshop**

10.30 to 2 pm

Tuesday 15 October 2002

Redfern Town Hall  
73 Pitt Street Redfern

This free workshop is for HACC consumers and family carers, not service providers.

You will get lunch and refreshments, a copy of the new book, *The Rights Stuff: A Toolkit for HACC Consumers and reimbursement for out-of pocket expenses, eg taxi fares.*

You must register by 8 October.

For more information, or to register, please contact Carolyn Campbell-McLean, Education and Training Officer, Community Services Commission on 9384 4929 or email [carolyn@csc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:carolyn@csc.nsw.gov.au)

## **Belvoir Theatre**

*Unwaged performance date*

'Swetlana in Slingbacks'

Thursday 12 December 2002

Please phone the Box Office on 9699 3444 two weeks prior to the performance to confirm dates as they are subject to change.

Entry on presentation of a healthcare, pensioners or industry card only.

## **Drumming**

Please note that there will be no Drumming Classes on 2 and 9 October.

Classes will re-commence on Wednesday 16 October 2002.

## **Fish Lunch**

Mark your diaries NOW for the November Fish Lunch picnic which will be held in Kiama on Friday 15 November.

More details in the next issue of *OWN Matters*.



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## **DISCLAIMER**

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

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MAIL**

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