



OWN MATTERS

Newsletter of the Older Women's Network New South Wales

CONTENTS

What Are You Waiting For?	1
A Fair Go	2
Coordinators' Report	3
History Repeats Itself	4
The Most Important Law	4
Dubbo Protest	4/5
Letter from Jo Krelle.....	5
The Gentle Activist	5
Donald Thompson in Arnhem Land	6
Other Strands in Our Culture	6
Breaking The Ice	6
Harmony at Cronulla	6
Film Review-Hepzibah	7
100 Great Books in Haiku	7
Letters	8-9
At and Beyond The Rocks	10-13
Sydney	10
Blacktown	10
Nowra	11
Newcastle	11
Illawarra	11/12
Southern Highlands	12
Bankstown Greek	13
Ashfield Greek	13
Theatre Group Report	14
Tribute to Gwen George	14/15
Celebrating the Life of Gwen George.....	15/16
Five Stages of Grieving	16
Grief, Growth & Gratitude	17
Jubilation	17
Duplicity?	18
OWN UP	18
Blowin' In the Wind	19
The Rope	19
Gardening Wards off Dementia	19/20
Safe Places, Big Problems	20
Homeshare NSW	20
PIAC	21
Speak Up, Speak Out	21
HREOC Study	21
Generic Fosamax	21
Notices	22-23

Vol.3 No.8 – September 2006

What Are You Waiting For?

In the combination of euphoria and exhaustion that followed our OWN NSW Annual General Meeting and the launch of our Autumn Leaves Report, there were increasing demands being made on OWN NSW as a Peak Body to provide direction and initiative in the design and delivery of Wellness programs for older women, and by extension to provide the administrative support and volunteer training for older women to realise their own potential across numerous fields.

Like many other organizations, OWN has always relied on volunteers to form the bulk of our workforce. When OWN began, twenty years ago, the women coming into the network had different pressures from today's retiring women. Because the women who started this organisation are now in their seventies and eighties, many are asking to retire a second time, or are requesting long service leave! We desperately need the next generation to embrace this challenge, and particularly to engage with the changes in technology and communications of today's network. If you'd like to get experience in learning how a community organisation works, working in a modern, well equipped office environment, using the internet, desk top publishing, then why not start at OWN? If you've always wanted to know how events were organized, who did what in government, how to use a database, now's your opportunity! Perhaps you'd like to change the world, but don't know where to start? If your agenda matches ours, we'll give you a desk, a phone, and a computer!

Maybe you go to a stack of things already, and you're far too busy - no problem - OWN is always on the look out for women who have an active involvement in particular areas to act as advocates! If you are keenly interested in pensioner rights, or you are a member of your nurses union, or you're a rep on your housing estate, for example, then you may well have a skill that we need to cultivate as an OWN advocate.

What's more we're one of the few organisations that actually pay volunteers a contribution for meals and travel to acknowledge their efforts. Centrelink may help with additional benefits for those with disabilities doing a certain number of hours per month. We may be able to persuade the unemployed or those recently dispossessed of benefits to join us. It is possible for an older woman to have her volunteer work acknowledged and still receive benefits, so don't overlook this option if you're finding it difficult to find employment. Discuss it with Centrelink. One of our 'Younger, Older Women' told me recently that the skills and confidence she'd picked up volunteering at OWN, gave her the courage to go back to study, and to work.

Although it's always difficult losing volunteers to work or study, they often stay connected because of the friendships they make in a network like ours, and continue to bring their energy and skills to the organisation even after their fully employed.

Get involved. OWN wants you. What are you waiting for?

Beth Eldridge

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

Phone: 02 9247 7046 Fax: 02 9247 4202 email: info@ownnsw.org.au web: www.ownnsw.org.au

Produced with the assistance of the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care

with project funding from the NSW Department of Health and assistance from the City of Sydney

Who Are We?

The Older Women's Network (OWN) NSW is the peak body for 20 groups in NSW. OWN promotes the rights, dignity and wellbeing of older women through a range of activities and resources, and advocates on issues of interest and concern to older women.

OWN Matters is the newsletter of the Older Women's Network NSW. It is published 11 times a year. The annual subscription for individuals is \$22 and \$40 for organisations & includes GST.

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 Tuesday of each month.

OWN Matters is copyright. Material can be reproduced, but only with acknowledgement of its source.

ABN 36 992 030 904

Editorial Team

Beth Eldridge, Daphne Lera, June West, Helen Young, Helen Vincent, Lorraine Inglis and Judith Mustard.

Layout and Design

Beth Eldridge, Polly Gow and Enid Leighton.

Membership & Subscriptions

Ermes Solari and Maureen King.

Mailout Team

Ermes Solari, Wilhelmina van Dorp, Pat Rayne, Noel Carpenter, Marie Williams, Mary McCusker, Elaine Reynolds, Lola Cummings, Bev Cameron, Joyce Henwood and Trudy Davis.

POINT of VIEW

A Fair Go

Do catch cries like 'fair go', 'mateship', 'a typical Aussie', really present anything other than false sentimentality?

Mateship has the implicit qualities of loyalty and trust — in many, many cases there were wonderfully courageous acts. For some time now, the word mateship has been debased — used by all and sundry and to complete strangers. Debasing of this once honoured word has been the conscious concealment of minor or major matters in the police force, the armed services and in all communities. Extreme examples are the gang rapes, violent attacks and murders by gangs. A whistle blower is regarded with contempt as dobbing or ratting on mates and is considered despicably traitorous. In a recent article in the Sydney Morning Herald's *Good Weekend*, the Australian cricket team said they could not rat on Shane Warne's incessant womanising.

The Prime Minister is over fond of protesting he stands on the side of the Aussie battler, which is not reflected in easing the strain of mortgages and the high cost of professional child care.

After many years, a woman's right to choose abortion is attacked by 'Right to Life' devotees, which is ironic as they do not concede a woman's right to make an important choice.

Indigenous people have long been denied the right of a dignified and respected life, and no satisfaction of getting an apology from the Prime Minister.

Leaving aside the basics such as income and transport as well as access to community services and a guarantee of being treated well in a caring environment should the occasion arise to go to a nursing home, older women are repeatedly told they are the major part of the burden of an ageing population. It is curious that everyone has had a mother, father and grandparents and should those who complain become old they too will be part of the maligned burden of our older population. The list goes on and on.

A fair go for all was and still is unrealistic — is it, in fact, realisable?

Louise Anike

DISCLAIMER

The views expressed in OWN Matters are not necessarily those of the Older Women's Network NSW, and we do not guarantee the accuracy of the facts in articles supplied by members. The Older Women's Network NSW accepts no responsibility for any loss occasioned to any person acting, or not acting, upon any material in OWN Matters.

OWN NSW

Coordinators' Report

August saw the new management team gather at number 87. It was a day of renewal for the returning members and a day of welcome to the brave new souls who put their hands up and answered the call. It was welcome to Nicki Mangolos from Illawarra and Lorraine Inglis from Sydney, Joan Van Halen from Blacktown and welcome back to Jan Robinson, also from Blacktown.

While I feel the conference was an overwhelming success, at the end of it we still have an under-resourced Management Team. We need at least three new members to help get the job done. There is a saying, "Many hands make light work," and that applies to our MT. At this moment, riding on the back of the launch of "Kicking Up Autumn Leaves", OWN NSW needs to show itself as a strong and viable organisation if we are going to be able to take full advantage of the rewards on offer. Rewards are just that. They have to be earned and to earn them, consistent and focused effort has to be put in.

With this in mind I urge all team leaders to look within their groups for that special woman (or women) who will step up and help do the work. Those who do join the team will not be asked to do a lot. At first they will observe and learn and as they get to know how things work and, when they are comfortable with that, they can decide how they can use their knowledge and talents to work with the team. And don't think distance is an excuse. Meetings are only once a month and we have always had team members who travel to attend these meetings. Pat Carlton commuted from Newcastle, Anne Warren came from Nowra, I travel in from Wollongong. Many others have committed

themselves to building a strong working team by making the journey into Sydney and doing their bit each month. What could be nicer? A very cheap train trip to Circular Quay, a walk through the lovely park, looking at the ferries, the Opera House, Bridge and tourists and thinking to yourself, they are just visiting this lovely harbour — I own it. The walk or bus up the Argyle Cutting to the Rocks shows Sydney in all its historic beauty and then there's arriving at 87, meeting friends, sharing a cuppa and lunch. It's not all work. Most of it is sheer delight. It doesn't get better than this.

Is that a hand I see, reaching shyly towards the phone? Be brave, pick it up and dial 9247 7046 and say to Beth or Kris, "Please let me in to this inner circle that helps things to happen." You will be surprised at how warm your welcome will be.

Barbara Malcolm

Film Bargain

I wrote about *Ballets Russes* in *OWN Matters* recently.

The Cremorne Heydon cinema, a spectacular venue if ever there was one, is offering a true bargain. On 18 OCTOBER at 11.00 am and for \$11.00 you can see this marvellous film and have a delightful lunch. Get a few friends together, catch the ferry to Cremorne Point, (every 30 mins from Circular Quay) then the bus from the wharf to the cinema and have a ball. Buses along Military Road will whisk you back to the City in no time.

It is best to book for these special screenings, so phone 9908 4344.

Daphne Lera

Aboriginal Support Circle Report

History Repeats Itself — Will the Government Never Learn?

At an intergovernmental summit organised by Minister Mal Brough in June on violence and child abuse in Aboriginal communities, the government offered 130 million dollars to be carved up between the 6 states and the Northern Territory. The requirement is that they match and exceed the investment, to be spent on law and order, with no consultation or negotiation. In other words, “do it my way.” There were no Indigenous people at the table, but the minister said their views had been considered. No long-term, recurrent funding was promised.

In 2003, at the Prime Minister’s roundtable with Indigenous leaders on family violence, the funding was ad-hoc, short-term and under-resourced. What positive benefit has ensued since then?

