

OWN MATTERS

Newsletter of the Older Women's Network NSW

Vol.8 No.2 – March 2011

OWN Illawara hosts the NSW Quarterly meeting

There was a lively discussion on such topics as ageism, affordable housing, the prevention of violence against older women, health, volunteers and carers and, finally, transport.

see *OWN NSW Quarterly Meeting* page 8

Brigid Sen summons the troupes

International Women's Day (IWD) celebrates 100 years on 8 March this year and OWN Sydney wants to make it a rousing occasion.

see *Be a Banner Bearer* page 9

Noreen Hewett pays tribute to Sue Thompson

'they came over every night' she said. 'There were shortages of food and equipment, we had to cut up and boil our own singlets and other items to make dressings for the many wounded'.

see *Centenarian Extraordinaire* page 15

Lorraine Inglis embraces change

My daughter bought me an e-reader for Christmas, and while setting it up is a challenge, I will be able to carry up to a thousand books on it whenever I travel.

see *Change* page 18

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

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Who Are We?

The Older Women's Network (OWN) NSW is the peak body for 19 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 news-letter 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 and 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 email or mail marked Attention – Editorial Team. Please include contact details. Contributions must be received by the second Tuesday of each month.

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Editorial Team

Beth Eldridge, June West, Lorraine Inglis, Helen Young, Louise Bentley, Sandra Windsor and Jacqueline Duffield.

Admin Support

Margaret Holland and Margaret Kearney.

Layout and Design

Beth Eldridge, Louise Bentley.

Membership & Subscriptions

Maureen King

Mailout Team

Pat Payne, Noel Carpenter, Veronica Willis, Corinne Campbell.

More help always welcome!

OWN Office



The phone hours at our OWN office are from 10:00 to 3:00.

If you call outside these hours you may get a recorded message.

Leave a message, with your contact number, and we will get back to you as soon as possible.

Between 10:00 and 3:00 the phone will be answered by one of our friendly volunteers.

OWN Matters Direct!

We love to hear from you and publish what you have to say in our newsletter.



The best way, for you and us, is for you to email your letter or article.

We have an email address for your

especially contributions.

The email address is newsletter@ownnsw.org.au

CONTENTS

New cover with snippets	1
Contact info & contents	2
NSW State Election	3-5
NSW Liberals Respond	3-4
Greens Respond	4-5
Belvoir Theatre Freebies	5
Volunteer film tickets	5
Aboriginal Support Circle	6-7
UN Criticism of Australia	6
Floods and Cyclones	6
Indigenous Chamber of Commerce	6
Lester and Jimmy Honoured	7
Bush to Beach	7
OWN Quarterly - Illawarra	8
Contemporary Chinese Painting	8
Wollondilly OWN	9
Be a Banner Bearer	9
IWD Notice	9
IWD Public Lecture	10
IWD Exhibition	11
National Gallery of Australia	12
Art Appreciation	12
Ballet Russes	12
Theatre Group Report	13
Village People Concert	13
Centre Stage Promo	13
Salute to Enid	14
Check Your Numbers	14
Hope for Millers Point	14
Centenarian Extraordinaire	15
Creative Kick Start	15
Coral's Poem	16
Consider the Frangipani	16
Kings Cross Community Centre	16
Dolly	17
Vive la Difference!	17
Change	18
Migration	18
Handy to Know	19
Walking for Health	19
Treatment for Lymphodema	20
Heart Attack and Aspirin	20
Where did I go wrong?	21
Childbirth at 65	21
Your Humble Client	22
OWN Sydney Notices	23

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.*

NSW State Election

Politicians on Policy

In the first week of January, 2011, Sonia Lavery, on behalf of the Management of OWN NSW emailed the 32 relevant Ministers and Shadow Ministers of NSW Government and others including members of the Greens and Clover Moore seeking responses to specific questions addressing the following issues:

- Ageism
- Affordable Housing
- Prevention of Violence Against Older Women
- Health
- Volunteers and Carers
- Transport

We asked that our requests be met by 4 February 2011, in order to publish their responses in our state newsletter *OWN Matters*.

To date, responses addressing the issues identified in the correspondence have been received from:

- Clover Moore (Independent)
- The Greens
- Liberal/National Party
- Verity Firth MP, Member for Balmain (Labor)
- Labor have indicated that a response is being prepared

Acknowledgement of receipt of the OWN correspondence was received from the following advising that a response would be provided.

- Barry O'Farrell MP, Leader of the Opposition
- Jodie McKay MP Minister for Women,
- John Robertson MLC, Minister for Transport
- Frank Terenzini MP, Minister for Housing
- Peter Primrose MLC, Minister for Ageing
- Paul Lynch, MP, Minister for Industrial Relations
- National Party

A full copy of the letter sent to politicians is available on our website, as are the complete copies of the responses received, the last two have had to be edited in this issue of *OWN Matters* as they missed the copy deadlines for February and March. Any additional

responses received after this edition goes to print will also be published on our website: www.ownnsw.org.au

OWN NSW is a non-party political organisation and we will endeavour to present all policy responses submitted that directly address the issues raised by our January request.