The government is not yet prepared to commit unconditionally to the critical and obvious issue of housing, infrastructure and other underlying causes of dysfunction. In the Koori Mail’s latest issue, Muriel Bamblett, Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care chairwoman and long-time Melbourne-based child and family advocate said current government policies would do nothing but cause more problems for Indigenous children and their families. She stated that governments need to concentrate on healing communities, and provide more services to ensure that children are able to stay and grow with their families; otherwise there would be another “stolen generation.” “It’s just no good funding more police. We need more counselling services, programs to work with families and funding to help victims through their ordeals. If we don’t we will have our own children growing up with violence and perpetuating the very thing that is destroying them.”

Our government is not presently competent to properly understand and tackle problems faced by Indigenous people, nor has it demonstrated an interest in acting on the advice of representative and properly resourced Aboriginal voices. Bob Beadman, a former top public servant, who is chairman of the Northern Territory Grants commission, says that 30 years of policies that bureaucrats considered generous have failed tragically because they ruled Aborigines out of having any effective role in their own lives. He says that above everything, “Aborigines need to be reengaged so that the momentum for change comes from them. They have been encouraged to think... that government would prefer them to be paid to sit down rather than to work”.

Pat Zinn

The Most Important Law You’ve Never Heard Of

You, the public, might have never heard of it because the media has been silent, dead silent.

You might say, well, it can’t be very important. Obviously it has not been considered very important to the majority of reporters and commentators.

But on the web, there has been lots of commenting, protesting, and even quite an important petition which was aiming for a minimum of 25,000 email signatures. Why an email petition? Because this piece of legislature was being hurried through, with minimum time for discussion, and no publicity! There was no time for the usual protests.

So what is this law?

I do not know whether it is a law yet. It was supposed to come before the Senate this week, but because the media has been so silent, I have not even heard that it was up for discussion.

For heaven’s sake, Lorraine, just what is this law you are blathering about? The law was aimed at changing the Aboriginal Land Rights Act. If it is enacted, Aborigines will be required to sign their land over to the government on a 99 year lease, in order to get the basic housing and services they need so desperately in some remote communities. This law would mean giving control of their land to government departments for five generations. Five Generations! Selling your rights for a mess of pottage!

Perhaps by the time this article goes to print, information might appear in print elsewhere. We might even find there were people of principle in the senate who insisted on changes to the legislation, or who gave it the thumbs down.

Lorraine Inglis

Dubbo Protest March

About 30 people marched through Dubbo, in the state’s central west, in protest against the state government’s decision to redevelop a public housing estate, to demolish houses and relocate families. The rally coincided with The International Day of Indigenous People.

Organisers want the Housing Minister, Cherie Burton, to overturn her decision to redevelop Dubbo’s Gordon estate. The protesters say the community wasn’t consulted about the redevelopment plans. Wiradjuri woman, Ellen Doolan, says that the forced relocation of families is basically racist.



ASC Continues . . .

Cherie Burton, State Housing Minister, says that no amount of protesting will make her reverse her decision. She says, "There is no way that anyone can consider this decision racist. What I am targeting is the behavior."

Contributed by Sally Fitzpatrick

Letter in response to OM August issue

Yes, I agree with you, that we have much to be grateful for and to celebrate — Being Here! Being Educated! But, Sorry! Why is Being 'White' So Special? We in OWN have an Aboriginal Support Circle, so come on, let us each acknowledge their precious status — sisters in the Human Family, all born equal! It is only we who often have much, who make the difference!

Given Education, \$ and opportunity men and women can rise to heights we all once only dreamed of, ie — Nelson Mandela, Neil Pearson, Lois O'Donaghue, Kofi Annan to name a few. Having said that, I quote this verse below from the National Council of Women's Newsletter, Oct-Nov 1999.

Dear white brother

When I was born, I was black.

When I grew up, I was black.

When I stay in sunlight, I am black.

When I fear, I am black.

When I am sick, I am black.

When I die, I will be black.

Whilst you, white brother,

When you were born, you were pink.

When you grew up, you were white.

When you stay out in the sun, you are red.

When you are cold, you are blue.

When you are afraid, you are yellow.

When you are sick, you are green.

When you die, you will be grey.

And even so you have the cheek

To call me a 'coloured man'.

Jo Krelle (OWN Nowra)

P.S. Yes! I stand up for universal freedom and respect for all people of this Earth.

The Gentle Activist

Faith Bandler's biographer, Professor Marilyn Lake of La Trobe University, says that Faith exudes a serenity that belies her extraordinary energy for the causes she has championed all her life: justice for indigenous peoples, women's rights, the peace movement and the abolition of poverty.

Faith was born in 1918, the sixth child of Ida and Peter Musing. Her father, one of 30,000 South Sea Islanders brought to work as slave labour in Queensland's sugarcane fields in the late 19th century, fled to NSW, where he married Faith's mother — a Scottish-Indian woman.

The abuse and exclusion Faith experienced, as an indigenous schoolgirl growing up in Murwillumbah, left a lasting impression on her. She was, perhaps, the only non-white sitting for the Leaving Certificate examination in 1932. Faith left school at 16, completed a dressmaker's apprenticeship, then moved to Sydney.

During World War II Faith served in the Australian Women's Land Army, where she learned first-hand that Aboriginal women on the farms were paid less than other workers.

In 1952 she married Hans Bandler, an Austrian Jew who survived Nazi concentration camps. Hans supported Faith's fight for justice. They raised a daughter, Lilon, and a foster son, Peter — an abandoned Aboriginal child.

Faith was influenced by Aboriginal activist Pearl Gibbs and radical Jessie Street. In 1956, aiming to advance the Aboriginal cause, Pearl and Faith founded the Aboriginal-Australian Fellowship. Faith and her colleagues waged a ten-year campaign urging the government to grant full citizenship rights to indigenous Australians.

In 1967, the Australian Government held a referendum asking Australians to vote on whether the Constitution should be changed to allow Indigenous Australians the same rights as other citizens. The success of the referendum — passed with 90.2 per cent of the vote — was Faith's most significant achievement.

In 1972 Faith co-founded the Women's Electoral Lobby and in 1974 co-founded the National Commission for Australian South Sea Islanders. She was an executive member of the Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines during its existence from 1962 to 1973.

Faith's achievements have been recognised as significant both within Australia and overseas. Her many awards include the Order of Australia and one presented by Nelson Mandela on behalf of the Sydney Peace Foundation in 2000. While no longer associated with a particular organisation, Faith continues to advise and guide many national and international networks.

Contributed by Neena Bhandari - Women's Feature Service



Cultural Strands

Donald Thompson in Arnhem Land

Those of you who have seen the film *Ten Canoes* will be absorbed by this book. Donald Thompson's photographs, on glass plate negatives taken 70 years ago, were the inspiration for the film. He was an anthropologist and his book is as remarkable as the film. He took thousands of photographs and built his own dark room on the spot, mostly of tree bark, in appalling conditions in Arnhem Land.

He was passionately committed to Aboriginal rights, and his bravery, dedication and heroism makes an exciting adventure story. The book contains many photographs of the Yolngu People when they were hunter gatherers in the 1930s, living their own culture — strong, vigorous people whom he admired and lived with for many years.

He was appalled by the ignorance and indifference of the government of the time, and gained permission to visit Arnhem Land. The government appointed him as an adviser to them on issues that concerned the protection of Aboriginal culture, and to investigate the many misconceptions held by the white people.

I came upon this book recently in Oenpelli, where the Yolngu people live in a vastly different situation from the 1930s. To think of the changes they've had to adopt in such a short time is overwhelming and admirable. Read it and be amazed. Available from Angus and Robertson

Joan Johns (Outback in Queensland)

Other Strands in Our Culture

It is good to see the development of our indigenous culture. Aboriginal art occupies an important place in international galleries with its historical earth maps unique in colour and design. The music played, introduced by the message sticks with the new instrument of the didgeridoo, and its rhythms and accompanying dance movement is now recognised. The film *Ten Canoes* portraying their own culture in their own language is a fine start. More of it...

The story of the Irish convicts in our culture is another important strand. The quality of irreverence and the larrikin spirit in our community may have been engendered from this stream. Another element of this spirit may be in the element of egalitarianism in our outlook.

The first immigrants to this country were English, Scottish, Welsh and Irish. The next wave of any large numbers was of European origins, fleeing the memories of the holocaust and a cruel war, coming to an insular population. Eventually, these migrants broadened the outlook of Australians through inter-marriage and by their Australian born children, until we have now a relatively sophisticated multi-culturalism. They changed our culture in many ways through food, wines, music, dancing and all of living derived from the ancient cultures of their varying backgrounds.

There are still elements of jingoism as the Cronulla riots revealed, but for all that we have a tolerant society which has the ability to stand up to politicians who would imprison refugees from tyranny elsewhere. The migrants who came to our shores brought with them many gifts, and we need to recognise and value what others have to offer. Let us cherish the values worth keeping and discard that which narrows our outlook.

Enid Harrison

Breaking the Ice — Respecting Difference

The facilitator was TV presenter, Geraldine Doogue. A panel comprised of two young people from the Shire and two from the Western Suburbs and each spoke for five minutes before taking questions from the floor.

Gynea Uni student, Natalia, said that since leaving school her 'shire bubble' had burst as she now mixes in many cultures.

Mohammed feels that the media has branded Lebanese youth as troublemakers, whilst Ola says that money should be spent on programs in schools.

Learning to understand and to respect another culture is not done overnight or even short term. We older members of the community hopefully have learned a little patience and tolerance. For the young, especially those who have lived in tight communities, more interaction will be needed.

Mohammed said he had learnt a lot from a program where he needed to trust and co-operate with others. He found it a very helpful and growing experience.

I feel that the residents of the Shire are not the only insular Anglo community. They are found all over this great city of Sydney, and many country towns.

Since December 2005 we all have had the opportunity to reach out, learn and go forward together. We have done it before, with mass migration at the end of World War II and we can do it again.

REACH OUT, EDUCATE AND INTERACT

*Ann Passmore
- reprinted from Wella Longa*

Harmony at Cronulla and Beyond

Since the Cronulla riots, many efforts have been made to restore the Shire's reputation and the economy of its businesses. Harmony Days were held, with the best 'music' being made by the youth.

I went on the women's march from Cronulla North Beach to Gunnamatta Bay. The Harmony Women's Choir

Cultural Strands

was great, but the march was small. Still it made the news.