OWN NSW

NSW LIBERALS - Response

The Older Women's Network requested a response to key concerns regarding the challenges, rights and opportunities for older women.

Ageism:

A NSW Liberal and nationals Government will require all NSW Departments and public sector employers to act in accordance with the provision of the Anti-Discrimination Act. We will require Departments to provide training for their employees to ensure that they are aware of their obligations under the Act.

Affordable Housing:

In relation to homeless and housing strategy, this is a difficult issue for state governments to address alone. There are many facets to homelessness, including the access of women to work and retraining when they return to the workforce after raising a family. We will ensure that government agencies work together to address homelessness, especially in assisting older women suffering economic disadvantage.

Violence against Women:

Women in NSW seeking escape from domestic violence deal with an uncoordinated and uncertain system, looking for court support, refuge, counselling for themselves and their children and of course, appropriate housing. The NSW Liberals & Nationals are particularly sensitive to the needs of these women and intend to make helping them a priority.

Health:

The NSW Liberals & Nationals are committed to developing a health policy with the needs of women, including older women, in mind. We acknowledge that a gendered approach to health best delivers outcomes for women, and will work to improve the evidence base to inform the development and funding of women's initiatives and programs.

NSW State Election

Volunteers and Carers:

The NSW Liberals and Nationals believe that those who care for children and the elderly should receive appropriate support and benefits – regardless of their gender and age. Our plan will be guided by six principles for reform and systematic change and informed by consultation with the disability sector, including non-government organisations; viability and sustainability; Building opportunities, outcomes and evidence-based; Comprehensive and transparent stakeholder engagement; Regional emphasis; Clear political leadership and direction.

Transport:

In relation to transport, the NSW Liberals and Nationals are committed to improving public transport and making it accessible for all commuters, especially for less mobile commuters – through an Integrated Transport Authority and community transport amongst our positive and practical plane. This will include responsibility for transport planning including the development of workable transport interchanges, deliver better co-ordination between transport modes, and put commuters first by providing more accessible real time information about services and ticketing.

see www.ownsw.org.au for full transcript.

Greens NSW

This is a condensed response to an email sent by Dr. Sonia Laverty, seeking the views of the Greens NSW on the rights and opportunities for older women.

The Greens are committed to eliminating all forms of discrimination against older women and to improving quality public services for the entire community. We are working for a society that enhances the rights of all of its members and celebrates the diverse and valuable contributions made by older people and women. Some of the issues you raise are not currently directly addressed by specific policies of the Greens NSW or the Australian Greens. There is however no doubt that there would be strong support within the party for a policy on Older Women that addresses in detail many of the issues you raise. Both the state and national party have policies on 'Older People' as well as 'Women'. All four of these can be found at:

[http://nsw.greens.org.au/policies/older people](http://nsw.greens.org.au/policies/older%20people)

<http://nsw.greens.org.au/policies/women>

<http://greens.org.au/policies/careforpeople/olderpeople>

<http://greens.org.au/policies/careforpeople/women>

Ageism:

The Greens NSW supports an investigation into measures to redress any government role in feminisation of poverty in Australia (Ageism 3). The more detailed points you raise are supported by the principles stated of the policies on Older People. Greens MPs have requested statistics from all government departments and agencies during Budget Estimate hearings. For example, in 2009 Greens MP, Ian Cohen, asked all departments to provide data on the percentage of the workforce who had a disability. The Greens commit to requesting the same data on older women if OWN thought that useful.

Affordable Housing:

The Greens NSW Housing Policy commits the party to advancing affordable housing. Our more than 70 local government councillors are advocating for affordable housing at the local level. Clause 11 of the NSW policy on Older People states:

11. In particular, The Greens NSW believe that expenditure on public housing and on social infrastructure are vital for older people. Not only does more public housing need to be built, but also increased expenditure is required on social infrastructure and has to be in place along with the housing, to avoid isolation and lack of services, problems especially apparent in areas such as Sydney's southwestern suburbs.

The Greens NSW agrees with the three examples provided from the McFerran 2010 report on affordable housing. Housing for older women is a high priority.

Violence Against Older Women:

The Greens NSW give the utmost priority to addressing violence in our society. Cate Faehrmann MLC and the Greens NSW spokesperson on Women, has already delivered a speech to the parliament addressing the issue of domestic violence. We agree that violence against older women is a largely neglected area. We would be interested to work with groups such as OWN to highlight how important it is that this area receives more attention from decisionmakers and to develop strategies to address the problem.

Health:

The Greens support OWN's proposal on health. It is important to undertake an analysis first to identify well-funded services to ensure older women have access to appropriate and high quality health care.

State Election

Volunteers and Carers:

The Greens NSW support the Articles of the Convention of Elimination of All Discrimination against Women and affirm the rights of older women to access support when caring for elderly parents or relatives. The Greens have had a strong focus on Home and Community Care funding and in 2010 initiated a broad ranging inquiry into Ageing and Disability and Home Care services. The Greens strongly supported the Carers (Recognition) Act 2010 which established the NSW Carers Charter and the Carers Advisory Council. The Greens support building upon this legislation to provide greater legal recognition of carers and their needs and pursuing reforms to respite care access.

Transport:

The Greens have strongly supported the NSW City Rail Easy Access program. We have made continued representations in Parliament about the need to increase funding for the program. We have questioned the selection of stations for upgrade as there are many areas across metropolitan Sydney and regional NSW that have large concentrations of older people that do not have train stations that are accessible to the mobility impaired. The Greens will be seeking further funding prioritisation for the City Rail Easy Access program. One of the issues is the move to prepaid ticketing. The Greens would be interested to investigate ways in which prepaid ticketing does not pose additional difficulties for those with limited mobility.

see www.ownnsw.org.au for full transcript.

Belvoir Theatre

The Belvoir Theatre doesn't advertise freebies any more! Here are the dates for their free performances for those who are unwaged. The Box Office is open at 1 pm and the performance starts at 2pm.

The Wild Duck	17 March
Jack Charles and the Crown	14 April
The Business	26 May
The Seagull	14 July
Neighbourhood Watch	25 August
Human Interest Story	15 Sept
Summer of the 17th Doll	10 Nov

from Joy Ross



This month OWN volunteers could win *An Afternoon with Marguerite!*

It's the story of one of those improbable encounters that can change the course of one's life. The encounter, in a small public garden, between Germain (Gerard Depardieu), fifty and barely literate, and Marguerite (Gisèle Casadesus), a little old lady passionate about reading. Forty years and 220 pounds separate them. One day, purely by chance, Germain sits down beside Marguerite. She'll go on to read aloud extracts from novels and thereby allow him to discover the magic of books, from which Germain imagined he was excluded for life. Until then his family circle and drinking buddies took him for an idiot; stupidity will now change places! But Marguerite is losing her sight. For the love of this charming, mischievous and caring grandmother, Germain will teach himself and show her that he's capable of reading aloud to her when she is no longer able to do so herself. Only at the movies April 7

10 double passes for March OWN volunteers.

For preview, see link: <http://www.iconmovies.com.au/Movies/M/My%20Afternoons%20With%20Marguerite.aspx>

Aboriginal Support Circle Issues

United Nations Criticism of Australia

Approximately 50 countries have criticised Australia as part of its four-yearly Universal Periodic Review (UPR) over its treatment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. The report highlights longstanding issues including full reinstatement into Australian law of the Racial Discrimination Act in the Northern Territory and the implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Among responses called for are actions to tackle excessively high incarceration rates and custodial detention and to set up "effective legal measures to prohibit the use of excessive force and tasers by the police". Independent investigations after deaths in custody are needed. A more genuine response is needed to combat economic disadvantage and to set up a National Compensation Scheme for the Stolen Generations. More interpreters are needed for people in the Northern Territory and there needs to be greater cultural awareness and human rights training for justice workers and police.

The Government has committed to providing a detailed response to all recommendations.

Pat Zinn

Floods and Cyclones

Inner Brisbane, Toowoomba, Ipswich, Cherbourg and Woabinda have high Indigenous populations, as well as Palm Island, which was never mentioned in news bulletins. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders were just as badly affected by flooding and cyclone Yasi as the general population. Aboriginal Red Cross workers based in Townsville and Barcaldine, part of the Townsville Aboriginal and Islanders Health Services, were able to help in

Brisbane but this tragedy will exacerbate pre-existing high levels of Indigenous homelessness, chronic poor health and unemployment, and recovery will be protracted. Indigenous services will be affected and specialised services tackling emotional well-being will be needed.

Some families stayed away from relief and recovery centres, preferring to rely on Indigenous services because many families do not want white people "knowing about their business". In Palm Island there had not been any evacuation warnings but the islanders heeded the warnings issued by the council and the damage suffered could have been a lot worse. One of the hardest things for the inhabitants to get over will be the loss of an old fig tree reputed to have been over 100 years old, which had been a meeting place for generations of islanders.

In future disaster response planning Aboriginal knowledge will need to be considered up-front rather than as an afterthought.

Pat Zinn

Indigenous Chamber of Commerce Established in NSW

Indigenous Employment and Economic Development Minister Mark Arbib was a special guest at the establishment of the Indigenous Chamber of Commerce in January. This will boost already successful Indigenous businesses and lead to more businesses being established, leading to more employment for Indigenous people and more skills being developed. The Government has provided \$3 million to establish the Australian Indigenous Minority Supplier Council (AIMSC) which links corporate and government purchasers of goods and services with certified Indigenous business suppliers.