Then there were the busloads of charming, excited youth from different backgrounds having fun and making insightful, inspiring speeches at the Cronulla Beach Harmony Day. June Smith and I represented OWN at the school gathering. An underlying 'blame game' hinders unity, but it was good to see Departments of Multicultural Affairs and Immigration, and the NSW Government sponsoring an event at the Trade Union Club on 30th June.

*Noreen Hewett
- reprinted from Wella Longa*

Film Review

HEPHZIBAH

Hephzibah Menuhin, sister to Yehudi and Yalta, had a fascinating life. This is revealed in a wonderful documentary *Hephzibah* now showing at the Heydon Orpheum cinema Cremorne and well worth going to see. Phone 9908 4344 for times. There are usually early performances.

As all were extraordinary musicians, the Menuhin family recorded much of their early life on film. As Yehudi and Hephzibah toured the world giving concerts together they grew very close and they married the Australian brother and sister heirs to the Aspro empire. Hephzibah was swept off to a new life on a sheep station in the outback, a life she embraced with complete love and devotion. Her descriptions are lyrical when writing to her family. Hephzibah's energies were focused not only on her family life, but also on the inception of Musica Viva, education of children, assistance to asylum seekers from war-torn Europe and many other things. However, as the documentary reveals, this was not to be for her entire life. As a passionate and deeply feeling woman she decided to follow her heart and the second part of her life began.

Hephzibah is remembered by her family in this moving film, honestly and with compassion. Her life was filled with complexities, a life in which impossible decisions had to be made by her and because of which some suffered. There are few concessions made by those who agreed to be in this film. But perhaps because of their candour, we the viewers are able to relate to much of what is revealed and recognize the very demanding position she was in.

Child prodigies are in a unique category. Hephzibah was no exception. With her brilliant brain, her undisputed musical ability and her passion for helping the disadvantaged, she shone in a dark world. Whether this life of dedication was to the detriment of her own children's welfare is for the viewer to decide but, personally, I left the cinema with a deeper understanding of her predicament and an admiration for her very great achievements. I found this film a compelling biography.

Daphne Lera

Book Review

One Hundred Great Books in Haiku

(David Bader, Penguin, RRP \$19.95)

In the 16th century Zen monks in Japan developed the haiku, a poem consisting of three unrhymed lines of five, seven and five syllables. Now Manhattan attorney David Bader has applied this ancient poetic form to the literary canon and come up with a book that is the perfect gift for book lovers. One hundred of the classic books of the world have been reviewed in haiku form by this crazy man, and the result is hilarious.

Bader admits in his foreword that the formal requirements of haiku have made it necessary to cut such things as characters, plot, dialogue and descriptive passages, so don't bother giving this book to anyone who lacks a sense of humour. The rest of us will giggle from cover to cover. A few quotes:

The Odyssey *Homer*

Aegean forecast –
storms, chance of one-eyed giants,
delays expected.

The Scarlet Letter *Nathaniel Hawthorne*

Grim, grey New England –
all adulterers receive
free monogramming.

The Confessions *St Augustine*

This is just to say
I screwed around. Forgive me.
I enjoyed it so.

Pride and Prejudice *Jane Austen*

Single white lass seeks
landed gent for marriage, whist.
No parsons thank you.

Lady Chatterley's Lover *D.H. Lawrence*

On the grounds, fresh game.
On the new gamekeeper, fresh
Lady Chatterley.

Reviewed by Helen Young

Letters to the Editor

Meeting Deadlines

Quarterly meetings and Management Team meetings now all start at 10.30 am not at 10.00 am as they used to. The amount of work to be got through is still the same. The meetings are now later so that the local women can get there for the start of the meeting, so the story goes.

What about the regional women who get up early to catch the only train available to get them there, sometimes having to travel some distance by car just to get to the train? They then have to leave early to catch the only train available to get them home. Sometimes leaving and arriving home in the dark.

Regardless of what time a meeting starts somebody always comes in late so why not start earlier?

*Gwenda Fulford, OWN
Newcastle*

Northern Exposure

I found your group in a small comment in a local paper, I was curious and became a member via your Bellingen Group and am now writing to ask if there is anyone 'down there' who would like to correspond with me, especially regarding their travel experiences whether USA, Canada, Europe, Asia.

How did you all 'work your passage' to land where you did?

What do you think of the places you came through and their current situations?

So much has happened in all the countries I've been through – good and bad!

How did you choose the spot you live in?

I understand the local group is in nucleus form at the moment.

My background is Pom with a lot of things mixed in. Lived in Canada

on the "49th" Worked in UK and Australia, moved around in Sydney. I've worked in all aspects of pharmacy.

My home is on the Sunshine Coast 'twixt forest and beach with access via the Pacific Highway. The native birds are magnificent, so too are the plants. The people are mixed, many young and retirees. No noise – wonderful.

Does anyone come up the coast to relax? Drop me a line — the kettle is always on.

You can gain an awful lot for a 50cent stamp! Contact the OWN office for my details.

Best wishes

Pauline Valsleo

On Living Treasures

I am forwarding an article which was sent to me regarding my aunt, Mrs Rosalie Hine, who lives in Somerset, Tasmania. It is as you will see a potted version of her lifelong activities. It was suggested to me that OWN might find this of interest, and I found myself in agreement.

I would also add that this wonderful lady not only was (is) an active community worker, she also had a very big heart for her motherless nieces (my two sisters and myself who lost our mother at a very early age). As the article suggests she is quite remarkable, not only for her age but for the diversity of her interests. Some years ago she attended an OWN meeting at Nowra and the next day she thoroughly enjoyed breakfast at the beach – an unusual experience for one used to Tasmania's early morning chill. A friend in OWN, who came with us remarked, it was quite amazing to see this lady, then ninety, in smart tailored shorts doing a quick walk along the beach. I had to agree. I am sure she would be happy to see this article in our wonderful Newsletter.

*Isabel MacCallum
(article follows)*

Knowledge to be Treasured

Three wedding ceremonies were held at St Mary's Catholic Cathedral in Darwin on Saturday afternoon.

The huge multi-coloured stained glass window — featuring Mary and the infant Jesus provided a spectacular backdrop to the bridal parties as they took the traditional march from the altar to the world outside where the future beckoned.

Andrea, of Somerset, Tasmania, married Matt at 2 o'clock and there was something distinctly different about the family and friends waiting in the sunshine on Smith St for the happy couple to emerge.

For 95 years young Rosalie this ceremony was clearly the main event. The matriarch of the Hine family had summoned hers: sons and daughters, her 26 grandchildren and her 28 great-grandchildren to be present and many were.

They came by car, bus, train and plane. They were from all the states of the nation and included among their number farmers, mechanics, sportsmen, accountants, teachers, community workers, students, ballroom dancers, church workers, property developers, nurses, hospital managers, ham radio operators and just about any other calling an educated person might follow.

They celebrated the union of Andrea and Matt but equally they celebrated their extended family and the contribution that Rosalie had made to it.

Rosalie Hine is a remarkably well educated lady who speaks with authority on matters of historical interest and is equally at ease discussing contemporary issues.

She has been a teacher, business developer, dairy farmer, wife and mother, community worker without peer, international traveller and is

among the relatively small number of women who have for decades provided drive and direction to the Country Women's Association in Tasmania.

Life hasn't always been good or easy. She has lived through world wars and a depression. Her good memories include all the interaction with family, friends and community. Her bad memories include a fire that took the family home and treasured possessions, the medical complications that took an infant son, the disastrous industrial accident that took her husband, and a sudden heart attack that took a treasured adult son.

Rosalie lingers on these matters only briefly and then advises that living in the past and bemoaning those things that might have been, is not her way.

She has moved from writing with chalk on a small slate board to communication on the Internet, from horse and buggy to global jet travel. She claims that she is now ready to move on again.

"If Ricky Ponting was 94 not out", she says, "he would put his head down and move to a century before deciding on what now for the next stage of his innings."

Rosalie reckons she is no different.

Undoubtedly this remarkable woman is the repository of a wealth of local history and has life skills that only people of her vintage possess.

The challenge for society is to seek out and record that knowledge.

(Courtesy of Tony Fletcher, retired MLC for Murchison)

Tale of a Merry Weirdo.

I recently heard of a small boy, about four or five, who said to his mother, "I know what a weirdo is." "Oh? What is a weirdo?" asked his mother. The little boy confidently replied, "It's a lady whose husband has died."

Halcyon Evans - A Merry Weirdo

People's Choice Media Awards

Older People Speak Out (OPSO) was established in 1992 by a group of retired media and advertising professionals in response to a commonly held view by older people's groups that older people were negatively portrayed by the media. The People's Choice Media Awards are part of the annual OPSO National Media Awards, which encourage the Australian media to break down negative stereotypes of older people by portraying the positive contributions made by older Australians, and the ways in which we lead rich and fulfilling lives.

Australian of all ages are asked to nominate a photo, article, advertisement or radio or TV report which they consider most effectively portrays the positive aspects of ageing. Winners of each of the above categories, and the person who nominates them, will be flown to the awards presentation ceremony in Brisbane on 13 November 2006 to receive their award and a prize. Prizes include electronic equipment such as MP3 players and portable DVD players.

Nomination forms are available from OPSO on (07) 3219 2572, or they can be downloaded at www.opso.com.au or via the Australian Government's Seniors Portal at www.seniors.gov.au. Nominations close on 26 September, 2006.

Helen Young

Don't Dump It, Donate It

Donating old mobile phones can raise funds for children with cerebral palsy, following an agreement between the Aussie Recycling Program and the Spastic Centre. The *Don't Dump It, Donate It!* campaign aims to prevent mobile phones ending up in landfills where their toxic contents can contaminate soil. For every phone sent to the Aussie Recycling Program, it donates \$3 and \$5 to the Spastic Centre which provides satchels for sending old phones through the post for free.

Contact: Jill Lennon, The Spastic Centre, P.O. Box 184, Brookvale, NSW 2100

Details: 1 800 004 364

Your old spectacles can be put to good use in the Third World. You can send them to John Bond, Unit 84, Sarah Claydon Retirement Village, Milton, NSW 2538

Contributed by Louise Anike

Heal Lebanon

Help Lebanon with urgently needed medical supplies.

Heal Lebanon is a not-for-profit charity that was established by a group of concerned pharmacists who aim to minimize the hardships and sufferings of the Lebanese people caught up in the current war with Israel.

Heal Lebanon was formed to ensure that medical aid in the form of urgently needed medical supplies reaches Lebanon via the Lebanese Red Cross and Red Crescent organizations through safe diplomatic channels. Antibiotics, antidiabetic drugs and other urgently needed drugs are being sent to Syria and will then make their way to Lebanon via negotiated diplomatic channels.

Donations can be made directly to any St George Bank branch in Australia or the Bank of South Australia. Donations as small as \$10 will be accepted.

At and Beyond the Rocks

Sydney

Just now our Sydney group is missing some of our most valuable movers and shakers. Our dear Joy Ross is, once again, taking time off to recover from further surgery and will be undergoing treatment for some time. She is, however in good spirits and our hearts go out to her with loving thoughts for a speedy recovery. For many of us OWN Sydney is synonymous with Joy and we miss her sorely as we struggle with the day to day business of the organization. Louise Anike who had been on the sick list for some time is much better and we have had the pleasure of her presence at some of our recent meetings. The unstoppable Muriel Hortin is making wonderful progress, and our beloved Ermes Solari is gaining strength at home.

Our 2006/07 Working group has just been appointed, at our recent AGM and we welcome you all and thank you all for your commitment.

We were Lucky enough to have Claire Vernon, Director of NSW Home Care come to speak at our Sydney OWN AGM on 18 August. Claire gave an interesting talk about the challenges facing Home Care as one of some 700 care providers funded across the state. If the government's aim is to keep us in our own homes as long as possible, then an effective and responsive ACAT, and Home Care system is essential. It was interesting to note that Claire said studies had shown that the claim that this 'stay where you are' philosophy was rooted in economic rationalism was untrue, because it actually cost more to provide

and administer the services to clients in their homes. All the same, I can't help wondering if the mental health component, and social/emotional dislocation ever found a column in that economist's balance sheet either.

As a network we cannot stress enough the importance of engaging in regular exercise and social activity: Wellness on Wednesday, the film group and other groups continue to meet and are happy to welcome new people.

Many of us are now in our late seventies and eighties with a subsequent slowing down and, in some cases, development of restrictive health problems. We do however recognize that no woman is an island. This is a network, and chances are women who have been active in OWN, have been active elsewhere. What we'd really like to see is an increase in this networking activity, both to support the women with increasing needs, and to extend the reach and knowledge of and about our own network. When you go to community meetings, remember that you are an OWN member, spread the word, and likewise, bring their resources back to us. Look at the material kept in the OWN office, take some out to other groups that you think will be interested. Our organization has a glowing reputation with Government and Community organizations and we want to keep it as a vital and influential voice of and for older women. Hear the call and join us, be a voice at our meetings. Whatever you give

to OWN will be returned in friendship and satisfaction.

Our sub-groups, one meeting weekly in the Inner West, and another two that meet once a month – one to welcome retiring women on a Friday evening, the other our Re-activated Political Activists – OWN UP – are uncovering new areas of concern for our members, as well as new skills and talents. Just as well really, because it will be these women who will form the Working Groups and committees of the future. So call in any time, we'd love a hand!

Judith Mustard

(also back home from hospital & on the mend)

Blacktown

Blacktown OWN has a bus trip every month but this month we wanted something different. Living reasonably close to the Blue Mountains, where every year there is a Yuletide festival, this year we decided on a Christmas in July cruise.

The weather was supposed to be cool, and thus give a Christmassy feeling. However, the weather was not cool, but very nice and sunny.

The *Nepean Belle*, a paddle cruiser on the Nepean River, does a Christmas lunch complete with Frosty the Snowman, Christmas decorations and carol singing. The cruise takes more than two hours with occasional explanations of sites and history along the river (some rocks on the river are millions of years old). The quietness and tranquility was much appreciated, as was the beautiful lunch.

Joan van Halen

At and Beyond the Rocks

Nowra

It was an early start for Nowra OWN members, who caught the 7.53am train to Sydney Central to see the ABC TV station at Ultimo.

The three-hour trip slipped past easily, with beautiful coastal and mountain scenery and pleasant company. Nourishment needs amply filled in the cafeteria, we browsed in the ABC shop before being met by our volunteer guide for the tour.

Entering the main studio, we cricked our necks gazing in awe at the massive array of cameras on the ceiling. The stage setting was reminiscent of *Are You Being Served* and the subsequent visit to the wig and makeup room confirmed this. Seats for live audiences were stacked in the corridor outside the studio. We listened with interest to some behind-the-scenes titbits.

A young male artist being made up did not seem disconcerted by eleven sets of eyes peering down at him, but wanted to know whether we had any eligible granddaughters!

The news and weather report room seemed surprisingly understated – our OWN ladies showed remarkable undiscovered talent interviewing and being interviewed and giving the weather report!

Photos on the gallery wall brought memories shared with delight by our guide. The lift was gigantic – used for transporting sets, sheep or whatever.

We sat and listened as the Classic FM organizer edited a musical – all fascinating stuff.

Showbags in hand, and full of newfound interesting

information, we scurried out the back entrance and through a tunnel to avoid the rain and the busy streets of the 'big smoke' to catch our train back home.

Pat Finn

Newcastle

Congratulations and thanks to all members who helped organize and run the launch and conference. It was a wonderful conference. Eight members from Newcastle attended and it was a first for four of the women, who just happen to be on our newly appointed committee.

A special thank you to Barbara Malcolm for arranging the evening's entertainment, which was both interesting and varied. Barbara also made the quilt that was raffled. The money was to pay the entertainers, so we hope a good result was achieved. Jean Eggleton from Newcastle won one of the prizes, yet to be collected, as Jean could not attend the conference.

After 13 years of existence, Newcastle OWN has finally been able to shift to council-owned accommodation, the Youth Centre, in the centre of Newcastle. It's large, has a small kitchen with some storage area, and, importantly, is on both train and bus routes.

Now, because council is having financial difficulties due to funding shortages, they are looking at cutting the funding or selling the building. So we have been writing letters, and the young people have been having a candlelight vigil which we have been invited to attend. Such a wonderful opportunity to try to bridge the generation gap! Most

of the youth programs in the building are centred around music and theatre. The space is big enough for them to hold a gig and for us to hold our functions, if commonsense prevails.

At our July meeting Sue Edmonds spoke about her experience of being a profoundly deaf single mother with good work skills, but unable to find work because of her inability to hear, and how receiving a Cochlear ear implant changed her life completely. Sue now travels the world on behalf of Cochlear telling her story. A wonderful good news story!

Also in July, Wyong OWN travelled by train to Newcastle to visit the Art Gallery and have lunch. Joan and Pat from Newcastle were each able to join them for part of their visit. In June Gwen, Pat and Gwenda from Newcastle, and June from Sutherland, visited Hastings OWN in Port Macquarie and had a wonderful visit.

Gwenda Fulford

Illawarra OWN

Six of our members were able to attend OWN NSW Annual Conference and all found it a worthwhile experience... so much so we are hoping to encourage many others to accompany us to the 2007 Conference.

It is very encouraging to see and hear so many impressive older women with such busy interesting lives. Our State Governor, Professor Marie Bashir, with her friendly, informal manner, was a real inspiration and the skill and enthusiasm so many others contributed to the occasion made it memorable indeed. A big 'thank

At and Beyond the Rocks

you' to the co-coordinators Brenda, Barbara and Kris from us all.

We are now looking forward to the Regional Meeting to be held at Shellharbour in August. Networking with other OWN groups generates great ideas!

The leader of our Playreading Group, Jacque Skinner, is currently fine-tuning the play we wrote, *Dastardly Deeds in the Desert*, as she intends to enter it in a competition for short plays being conducted by Wollongong's Workshop Theatre. Who knows? Playwriting by multiple authors may yet become the new vogue!

Our group viewed David Bradbury's controversial documentary *Blowin' in the Wind* concerning the use of depleted uranium in certain weapons. This has led to an outburst of letter writing to our members of Parliament. We would certainly urge other OWN members to view the documentary if they get the chance, as screening is rather limited.

Peggy Rodden

SHOWN

Where has the year gone? It seems that only last week we were celebrating Seniors' Week and wasn't it only yesterday that we were Kicking Up and Kicking On at the Women's College in Sydney? We have been so busy in the Highlands that we don't have enough days in the week. Who said older people are a burden on the economy and sit around doing nothing?

SHOWN has received a \$4,000 grant through Wingecarribee Shire Council's Community

Assistance Scheme. This grant will give forty local women the chance to do the St John Senior First Aid Certificate Course at a cost of only \$10 each. We will be having two courses – one in September and the other in October. The aim of the project is to empower women by giving them the knowledge to know what to do if someone collapses or has a fall and to give them the confidence to be able to respond calmly in an emergency.

Our Tai Chi classes are continuing to grow in popularity. When this round finishes, we already have enough people registered to run a ten-week intermediate session to take us up to mid-December, then, if things go well, in February we will start another class to include beginners. We are blessed to have Geyi Chen as our instructor.

We have had some good guest speakers during the year but the one we had this month was very much out of the ordinary. The speaker was Jonquil Temple who introduced us to the wonders of her theatre masks. In a mini-workshop, she showed how her masks could enable a person to overcome shyness and take on a particular role. Several members donned masks and flowing costumes and were transformed before our eyes. It was incredible. Jonquil also told us some poignant stories of the responses that she has received from young disabled people when she has used the masks with them. She finished the day with a brief demonstration of how she used puppets in theatre presentations for children.

In October, we are having a bus-trip to Canberra to see the "Anzacs in France, 1916" Exhibition at the Australian War Memorial.

The WENCHes have been busy doing performances for several local groups. The most recent performance was for the Presbyterian Women's Association and was rather special as Jan Woods, from Sydney's Community Television, filmed the show. We were a little apprehensive about it but we had a great audience and Jan was very unobtrusive so we were able to forget about the camera and sing as usual. We have a show to do in September and then we are taking a break for a few weeks to develop some new songs that we have written.