Pat Zinn



Aboriginal Support Circle Issues

Lester Bostock and Jimmy Little Honoured

Well-known local resident Lester Bostock has been presented with an Order of Australia (AM) award for services to the Indigenous Community, to the broadcast media industry as a presenter and producer and as an advocate for people with a disability. He helped to establish Redfern's Black Theatre in the 1970s, Radio Redfern in the early 1980s and the Inner West Aboriginal Community Company (IWACC) based in Marrickville in 1999. As an amputee, he has been president of the Aboriginal Disability Network since 2006 and chairs the Marrickville Aboriginal Consultative committee. Way to go, Lester!

At the 39th Country Music Awards in Tamworth in January, 73-year-old Jimmy Little, known as "Gentleman Jim" was honoured with a Golden Guitar Lifetime Achievement award. He also announced that it was finally time to slow down. A Yorta-Yorta man, Jimmy's rise to fame started in 1964 with his hit "Royal Telephone". He plans to retire and base himself at home, "relaxed in my haven of memories". He has been a role model for other Aboriginal musicians and a strong advocate for Aboriginal Health, particularly after he was diagnosed with diabetes and received a kidney transplant in 2004. He said he hoped to be remembered as "a person who did it my way gently, strongly and positively".

Jimmy's sister Betty, joint co-ordinator of our Aboriginal Support Circle, now living in a nursing home in Blacktown, was also an entertainer and composer. Those of us who were privileged to hear her performing recognised her consummate talents, her beautiful voice and warm personality. What a tragedy that she was never recognised in the same way as her older brother. We love you, Betty.

Pat Zinn



Bush to Beach Adventure

Aboriginal children from Brewarrina and areas nearby had never seen the surf until their visit to Sydney last month. The Bush to Beach program was a wonderful experience for them, supported by volunteers from Variety Australia and South Narrabeen Surf Life Saving Club. It is the sixth year the Bush to Beach program has hosted Aboriginal children from Brewarrina and surrounding areas. Prior to the floods these areas were in drought for about 10 years.

The Aboriginal community has suffered in recent floods, whereas mosquitoes have multiplied extensively in the areas where the children live. Bread has been flown in by light planes, they have had no fresh fruit or meat. The young visitors had fun at South Narrabeen for 3 days frolicking in the sea, learning skills such as surfing, water safety and first aid. They travelled on ferries and when Saturday evening arrived they sat down to a baked dinner with celebrities, sponsors, politicians and live entertainment.

The Bush to Beach program is an incentive for Aboriginal children to attend school. Truancy has decreased since the program was introduced.

Sandra Windsor



At and Beyond the Rocks

OWN NSW QUARTERLY MEETING 17th February, 2011

Hosted by Illawarra OWN at Corrimal Community Hall

The meeting was attended by around fifty women representing OWN NSW, Macarthur OWN, Southern Highlands OWN, Sutherland OWN and, of course, Illawarra OWN and Illawarra OWN Wellness Centre.



There was a lively discussion on such topics as ageism, affordable housing, the prevention of violence against older women, health, volunteers and carers and, finally, transport.

Members were invited to have their say about what matters to them and why it matters, and they accepted the invitation with enthusiasm.

Beth Eldridge, Cate Turner, Sonia Laverty, Lorraine Inglis, Beverley Farley, Glenda Laird, Mary Bentley and Jo Allon from OWN NSW shared their knowledge and experience of these issues and encouraged us to say to our politicians: "This is what we want. This is what we need. This is what we want you to do."

This is what we want:

In expecting politicians to respond to our demands, we must first do our homework by researching the issue as thoroughly as possible. We should be able to present the figures etc., showing what the problem is and why we want it fixed.

This is what we need:

We then put forward what we see as a reasonable solution to the problem.

This is what we want you to do:

We then outline what we would like the politician to do to help us achieve our aim.

Older women have more power if they band together and work as a group. We can write a one page letter of demand, outlining the above points and send the letter to our politicians.

Many interesting and helpful pieces of information came to light during the discussion.

Members were able to catch up with OWN women from other groups and, despite the seriousness of the topics, we certainly had a laugh as well as a delightful lunch.

Barbara Malcolm displayed the beautiful quilt she has made to raise money for the OWN NSW Annual Conference. Many raffle tickets were sold on the day as we all want to win the gorgeous Japanese-inspired creation, so don't miss out!

**Peggy Rodden,
Illawarra OWN**



Contemporary Chinese Painting with an Australian Perspective

The Older Women's Network Northside, together with the Australian Chinese Painting Society, is running Chinese Painting classes on *Contemporary Chinese Painting with an Australian Perspective*

Classes will be held between 1 - 3pm, every Friday for 10 weeks. Commencing Friday 4th February 2011, at The Studio, Dougherty Centre, 7 Victor Street, Chatswood.

Cost for tuition is \$150 for 10 weeks.

Places are limited. Please call 0416 166 789 for booking and enquiries.

Rhoda Sexton

At and Beyond the Rocks

Wollondilly OWN

What a busy year we had in 2010 and how quickly it has passed.