Membership of SHOWN is still growing with four women joining this month and two last month.

We are directly represented on Council's Seniors' Advisory Committee and, indirectly through that, on Council's Community Consultative Committee. This means that Council is being made aware of the interests and needs of older women. Our contacts with other groups in the community are strengthening with SHOWN being invited to send representatives to various forums and AGMs. We receive great support from the local Community Radio.

Life in the Southern Highlands is great and SHOWN members continue to lead busy active lives.

Robyn Smith

At and Beyond the Rocks

Bankstown Greek OWN

July was a busy month for some of our members. In addition to our usual exercise and dancing classes and other social gatherings, Cleo and I attended the OWN Annual Meeting which was held at the Women's College of the University of Sydney.

On 20 July, some of us attended the information session for free English classes provided by the Bankstown Multicultural Network. As a result, 16 of our members will attend English classes at Bankstown TAFE. These classes will be held on Wednesdays between 12:30 and 3:30pm.

On 26 July a few of our members participated in the HACC Services Educational Tour which was free for ethnic community workers and multicultural seniors group leaders. The tour educated attendees about the challenges faced by carers of physically and mentally disabled people and the elderly, and the services and resources available to carers in order to ease their workload: for example transportation, meals on wheels, counselling, shopping trips, outings and excursions. It was a most informative day. A free lunch was provided for all who attended. Our attending members relayed all information back to the rest of our group.

On 28 July our group was invited to attend a Police and Community Consultation Meeting with the new Bankstown Local Area Commander. We were made to feel very welcome, and will attend these meetings every three months to bring up issues such as domestic violence, racism

and other injustices to discuss directly with the Commander.

On 31 July we spent the day at Manly and had a lovely picnic.

Connie Kondilios

Ashfield Greek OWN

I attended the excellent July Conference at the Sydney Women's College. I would like to thank the members of the committee and the staff for organising this wonderful event. The entertainment was super. I had the pleasure of meeting Her Excellency Marie Bashir, Governor of NSW.

On the second day we had very interesting topics regarding legal issues, discussed by a lawyer Ms Sue Fields and her advice was extremely useful. I will try to organise a similar talk with our members at Ashfield.

Being a MIP (Medicine Information Project) representative I discovered that some food and herbal medicines could affect people's health so it is important to know about it. The Ashfield group has benefited from this type of talk and we look forward to the next one. MIP is part of CPSA (Combined Pensioners and Superannuants Association). OWN groups can organise seminars for members. If interested, I suggest you ring Ms Tracy Henry on 02 9281 3588.

Our members in Ashfield enjoy their new premises and have settled very well thanks to the very friendly staff of the Community Services of Ashfield Council. They always greet us with a smile and try to help whenever they can.

From all the activities that we have, Gentle Exercise is the most preferred one because our members find that it helps them to be fit and mobile and increases their self-esteem and confidence.

I took some group photos at the Conference and they can be collected at OWN Head Office.

Maria Camelin

You Can't Beat A Woman
White logo t-shirts are available at the OWN office for \$20 each.

2006 Great Australian Bushwalk Sunday 10 September 2006

"Try bushwalking, Australia!"

Join one of 110 **free** bushwalks in spectacular locations across Australia. This national celebration gives you the opportunity to try a walk with Australia's leading community bushwalking groups and discover the many benefits of bushwalking!

- Choose from 110 free bushwalks
- In every State and Territory – both city and regional areas
- For everyone – from kids to seniors
- Led by our experienced guides
- No special equipment or experience needed
- Find fun, fitness and new friends

Walks information and easy on-line registration available now at: www.greataustralianbushwalk.org.au
Presented in NSW by National Parks Association NSW

Theatre Group Report

Alas, I missed most of the NSW Conference and AGM because I was detained by a Domestic Situation at home (the painter announced he'd be 'coming on Monday', and when a tradesman says he's coming, you want to BE THERE or you'll not see him again for months). Reports of this year's conference, however, gave it high marks and certainly the theatre group was impressed by the meticulous timing, only sorry to keep our wonderful audience waiting while we set the stage. Perhaps it proved a useful pitstop?

How good it always is to be in our OWN setting, performing to such a responsive, appreciative audience; good to see so many familiar faces too,

and have so many buddies singing along to 'Whoopee!'

We are starting work on our domestic violence show, expanding it to violence in general, so topical in this period of tension and terrorist hype that we are subjected to by governments and the media.

By the time this report goes to print the Theatre Group will be at full strength again, with me back from a superlative month in England, Monique Reiher from an exciting visit to Canada, and Jo Allon returning from travel in Europe. There are ten performers and one musician *par excellence*, who would dearly like to pass on the baton so that she can join us on stage. Isn't there anyone out there, free on

Tuesdays, who can play the guitar, or the keyboard, or ANYTHING (suitable)?

We are also looking ahead to our Christmas gathering, deciding on a venue and hoping that as many friends as possible will join us then — still a good way off, but forward planning and booking is essential these days.

Last and best and a note for your diary: on 28 October the Theatre Group will put on a mega show in Mott Hall for family, friends, special guests, and the general public. We are putting it together right now, with a few interruptions for shows for NCOSS, Leichhardt and the mountains, between now and then.

Brigid Sen

Tribute to Gwen George

Gwen was a founding member of the Older Women's Network. She performed in the first shows of the OWN Theatre Group and was very active in OWN's committees and projects. One of her colleagues described her as a forthright and impassioned speaker.

She was very proud of her nomination by OWN as a member of Telstra's Consumer Advisory Committee. Gwen was also a member of the Nursing Home Review Tribunal, and was presented with Life Membership of OWN when she turned 80.

Gwen grew up in Torrington NSW where her father managed the tin mine. She boarded at St Hilda's Hostel in Summer Hill during her final years at Fort St Girls' High. The 'Lady', as they referred to the hostel owner, would invite boys from Newington 'to take tea' with her girls. Afterwards Gwen would say, with delight, that she



Gwen George, Peg Hewett & Joy Ross

would have done better in her exams., 'If it weren't for those Newington boys.'

Gwen's work to improve the lives of women stretches back to World War II. It was after her marriage to Michael George in 1939 and the birth of her son Paddy in 1941, that she became politically active. Her first political campaign centred around the need for Child Care and Kindergartens, when

women were required to do the work that men had done before they were called up to serve in the War. Like many Australians during the war years, both Gwen and Michael joined the Communist Party and so began a life of activism.

After the War, Mick, Gwen, Paddy, their red setter, Red Girl, and a friend who had been a prisoner-of-war, went rabbiting. They travelled in an old truck and pitched tents in all weathers. Despite the rabbit plague they never seemed to be in the right place and eventually admitted defeat. Broke, they returned to work and live in Sydney. They must have been very hard times indeed. Gwen worked in various jobs over the years ending up as librarian at the Amalgamated Metal Workers Union.

Gwen was a founding member of the Union of Australian Women in the 1950's and their first Secretary. The UAW campaigned on prices, peace

Celebrating the Life of Gwen George

issues, equal pay and even pollution, all during a polio epidemic in the 1950's.

Gwen's husband, Michael George died young. Their only son, Paddy was married to Jennie George, President of the NSW Teachers' Federation, and President of the ACTU, she is now a Labor member of Federal Parliament. Paddy died of cancer in 1980, before his fortieth birthday.

Despite these personal tragedies, Gwen remained active for many years on issues which were significant to women, first in the Combined Pensioners Association and then in OWN. She travelled widely and retained a lively interest in everything around her.

As Gwen's health deteriorated her niece, Bronwen Campbell, took on the role of helper and carer. She was determined to stay independent in her own home as long as possible.

However, Gwen had to go to a Nursing Home two years ago, still enjoying company, and a drink and a cigarette. In recent times, a stroke had severely disabled her. She died mid-morning on August 17, having made it very clear a few days before that she did not want to be fed. Strong-willed to the end!

Bronwen described Gwen as a great story-teller who loved a beer and a good time. Bronwen also remembers Gwen as someone who had done a great deal, who had led an interesting life, and who had loved and been loved, before her death at the age of 88.

Noreen Hewett, a friend for over fifty years, and Jennie George MHR, delivered moving eulogies at the service celebrating Gwen's life on August 23, 2006.

Friends are invited to make donations in her memory to the OWN Theatre Group, or to the Jessie Street Women's Library, Tapestry Project.

Monika Law

A Celebration of the Life of Gwen George

- by friend Noreen Hewett

Gwen George was a battler, a stirrer, a socialist, a feminist who won many skirmishes for the political and women's movements — right up to her final illness.

My friendship with Gwen firmed when the Union of Australian Women — the UAW — formed in 1950. Gwen became first Secretary and I the President of the NSW organisation. It quickly went national.

We worked hard and long that first week of its formation and on Friday evening adjourned for a drink at the Ship Inn hotel. On leaving, one of us stumbled and we ended up falling onto the street. We laughed at the hot news item it might have been if the Secretary and President of the newly formed UAW had been photographed falling out of a pub!

The UAW was created at the urging of Communists who saw the spectacular rise of women's organisations, similarly named, in Europe. It could never, of course, have reached such heights. But the UAW revived International Women's Day (IWD) marches (though then we marched on footpaths). It organised the biggest ever women's lobby — 280 UAW women — to Canberra to claim rights for women and children. A demonstration of UAW women against conscription of 20-year-olds for Vietnam in Federal Parliament saw us ejected from the public gallery. And it was the only time I saw redbaiter WC Wentworth turn tail and back off from the fury of women in the Great Hall. It was there that the seeds of the Save Our Sons Movement were sown. The book *Not Just a Hat and Glove Brigade* shows such UAW achievements.

Gwen was a good scholar and

trained as a librarian. She was also a good writer, speaker and performer, both for serious occasions and in comic satire. She recruited Maroubra lifesavers to perform in a show on beachside pollution. Her punchy messages graced many political leaflets, one of the most successful appealing to women for a 'NO' vote in the referendum to ban the Communist Party.