As well as our monthly train trips to Sydney, where we visit Museums and Exhibitions and trips across the Harbour to places like Cockatoo Island and Garden Island, we also have our very enjoyable monthly bus trips with our trusty driver and guide Keith. We visited Mt Tomah, Cockington Green, Churches of Goulburn, Lucas Heights, Mamre House and the Printing Museum at Penrith, plus many more. Over the years these outings have become an important part of our lives and we have become old friends and made new ones. We look forward to spending the day together and of course and, most importantly, finding a nice club and enjoying a hearty lunch.

Our holiday group had a great time staying at Orange and visiting Western Plains Zoo and the Old Gaol at Dubbo and many other places of interest. The Japanese Gardens at Cowra are breathtakingly beautiful and we found the War Cemetery very moving. There are plans in the pipeline for another trip this year.

The craft group still meets on Thursdays and other members attend the exercise class, line dancing and Scottish dancing. Our membership at the moment is thirty six and although we've lost a couple, we have gained five new members.

Congratulations to our committee members who do such a good job keeping us organised and afloat.

Audrey Van Dragt



Be A Banner Bearer!

Summer time, and the women are marching.

“Equal pay!” That will be our cry!

Come and share breakfast at the café near the fountain. In wheelchair or pedapod - just give it a try!

International Women's Day (IWD) celebrates 100 years on 8 March this year and OWN Sydney wants to make it a rousing occasion. The date chosen is now 12 March, being the nearest Saturday (5 March having been bagged by Mardi Gras marchers). IWD will kick off with breakfast as usual at 9.30 in the café now known as Café New York Metro, underground in Town Hall Square near the cascade. From there we will join the march starting in the square above ground near St Andrew's Cathedral and march to Martin Place.

This year, an Innovation! You will be able to make use of a pedapod, one of those strange-looking/bike-taxi creatures you see down near Circular Quay in which you sit back while an athletic driver pedals you to your destination.

Just ask Beth-in-the-Office, the all-knowing wise and wonderful woman who has made all things possible for us OWNers to participate in this great event (with a little help from her friends). We need support - banner bearers, people to mind the tent, loud voices, strong marching legs and above all enthusiasm.

Don't let OWN down, Women!

Brigid Sen



NEWS FROM THE GROUPS * NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

invitation

Come to the NSW Government's 2011 International Women's Day Centenary Public Lecture and join with women at the top!

The second annual public lecture at the top of Centrepoint Tower will feature three prominent women talking about how far we have come over the last 100 years, and where we are heading.

Come along and engage with our prominent panel members:

Ms Catherine Fox – Deputy Editor, AFR BOSS magazine and weekly columnist for the Australian Financial Review. Co-author of *The F-Word: How we learned to swear by feminism*

Dr Rebecca Huntley – a feature writer for Australian Vogue and the Director of Ipsos Mackay Research. Author of *The World According to Y – Inside the New Adult Generation*

Ms Emily Maguire – columnist and author of *Princesses and Pornstars: Sex + Power + Identity*

You will have the opportunity to ask questions and contribute to debate on the topics raised.

Event Details

Time: 5:30pm arrival for canapés and drinks, for a 6pm start

Date: Wednesday 9 March 2011

Where: Sky Venue, Level 3 of Sydney Tower Dining
Enter via Level 4, Westfield Sydney
Cnr of Market Street and Castlereagh street Entrance

RSVP essential by 3 March 2011

email the Office for Women's Policy at ofw@dpc.nsw.gov.au

The annual International Women's Day Public Lecture is an initiative of the NSW Government to celebrate International Women's Day on March 8th.

For more information on women's issues in NSW, visit www.women.nsw.gov.au.



**Premier
& Cabinet**
Office for Women's Policy

International Women's Day 2011
celebrating 100 years



An Exhibition

Hon. Helen Westwood invites you to an Exhibition to Celebrate the Centenary of International Women's Day and to showcase how women activists have embraced IWD down through the last 100 years.

Where:
**Parliament House Fountain Court
Macquarie Street, Sydney**

Exhibition will be on display throughout March 2011 and can be viewed from
1st to 25th March
8am - 5pm Monday to Friday

Curator Jessie Street National Women's Library

Out and About

National Gallery of Australia

I went to look at the soaring new entrance of the National Gallery of Australia, never having liked the brutal bulk of the original building. Anderson the architect is to be congratulated on the elegant new entrance building which softens the whole museum edifice. Inside, even the public seating echoes this stylish elegance. To the right of the entrance is the special space given over to the *Aboriginal Memorial* which is down a spiral walkway and has been beautifully designed to express the funeral rites of all those Aboriginal people from across Australia who never had a burial place in the past couple of centuries. You walk amongst the hush of their coffin poles.

However, before venturing further inside the National Gallery, I went outside the building to visit James Turrell's amazing piece of artwork "*Within without.*" This artwork, by a renowned American artist, announces itself as a hillock of grasses which rises above brimming lakes of water. Passing through the lakes, you enter down into the hillock to be faced with something that looks like an ancient stupa (a Bhuddist Shrine) of grey basalt. This stupa is also surrounded by brimming water. Finally, walking a slope, you find a small doorway into the stupa. You come into a womb-like space lit by a perfect circular window – called an oculus – open to the sky with its passing clouds. You can sit (on heated seating for cold Canberra days). It's like being inside a silent space capsule, looking up at the sky in meditative silence.

I tore myself away from this sensory experience to explore another – the 11 new galleries devoted to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Art, the largest collection in the world. Beginning with early Western Desert art of the 1970s these intimate gallery spaces offer a journey through the history and heritage of indigenous art. Included are textiles, sculpture, decorative arts, protest art by well-known artists and some unknown.

The displays are calculated to keep surprising and provoking interest as you turn yet another corner. Once again, I was stunned by the sheer beauty and variety as well as the emotions revealed in the art.

There is so much more to see at the National Gallery, you can easily spend the whole day there.

Joan Modder

Art Appreciation

OWN's 'Lost Ladies' were in a state of eager anticipation. We were at the S.H. Ervin gallery to see 'Curious Colony,' an exhibition of early Australian colonial paintings and artefacts, most of which were on loan from Newcastle Art Gallery and rarely seen in Sydney.

Our guide, Simon, and our group entered the world of colonial Australia seen through the eyes of artists of the early 19th century, contrasted with the work of some contemporary Australian artists. Simon explained that this

early period of Australian art also happened to be the period of Romanticism in Europe. That Romantic influence would have inevitably and unconsciously shaped the artists' portrayal of what they saw so that what we Australians of today see in their paintings does not exactly reflect the reality we see around us. Simon discussed the artists' early influences, the cultural influences of Macquarie's government and fascinating historical details that had been included in the paintings but which required viewers' minute attention to discern.

Simon spoke clearly, his enthusiasm for his work evident in his words. He was at pains to ensure we both understood him and had time to observe the items for ourselves. He invited comments from us, asked for our names so he could refer to us personally and engaged in amusing repartee with those of us who made any insightful or cryptic remarks. The tour, normally lasting an hour, went on for an hour and a half, such was the pleasure of both guide and group in our mutual experience. Clearly, there is much more to this exhibition than can be mentioned here, but I can only encourage you to visit the S.H. Ervin gallery yourself. You will find there much more to appreciate than you may at first have imagined.

Bev Cameron

Ballet Russes – the Art of Costume at the National Gallery of Australia

In 1975 the National Gallery bid at Sothebys for about 400 old costumes left over from Serge Diaghilev's Ballet Russes operas. Some costumes were even jumbled in baskets, and all needed restoring and repair. What you see when you walk into this enchanting exhibition is everything displayed at the highest level of theatre. The expert costumiers of the National Gallery have taken years to beautifully restore glittering costumes by artists such as Matisse, Picasso, Braques and Leon Baskst,. One gallery has a wall high gigantic stage setting as for an actual opera. The galleries show an astonishing series of group displays from all the famous operas of the Ballet Russes which have become part of our language. Diagliev's unique vision, total breakaway from the past and fanatical attention to detail, come through to astonish us today. *Sheherezard*, *Le Coq d'or*, *The Sleeping Princess*, *Song of the Nightingale* and (my favourite of the displays), *Firebird*. Each display explains its storyline, an anecdote of its history, the designers and sometimes the makers of the costumes. If you take the audio tour you have some of the music as well. This is a theatrical event in every sense of the word. Concession ticket is \$15 otherwise \$20. Not to be missed, and on until 20 March

Joan Modder

OWN NSW Theatre Group



It's Hot at the Mott

The Theatre Group is in full swing rehearsals now for their "Village Show", which will have its premiere at the Mott Hall on Tuesday, 12th April (see separate entry for details).

To obtain a grant from the Sydney of City Council we identified that we would like to play at their seven city villages with a theme of positive ageing. Our new director is devising a show for us to provide inspiration and entertainment to the residents who come together in the various centres. And the wonderful JJ (Josie Jackson not Jay Lo) has already been penning some numbers for us.

The Abraham Mott Hall adjoins the Harry Jensen Centre, which provides a number of activities to local residents in the Rocks Area. It also advertises the Older Women's Network Wellness Program in its brochure for local women who want to join in the activities.

Each Theatre Group director takes us on a different exciting journey and on this journey we are spending time on vocal and breathing exercises so that we can improve our performances, and we are also doing some harmonies and a *capella* work. Improvisations are encouraged and it's wonderful to see ideas coming together with creative input from the group as well as the Director.

It's great to experience the joy that song, movement and laughter bring and the really wonderful thing, as many of you who belong to groups will know, is the camaraderie. Rock on women at The Rocks!

Rita Tratt

OWN THEATRE GROUP VILLAGE PEOPLE CONCERT

ALL OWN MEMBERS ARE INVITED TO
OUR PREMIERE 30 MINUTE
PERFORMANCE

TUESDAY, 12 APRIL

where we launch our

VILLAGE PEOPLE SERIES

at the ABRAHAM MOTT HALL

17 ARGYLE STREET, MILLERS POINT

(last stop on 433 431 AND 339 buses)

Please arrive around 11.00am for an
11.15am performance.