As a strong unionist Gwen decided, when in the UAW, to become a sheet metalworker. Popular with workmates, many of them joined the UAW Working Women's Group, which she initiated. It invigorated support for equal pay struggles among nurses, migrant workers in clothing factories, industrial and office workers.

Years later, when Women's Liberation inspired Australian feminists, when International Women's Day marches claimed the streets, when peace activism became the norm and equality was demanded as a right, Gwen was there. It was in the spirit of this rebellion by feminists that the Older Women's Network was born.

When Gwen retired from work in the Metalworkers' Union she joined me in the Pensioners' and Superannuants' Association for many successful campaigns and we were founding members of the Older Women's Network. OWN soon went national and even inspired similar organisations in UK and Europe.

The publication *Kicking Up Autumn Leaves*, a product of today's OWN, would have delighted Gwen. She was forever kicking up autumn leaves as a rebellious OWN challenged the invisibility of older women among governments and society and claimed a voice in shaping contemporary society.

In OWN's many causes Gwen was influential, even with politicians — including Liberal Premier Greiner, no

Celebrating the Life of Gwen George

less! He said Gwen George talked sense and could see him any time. It wasn't an offer she accepted. Instead, she wrote personally to every woman MP in NSW Parliament pointing out that only NSW lacked a Women's Information and Referral Centre. She won bipartisan support and a Centre was established, though just recently abolished.

Gwen was on the Telecom Regional Consumers' Council — a thorn in Telecom's side by highlighting injustices to consumers. Yet she persuaded Telecom to sponsor an OWN Theatre Group performance featuring consumer issues. Then Gwen worked with the late Linda Adamson to produce OWN's Information Superhighway publication.

I've just touched the surface of Gwen's involvement in making a difference. She participated when

OWN initiated of the first ever public conference focusing on how women were discriminated against in superannuation schemes. Called 'Super Women', it attracted many high profile women including Geraldine Doogue as facilitator.

Today OWN has 19 active groups in NSW and several wellness centres for older women. It is a national organization covering several States. Gwen's involvement in OWN earned her a life membership. Gwen was not given to displaying emotion, but when I went to find her after that presentation (I have a copy here) she was in tears. It was a precious acknowledgment.

I shared many of Gwen's joys and sorrows. We became even closer when she built a place at Shoal Bay and I lived at Nelson Bay. I had many holidays with her, often with my sister-in-law Joan. On our travels, I assure

you Gwen knew about everything worth seeing. She was a great organiser and fun to be with. And how we loved those parties in Glebe waiting for that strange exotic Boongarajah to bloom!

Gwen loved her family. Jenny was always generous in support of Gwen while Bronwyn repaid Gwen's love in full measure, becoming principal carer in her last years. Thank you for that.

It was my privilege to be with Gwen on the evening of Paddy's death. I shared her grief and stories after that hospital phone call. We drank a little and mourned, talking till early morning.

Gwen was my mate, my comrade, my sister in all but blood relationship — as she was to many others. Vale our great mate. We won't forget you!

Noreen Hewett

The Five Stages of Grieving

According to Dr Elizabeth Kubler-Ross, there are five typical stages that a grieving person experiences — denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance.

Denial: "This can't be happening to me". Your mind refuses to accept what is happening. Also, *shock and numbness*, where you go about your daily routines and tasks like a robot, showing very little emotion for days or weeks.

Anger: "It isn't fair. What did I do to deserve this?" It comes as you begin to accept reality. We must get in touch with our anger and express it in a way that is not destructive. If anger is turned inward (not felt or expressed) one becomes depressed. If anger isn't expressed, it will make you bitter and hamper your recovery. It is important not to bury your anger, but express all of it *before* you try to forgive. Also *guilt* — for things you did and for things you didn't do.

Bargaining: "I'll be nice to everyone if you just make it go away". You try to get them back. This is a necessary stage, and it helps you to look back at what happened.

Depression: "I feel hopeless. Nothing matters anymore". This is an inevitable part of loss. It comes during anger, bargaining and the letting go. You feel that your life is over. You question your worth, what you're here for, what you will do with the rest of your life. This is a dangerous stage. You need to let go rather than hold on to an unrealistic dream for the rest of your life. Crying is normal and tears are healing.

Acceptance: "I'll be OK now". This only happens when you have worked through all the other stages. You realize that it is final, and you are ready to get on with your life, which does have meaning, and make the best of it. You begin to feel free from the pain and the hurt. You are ready to move on to a *new* life and let the other life remain in the past. You are able to remember the good as well as the bad. You accept loss as an inevitable part of life. Usually, you will end up with a better life. Also *Forgiveness* — do it for yourself, not for the other person. Forgiveness is very freeing, and necessary for you to get on with your life without carrying baggage.

Contributed by Robyn Tassiker

Grief, Growth and Gratitude

In the gloom of early evening, the door to 87 Lower Fort Street appeared firmly shut. All around was quiet. Was it the right night for the meeting? But the door opened smoothly to my touch to reveal a small group of women setting up a casual meal, ostensibly for Christmas in July, but really to share and discuss experiences of loss and grief. There had been a meeting on this matter some weeks before, it had produced helpful information on what emotions to expect in loss and grief, some stories of loss from the group and some methods of dealing with loss and grief; some women wanted to explore this further.

These women of the Younger Older Women's Group, all but two of them unknown to me, welcomed me with smiles but the ice between strangers remained to be broken. More women arrived alone or with a friend until a dozen sat around a large table, pouring drinks and tasting the food, very welcome at this time in the evening.

Preliminaries over, Robyn Tassiker, our group leader for the night, invited us as a getting-to-know-you exercise to share briefly our name, how our day had gone and what was a major grief in our life. The last item was challenging. What would the women feel safe to reveal to a crowd of mostly unknown and therefore untested listeners? My fears were unfounded. Without hesitation, as if suddenly freed from tight suppression, stories of painful loss tumbled out. Interestingly, they were mostly about physical illness and the degeneration of aging with the seemingly insuperable challenge of dealing with the consequent loss of freedom to do what could once be done with ease.

Next, we were asked to write out what we thought was the meaning of grief, the feelings associated with it, what our most significant losses in life had been and how we had or would deal with them. Armed with this list of personal information, we split into groups of two or three to discuss them as we chose. My group quickly established a sense of trust as each of us went through our list and the others listened attentively without interrupting. Such listening is a gift and went a long way in enabling those who were listeners to then express support and explore in more detail those painful issues which generally we do not mention. As this sense of trust deepened into one of uncritical acceptance of each other, we began to feel free to give feedback and even to laugh with wry humour at the dilemma of suffering we all face as human beings. In this circumstance, we talked so long together that we were late in returning to the main group for the final plenary session. We felt a bit like naughty children, but we'd had a very rich time together.

The whole group continued to share and listen to one another for the final session. At the close of the meeting, we each offered what we thought had been the best aspect of the whole meeting. Some said new friendships, others said feeling less alone knowing others were in equally difficult situations of loss. For me, particularly in the small group, a

totally unexpected experience of intimacy and appreciation for our sharing had arisen even though our focus had been on loss and grief.

Subsequently, I recalled other times when a sense of powerful connection with others has come my way despite, or more likely because of the presence of grief. Grief makes us very vulnerable to hurt, but paradoxically, it also opens us right up to love. When someone shows, often in a wordless way, that they understand and care about us, the loneliness of grief departs, at least for a while, and we feel loved. When we can finally allow the tears to flow, an exquisite inner softness, a release of all the tension of holding them in, follows. Suddenly the world around looks no longer grey but alive with colour, as if fresh washed with rain. At such times, a tender green shoot of hope in new possibilities appears on our inner landscape and we know we have taken a small step forward towards a changed and more appropriate life, both inwardly and outwardly. There may still be a hard road ahead, but hope lifts our hearts and brings an experience of quiet gratitude that we are still alive and able to enjoy our beautiful world.

Here, in the heart of OWN, among the hard work, the frustrations, the conflicts and griefs are also treasures beyond price: compassion, friendly encouragement and welcome, all waiting for those who seek them as they wrestle with life's inescapable losses on the way to new life and thankfulness for the wisdom they have gained.

Bev Cameron

Jubilation

When I first heard the Spanish word for retirement I thought *fabuloso*. Spanish for retirement is *jubilacion* (pronounced *hoobilarseon*). Although I am giving a fair slice of my time to volunteering, for myself I want joy and jubilation at this stage of my life. So I have many interests and activities outside volunteering that bring me joy.

On the third Friday of the month, a group of younger older women meet. Most of us are newly retired, or about to be retired. Next meeting the subject for discussion is, 'What brings you joy?' This could be anything ... family, achievements, activities, philosophy. Come along and share your ideas (and bring your joy with you).

Weekends are a treasured part of my life and I enjoy many activities. We all have activities or interests which we enjoy now that we could share. Maybe we could include some sharing, maybe each month we could try something that one of our members is doing. How our group fulfils the needs of our members is up to those members. So come along and speak up. Beth feels that 'Jubilation' is a much more inviting and inspiring name for this group. So be it.

Lorraine Inglis

October Jubilation Meeting

During the year several “younger” OWN members discussed the possibility of a forum within the wider OWN in which to explore issues pertinent to the lives of women who may still be in employed work or have just finished their formal working lives and are looking for fellow voyagers on the journey into, through and beyond retirement.

At the October meeting of *Jubilation*, I will present some thoughts on the journey into retirement from the psychological/emotional/intellectual perspective rather than the practical issues of financial planning, mortgages, pensions etc, although the two aspects are inevitably interwoven. Members of the group will be invited to explore their own questions and share wisdom drawn from life experience. The aim of this *Jubilation* meeting, as with all *Jubilation* meetings, is twofold: to learn from each other and to build and strengthen friendships.

All members of OWN are welcome to the meeting on 20th October '06 at 6.00 p.m. at 87 Lower Fort Street.

Bev Cameron

Duplicity?

One afternoon about ten years ago I went into an electronics shop. The six young male attendants were all “hoovering” around the only other customer in the shop — the stereotypical blonde bombshell in stiletto snakeskin boots (amongst other suitable adornments). No one seemed to see me or to take the slightest interest in my custom.