(We are unable to provide refreshments
for this event as it is being hosted for local
residents through their Centre)

Centre Stage

by Dorothy Cora

\$15.00 plus \$7

Available from Older Women's
Network NSW

Ph (02) 9247 7046

admin@ownnsw.org.au

Published in 2009 by the

Older Women's Network NSW

with financial support from the

City of Sydney

Letters to the Editor



Salute to Enid Harrison

How I agree with Dorothy Cora's *Salute to Enid Harrison!*

Enid probably does not realise that she has a small fan club. Every time *OwnMatters* arrives, I open it and scan the pages to see if there is a contribution or letter from Enid. If there is, I read it first.

If there isn't, I register disappointment first, and then hope that everything is OK with Enid.

Thank you, Enid for all your feisty words, always written askew from the mainstream and always with a wonderful nub of wisdom.

Janet Grevillea

Check Your Numbers!

Last month I wrote in my article in *OWN Matters*:

Bruce Lourie said, to look at the number in the little triangle on the bottom of the plastic container and remember: **Four, five, one and two is the plastic good for you!**"

This wasn't exactly doing Bruce Lourie, author of *Slow Death by Rubber Duck*, justice. Bruce feels we should aim to live our lives without any plastic at all, but realistically they are hard to avoid, and we can minimize the damage to ourselves and the environment by following his mantra:

"keep 4, 5, 1 and 2, all the rest are bad for you."

He goes on to qualify this further by saying never freeze or microwave plastic. And when it comes to non-stick pans, especially if they're scratched, they really belong in the bin.

Huge apologies if this caused confusion for anyone, but it was hard to take it all down from a radio interview.

You can read more on this topic by visiting:

<http://blog.booktopia.com.au/2010/05/21/slow-death-by-rubber-duck-by-rick-smith-and-bruce-lourie>

You will be pleased to learn that we have had five new members come along to join Wyong OWN, and they are all younger older women. This is very heartening as some of the older older women will see the continuation of our group. I have also heard that the new Brisbane Waters OWN is coming along well.

With best wishes and thanks,

June Goss

Hope for Millers Point Homes

Clover led a delegation of Millers Point residents to meet the Housing Minister, and he agreed to review Millers Point Housing sales and investigate tenanted vacant homes. The Government announced its intention to sell another 20 Millers Point properties on 99-year leases despite an earlier promise to suspend sales. Two have already been sold and with growing maintenance backlogs and more empty properties, residents fear they will lose their homes. Millers Point is an historic, stable and supportive community, and in Parliament Clover argued that public housing close to services, transport and jobs should be valued and retained.

Source: Clover Moore's Newsletter



Centenarian Extraordinaire

Sue Thompson – Centenarian Extraordinaire

An interview with Sue Thompson (nee Florence Ella Wager Shaw), who turns 100 on 24 March 2011, was an extraordinary event. Her life story is a chronicle of courage and drama. It also turned out to be a chummy occasions toasted with a glass of beer.

Florence Wager Shaw was born in Sheffield, England. Her brother Charles was born three years later when the family had settled in Australia, enabling her father to secure better work and accommodation. Her mother died here during Charles' birth. Sue's father ultimately became Mascot's Town Clerk, having taken many other jobs to better himself in his new land.

Sue left school at 14 to help with family chores and was 18 when she achieved independence by becoming a trainee nurse at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, Sydney. Four years later in, 1934, she graduated as a registered nurse with general nursing qualifications. Two years later, after working privately as a general nurse, she trained in obstetrics at St. George Hospital where she was seen as accomplished in general and obstetrics.

Then the most dramatic and hazardous period of Sue's life began. She had enlisted for army service at Victoria Barracks in 1939, and was at the Concord Repatriation Hospital, Sydney. Four years later, she was appointed for military service in northern Australia. Thus she was involved in the Australian army's successful resistance to invasion by Japanese forces.

What a patriotic mission! She was in Darwin when it became the target for nightly bombing by the Japanese. The troops stationed there had called for nursing services and as one of the nurses in the 2/5th AGH, Sue was stationed there. The Australian Navy and Air Forces were attacked by the Japanese as they brought supplies by sea and air to Darwin.

The mind spins as one listens to Sue's description of the Japanese bombing of Darwin – 'they came over every night' she said. 'There were shortages of food and equipment, we had to cut up and boil our own singlets and other items to make dressings for the many wounded'. And there were also constant Japanese broadcasts on the radio every night meant to erode Australian morale – "Don't be worried about our bombs landing on Government House or hospitals,' they taunted. 'We will be using them when we land!' However, thankfully, the Japanese failed in their bid to seize Australia as they did in their bid to destroy Aussie morale.

From Darwin Sue's unit moved to a base in the island of Morotai. Australian nurses and doctors lived under canvas as they served the troops stationed there and shared the hazards involved in continuing military action against the Japanese invaders.