I admit to having benefited from the ‘sweet young thing’ phenomenon in my ‘youth’ — the nice seat by the window in the coffee shoppe, attentive service from the waiters, a goblet of red wine paid for by a handsome French stranger on the *Orient Express*.

But standing there invisible in the electronics shop, I felt middle-aged and dumpy competent, but dumpy. (Earlier that day I had been working on my TV antenna in the dirty and hot attic and perhaps looked a teensy bit rumbled with dust and perspiration.)

Now I’m a somewhat older woman — but ‘older’ has its perks: Smiling young people offer me their seat on the train, shop attendants smile patiently at my slowed pace and help me get my groceries into my green Eco bag. When I asked the man at the mountaineering shop if he could validate my parking ticket, he regretted that his shop was not in the parking scheme. So he instead gave me a \$10 discount on my new camping gear. At the garden shop I asked if they take Seniors’ Cards, and the attendant said no, but gave me a voucher for a lovely cappuccino at the garden’s cafe. Perhaps I can, from time to time, indulge myself in a minor taboo of the sisterhood (?) the perks of being a ‘cute little old lady’?

Helen Vincent

OWN UP (Unashamedly Political)

Pearlie’s plea, “Let’s Do Something” has resulted in three spirited meetings (June/July/August). Now instead of shouting at the TV and radio we are full of ideas. Slogans such as: “Better to be up and doing than down and being done”. “If Howard gets up your nose, PICKET!”

We plan selling stickers.

Also, a “Did You Know?” list for *OWN Matters*. See below. There is great concern at some of the legislation being pushed through parliament just because the government has the numbers.

If you know anyone not registered to vote please tell them to do so now as they will only have three days once the election is called.

If this sounds like your kind of group, do join us at 75 Windmill Street, The Rocks on Friday 15 September and 13th October from 10:30am to 1:00pm. Bring a sandwich to keep talking at lunchtime.

Lola Cummings

Did You Know

- Within the first three weeks of the new Federal Legislation (implemented from 1 July 2006) 200 people had been thrown off benefit? Whilst most well know charities and churches refused to take part, curiously Hillsong Church has accepted the role of manager, handling funds to pay, depending on circumstances, some bills for these people who will be receiving no benefit for eight weeks.

We might wonder how many people with leukemia (or any other life-threatening illness) are fighting now to be granted a pension.

- Did you know that a strip of land at East Darling Harbor, about to be redeveloped, was known, even before the Depression era, as *The Hungry Mile*?

Wharfies used to queue in this area, past the soup kitchen stalls set up to give them something to eat, in the hope of getting a job. Renaming will be part of the redevelopment process. One of the names being considered is that of Ian Kiernan, synonymous with the *Clean-up Australia* campaign.

- Did you know that there’s a strategy to cope with those occasions when you are busting to get to the toilet? Researchers say if you vigorously scratch the back of your calf it distracts your brain long enough for you to make it to the bathroom.

Now when you’ve worked out how to run whilst scratching your calf, do let us know.

This list is compiled by the new Unashamedly Political group, newly named at our last meeting as the *OWN-UPs*.

Pearlie McNeil

Blowing in the Wind

This is an Australian documentary made in 2005. It was produced by David Bradbury, and shown at the Dendy Theatre

We were lucky in the Illawarra to have it screened for one night and it was shown to a packed theatre.

It is hard not to be enraged after seeing this film, which is about depleted uranium being used in US weaponry. While working on this documentary, David discovered that a 20 year agreement was signed in 2004 between the US and Australia, the terms of which are secret, but which allows the US military to train and test its latest weapons in Australia without any environmental Impact Study (EIS) done, before or afterwards.

The Base is in Shoalwater Bay near Rockhampton, Queensland — a pristine area. The exercises will involve 30,000 US military personnel, ship to shore and aerial bombardments. This will involve warships, aircraft carriers, submarines and destroyers (all nuclear powered) sailing around and through the Great Barrier Reef. We know what the US has done when testing weapons in other parts of the world, so we should be gravely concerned.

This 62 minute film should be seen by every Australian.

David Bradbury has an international reputation as a film maker, making documentaries such as *Frontline and Chile*, *Hasta Quando?*, *State of Shock*, and others. The DVD of this film is available from www.frontlinefilms.com.au for \$40. Frontline Films funded this film.

Three members of Illawarra OWN attended the showing of this film and we showed the DVD to our Group at our last meeting. The Group decided to write to the Prime Minister about our concerns. Members also decided to contact the ABC and SBS requesting that they show the film.

I volunteered to let all other OWN groups know about this documentary by writing to *OWN Matters*.

The immorality of disposing of our uranium waste in warheads and sending it to kill and contaminate other people in their own lands must be stopped.

Also remember that 11,000 known people who were at the Maralinga Tests have died from cancer. Will we see the same from the tests at Shoalwater Bay?

Joan Hilton - Illawarra OWN

The Rope

Eleven people were hanging on a rope under a helicopter, ten men and one woman. The rope was not strong enough to carry them all, so they decided that one had to leave, because otherwise they were all going to fall. They weren't able to name that person, until the woman gave a very touching speech.

She said that she would voluntarily let go of the rope, because, as a woman, she was used to giving up everything for her husband and kids, or for men in general, and was used to always making sacrifices with little in return.

As soon as she finished her speech, all the men started clapping their hands...

contributed by Barbara Malcolm

.....

Fantastic Computer Vision

Women with low vision who use a computer this is for you!
 Contact: Quantum Technology on 1300 791 777 and ask for a free 30 day trial of Magnification Software 'Magic and Zoomtext'.

Seeing is believing, I'm using it right now. People who use computers constantly can also benefit from this marvellous invention.

contributed by Janet Waters

.....

Gardening Helps Ward off Dementia

Most of us have someone in our extended family with dementia, or know someone who does. It's distressing and debilitating — and common. It's the primary reason for about 44% of nursing home admissions, and in another 20% of admissions, it's a contributing factor. These percentages are going to get higher in the years ahead as our population continues to age. But certain lifestyles seem to protect people from dementia — and the good news, for those with a green thumb, is that gardening is high on the list. Australian researchers followed a group of men and women aged 60 years and older from the city of Dubbo, in western New South Wales. At the commencement of the trial in 1988, these people — 2805 in all — were given a medical examination and a battery of medical tests and asked to complete a questionnaire about their education level, alcohol and tobacco use, medications, medical history and levels of physical activity. The researchers then followed them for 16 years to see how many were admitted to hospital or a nursing home over that period with dementia (Alzheimer's disease plus other types of dementia like vascular dementia). The researchers found there was a 34% lower risk of developing dementia if a person drank a moderate amount of alcohol. Daily walking produced a 38% lower risk of dementia in men (but curiously there was no significant risk reduction in women). There was a 36% lower risk for those who did some gardening every day. Another factor that lowered the risk was education — the higher a person's level of education, the less likely dementia was.

Why gardening? Because it involves not just physical exertion but mental activity as well, according to the researchers. One thing that didn't have any effect either way was blood cholesterol, despite other studies that seem to show a connection between elevated cholesterol and dementia.

Things that actually increased the risk of dementia were pre-existing heart or lung disease, a physical disability, and depression.

continues next page



Implications:

There are ways of warding off dementia — keep fit, enjoy a drink or two, keep mentally active, and get those gardening gloves on.

Dr Peter Lavelle

From Health Reader – June 2006

Safe Places . . . Big Problems

When I drop off the twig, and someone comes to clear the home/room/twig where I was living before I departed, there are a few possibilities.

Someone near and dear might have the good sense to look in every container and every corner and to shake everything possible. They may find all kinds of little treasures, or objects that I perceived as important to me or others, that I, at some time, put in a SAFE PLACE.

By the time I drop off the proverbial, I might have forgotten where the SAFE PLACE was, or even that I put objects in those SAFE PLACES.

The twig/room/home might be cleared by an agent for the public trustee, and my belongings, including the little treasures, might go to some auction room. There the SAFE PLACES might be found, and the little treasures go up for auction. Or some lucky buyers of my belongings might find little treasures in them. They might not be worth much money, just enough to give them a bargain.

Why do I think these scenarios possible? Although I am not planning twig-dropping-off for many years, I recognise, even now, that SAFE PLACES are a big problem. We chose SAFE PLACES because we believe that no one will find them, that these places are unusual.

Our problem is that these places are so unusual that we sometimes don't remember where they are. Given enough time we might forget we used them.



For my 21st birthday I received a string of pearls. I was very fond of them and, in the current twig, I put them in a SAFE PLACE. When I was packing up my house to go overseas I found them for the first time in years. I found that safe place.

Last year in Mexico I was in El Fuerte to catch the train along the Copper Canyon. My night's accommodation was marginal, so I put my money belt, which contained my passport, cards and money in a SAFE PLACE. Next morning I took a taxi very early to the station to catch the train, and was talking with fellow travellers while we waited for the booking office to open. Suddenly I realised I did not have my money belt, because I had left it in the SAFE PLACE. I entrusted my luggage to a fellow traveller, grabbed a taxi which had pulled up, and raced back to my accommodation. The door to my room was open, but luckily my room had not been cleared, so my money belt was still there. I got back to catch the train. That cured me of changing my routine for my belongings as I travelled.

I cannot say I am totally cured of using them at home, nor can I say that I have remembered all the SAFE PLACES I have used. I am still looking for my spare keys, my good leather gloves, that map of the Silk Road, the new spice grinder I bought... and those other things I can't remember putting somewhere safe. They are here somewhere.

So take note, find two or three good SAFE PLACES, and only use those.

One place you use all the time for where you put your keys, glasses, wallet (and this is a place that never changes).

One you use for your will, passport, the photos of that gorgeous man you met in Spain twenty years ago, the information about that fixed deposit which you have not mentioned to Centrelink... (These you keep where you can grab them if you have to leave



quickly in a disaster, and this might be the one place you tell your nearest and dearest about).

Lastly, maybe one place where you keep valuables! If you like to change your SAFE PLACES in case that burglar has been checking the old ones, at least keep a list of your safe places. This is so that you can remind yourself where your safe places are.

Of course, you will need to put your list in a SAFE PLACE!

Lorraine Inglis

Homeshare NSW

- Are you an older person interested in having someone come to live with you and help out?
- Are you interested in share accommodation and in helping out an older person?
- Are you interested in Homeshare for an older family member?

Perhaps you are interested in companionship, someone to help out with gardening, cooking, shopping, cleaning, walking the dog, laundry and transport, or the peace of mind of having someone staying overnight in your home. Having a homesharer live with you would mean having someone friendly around to talk to and give you a hand, plus a chance to enjoy shared interests and perhaps develop a new friendship.

We would talk to you in detail about your interests, expectations and needs, what you would like the homesharer to do around the house, plus important things like who pays for food and bills.

Contact: Thomas-Andrew Baxter
HomeshareManager
The Benevolent Society
Ph: 9365 6122
Fax 9365 6628
Email homeshare@bensoc.org.au

OWN ADVOCACY

Public Interest Advocacy Centre

Public Interest Advocacy Centre contacted OWN Sydney to participate in a review of the scheme below. We were unable to attend, however we have been informed of the main focus of the meeting. Lots of concerns were raised during the meeting. The main topic of the meeting was, problems encountered by older people with bills from Sydney Water.

The Public Interest Advocacy Centre called a meeting to address this problem.

This received considerable support and the meeting resolved to ask PIAC to make a formal proposal on behalf of the other organizations to Sydney Water, that it subscribe to Centrepay and make this payment option available for customers facing difficulties in paying bills.

The meeting was supported by representatives from the following eight organizations.

The meeting resolved to ask PIAC to make a formal proposal on behalf of the other organizations to Sydney Water that it subscribe to Centrepay and make this payment option available to customers facing difficulties in paying bills. We have been requested that our organization be represented.

If you have any comments, problems or concerns that you would like to raise in regard to the above with PIAC please contact us at OWN Sydney 9247 7046. We will discuss this more fully at the NSW Management Team meeting on the 14th August 2006. We would welcome anyone who would be interested in joining us to follow up on these issues.

Peggy Hewett

Speak Up! Speak Out!

It was been brought to the attention of OWN NSW that one of our members had been suffering from abuse at the nursing home where she is a resident.

The abuse had occurred over a long period and was in the form of harassment over her requests for a diet to suit her medical needs and her laundry to be done without the use of strong chemicals. Both the diet that did not meet her specific needs and the chemicals in the wash caused her severe and painful rashes over most parts of her body. This was very distressing to her as she knew it was something that could be avoided if proper care were taken.

After many attempts to get these needs addressed and finding herself the target of what she describes as a witch hunt, she decided that it was time to look outside the organization for help. Letters to the Aged Care Task Force

and the Health Care Complaints Unit brought swift results from both departments.

The upshot is that she now has her diet attended to. Members of the kitchen staff have been to visit her and she has been so touched by their kindness and attention that it has brought her to tears. The laundry staff are also making a better effort to accommodate her.

The result of writing to the right department, airing her grievances in a clear manner, has enriched her life. A lesson for us all.

Barbara Malcolm

AGE DISCRIMINATION STUDY

On this theme of speaking up and speaking out, OWN NSW is hosting a focus group for a HREOC study seeking 8-10 participants on Thursday the 7 Sept, from 11.30am to 1pm looking at the issue of age discrimination and how it impacts on all aspects of your life. You must be a woman over the age of 65 years. There will be a participation fee paid to those attending. You must book with Beth at the office on 9247 7046

Generic Fosamax

It has come to the attention of some of our members that it is possible to buy a generic form of Fosamax, which is a prescription used by many of our members.

The generic, *Allendro*, will not save heaps of money each month, but it will save money.

It will save money, whether you have had a fracture and get the cheaper prescription (now about \$33.50 for non-pensioners), or whether you have not had a fracture, and pay more — up to \$60.

At Blooms Chemist, in Leichhardt Marketplace, *Allendro* is available for \$45 if you have not had a fracture, or \$29 if you have.

Since every little bit counts to many of our members we would like to make a list of chemists where such a widely used drug is available at a cheaper cost. If you have purchased *Allendro* at the cheaper price or if you find a chemist which sells generic forms of medications please drop OWN a line.

Lorraine Inglis

NOTICES

25 November White Ribbon Day International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women

White Ribbon Day was created by a handful of Canadian men in 1991 on the second anniversary of one man's massacre of 14 women in Montreal. They began the White Ribbon campaign to urge men to speak out against violence against women.

In 1999, the United Nations General Assembly declared November 25 the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women (IDEVAW) and the White Ribbon has become the symbol for the day. From 2000, the Commonwealth Government Office for Women ran awareness activities on the International Day, and, in 2003, the Australian branch of the United Nations Development Fund for Women, UNIFEM, began a partnership with men and men's organisations to make this a national campaign. Ten thousand white ribbons were distributed this year.

In 2004, 200,000 ribbons were worn by men and women across Australia - men at work; men and women in all Australian police forces; men in national and local sporting matches and organisations; men in the media; men and women in politics; men in the defence forces; men and women in capital cities and in rural and regional Australia.

In 2005 the campaign grew even stronger and almost 250,000 ribbons were distributed across the country and beyond.

Violence Against Women in Australia

Australian research has established that:

- more than 1 million women have experienced violence during a relationship with 60% reporting that they lived in fear during the relationship
- 23% of women in a current relationship, or who had been in a relationship, experienced physical and/or sexual violence from a partner
- 20% of women who experienced violence were pregnant when violence first occurred
- 67.6% of women who experienced violence said their children had witnessed the violence (Women's Safety Australia, ABS 1996)
- Visit :www.whiteribbonday.org.au and find out how you can get involved.

Bequests to the Older Women's Network

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

Please specify which Older Women's Network you wish to be the recipient of your gift: Older Women's Network NSW or the *Older Women's Network, Sydney*.

Option No. 1

I devise the sum of \$ to the Older Women's Network for the general purpose of the Older Women's Network OR the specific purpose of such purpose being consistent with the aims and objectives of the Older Women's Network, to be administered by the Older Women's Network.

Option No 2

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

The gift you make to OWN will be an enduring record of your generosity.

Reclaim The Night

Reclaim The Night Sydney will be 28 years old this year. She has had many women and children from diverse backgrounds participate over the years both in the march and organising or supporting this event to protest against men's sexual violence.

In this current climate of global terror it is appropriate to recognise that sexual violence is indeed a war crime no matter where it happens. Rape is gendered terrorism — a domestic war crime — it is only the right words away.

You don't have to be a feminist to understand that men's sexual violence against women and children is not natural, but an atrocity anywhere, and every time it happens — no matter who's doing it.

Most of the women who have marched know why it is non-negotiable that RTN be respected as a women and child only space. RTN's success is a reflection of how courageous individual women, their networks and groups and communities have shown their support. It is grassroots event, not a platform for polities or businesses. Her message is TO these people and the laws they create and enforce. There are many issues each year that come up for RTN. Some are nasty and recurring. The issue of elder abuse is not new, but it is one that concerns older women who may not be able to march or make their voices or protests heard. If you feel strongly about this issue then join the collective now and work towards making OWN a real presence at this event, 27 October 2006. Contact Susanne Martain email: webweave@isis.aust.com. Or call OWN on 9247 7046 and we'll put you in touch. More info on website: www.isis.aust.com/rtn/

OWN Sydney Notices

Subscribe NOW!

Subscription to *OWN Matters* is \$22 per year, these are due every JULY.

Payment method

- I enclose a cheque/money order for \$22 made payable to OWN NSW
OR
 Please debit the following credit card for \$22
- Visa
 Mastercard
 Bankcard

Card no.

____/____/____

Exp. date __/__/__

Name on card (please print)

Signature _____

Address _____

State & Post Code _____

I need the audio version

- I'd love it on email
 Email only - don't post

Email address:

What are friends for?

Please send the above subscription to:

Name:

Signature _____

Address _____

State & PC _____

Members and friends are welcome to attend all activities.

Wellness on Wednesdays

9.30am-11.45am every Wednesdays

Held in Mott Hall, Argyle St., Millers Point at the terminus of 343, 339, 308, 431 and 433. Our program of gentle exercise and tai chi, at \$4 per session, are lead by accredited facilitators. Early cuppas and morning tea are free, why not bring a sandwich and stay for lunch and a chat?

Film Discussion group

Tuesday, 12 September

You are invited to join with us to see *2/37*, and then have something to eat. Please ring Yetty on 9665 2050 to check the session time. Other films recommended for viewing are *Hard Candy* and *Libertine*.

Creative Movement

Every Thursday at Mott Hall, 10.15am. Call office 9247 7046

OWN UP — Unashamedly Political Discussion Group

10.30am-2.30pm, Friday, 15 September & 13 October

The group will meet again at 75 Windmill Street, Millers Point.

Have an early cuppa with us then proceed upstairs, and bring a sandwich for lunch. Contact Pearlle on 02 4285 5373 or e-mail pearliej@bigpond.net.au

Inner-West Networking group

- **Every Saturday** at 2-4pm **IWNG Meeting** in the Community Room, Leichhardt Market Place (Ground floor behind Tandy). For networking and support.
- **Every Tuesday** at 2pm **IWNG Coffee** Bar Baba/Manfredi, 31 Norton Street, Leichhardt (near the Italian Forum).
- **Monthly dinner** to be arranged.

Buses serving the area are: 470, 435, 436, 437, and 438

All OWN members are welcome. Just turn up, or contact the OWN office on 9247 7046 or Jan on 9692 9400 OWN Members from other areas are welcome!

Jubilation - reaching out to retirees, all OWN members welcome 6pm-8.30pm, Friday, 15 September and 20 October, (see pages 17 & 18 for details), at 87 Lower Fort St. Bring food & drink to share, a gold coin donation is appreciated. RSVP essential. Call Terry on 9247 7046

**IF UNDELIVERED PLEASE RETURN TO:
Older Women's Network NSW Inc.
87 Lower Fort Street
Millers Point NSW 2000**

**SURFACE
MAIL**

**POSTAGE
PAID
AUSTRALIA**

OWN Matters

**Print Post Approved
No. PP239 337/00007**