When the Japanese lost their bid to conquer our land, Sue returned to normal life in Australia. Sue married William (Bill) Thompson in 1956, was widowed later and has no children, but always many friends.

We are very proud of those who served in the war against Japanese aggressors – and particularly proud of this strong woman, Sue Thompson, who has as vital a personality today as in her prior history, in civilian life and war service.

Now, as she nears a century, we have the opportunity to say thank you, Sue, for your service to Australia and all Australians. Congratulations on a wonderful history as we join in celebrating your hundredth birthday and wish you good health in your times ahead, which you richly deserve and which we hope to share.

Noreen Hewett

Creative Kick Start

Creative Kick Start is a breakthrough method of approaching art and the creative process especially designed for those embarking on a creative journey, perhaps for the first time.

Why not give yourself permission to play? Two 3-hour workshops are planned at the Hannaford Centre, 608 Darling Street Rozelle on Friday 1 April and Saturday 16 April, 2011.

To help you get started, these workshops are offered at a price of \$25. Materials are supplied and the program is generously supported by Leichhardt Council

For more information and to enrol contact Erica at: earonsten@inet.net.au or phone 0420 221 271.

For further information visit www.creativekickstart.com.au

Our OWN Writers

Coral's Poem

We have been asked to send in some items for the magazine and I thought you all might be interested in some poems I have been doing in my writing class. Fourth term was poetry and I was a bit sceptical as I had not considered myself as a poet and do not know much about the craft... so here is my effort. We had to compose a poem in the villanelle style about a very dramatic event, and I chose my first child's birth. I do hope you like it.

He came to me on a dark cold day
Through blood and tears and shards of pain
My tiny bundle

His eyes ashut, his head askew
No sound
He came to me on a dark cold day

What can be wrong
What have I done
My tiny bundle

He now is making a silent noise
A squeal, a trill, please God a sound
He came to me on a dark cold day

His flaying arms are calmed and wrapped
His blood soaked face is wiped aclean
My tiny bundle

I cannot convey the joy I feel
He's made a sound, a trill, a peal
He came to me on a dark cold day
My tiny bundle

*Coral Littlewood
Blacktown OWN*

Consider the Frangipani

Consider how they rise ...in my room three storeys above the garden, their scent pervades every nook and cranny. I feel airborne on wings of fragrance.

Consider how they fall ...the creamy flowers drop face up on the grass, but ohhhh! the pink ones! They land face down, their pink and creamy petals unfurled like naughty petticoats.

Have you ever looked closely at a frangipani bud? See how sweetly the petals fold around each other, especially on the pink ones? Exquisite.

And what of the tropical hibiscus? Their new bright yellow flowers lighten up the lawn like stars when colours change to old rose then crushed brown. Turn them upside down to find a cheeky yellow-striped bottom.

Dorothy Cox



Kings Cross Community Centre

The Kings Cross Community Centre is offering the following activities:

Wednesday 9 March (Full day) a trip down south, Bowral for lunch then stopping at Mittagong on the way home. The bus departs 10am, cost \$7 due back by 5pm.

The following weekly exercise classes are provided:

Monday 2pm Creative Movement \$3

Tuesday 10.30 am Stepping On 7 classes \$15

Tuesday 9.30 am Tai-Chi Advanced \$3

Thursday 9 am Tai Chi Intermediate \$3

Thursday 10 am Tai Chi Absolute beginners \$3

Thursday 11.15 am Gentle Yoga - \$3

Friday 10.30 am Gentle Movement Feldenkrais

The Book and Jumble Stall is back on Thursdays from 11am til 2 pm

The centre is located at 50-58 Macleay St Potts Point - adjacent to the Fitzroy Gardens

For further information phone **9357 2164** or email kxcc@bigpond.com

Our OWN Australia

Dolly

A couple of years back I edited a book called *Droving Down the Cooper*, written by Col Hood, an old saddle maker who has a deep love of horses; as the title implies, it was inspired by Banjo Paterson's *Clancy of the Overflow*. While it's no literary masterpiece, Hood's book paints a vivid portrait of post-war outback life in Australia as it will never be again. It sold well, I believe, so it must have pressed a button somewhere in the Australian psyche.

His tales of mustering and droving had special appeal for me because they reminded me of the times in my late teens when my cousins and I used to muster on my uncle's cattle property near Dorrigo, and the excitement we had on those rides. I rode a wonderful little stock pony called Dolly, a pretty palomino with a lovely temperament. My uncle's old sidekick, who always spoke in the past tense, used to say of her "she wuz a kind hoss". Dolly also knew more about mustering than the rest of us put together. No beast could shake her off when Dolly had a fix on it. She loved a good muster.

I'd never had any formal riding lessons, so it was Dolly who, back in the quieter paddocks of Bellingen, taught me to ride. She'd come trotting across the paddock when I called her and stand beside the slab fence, so that I could put on her bridle and mount her from the fence, to ride bareback over to the tack room for her saddlecloth and saddle. When I fell off she'd come back and wait for me to pick myself up, and we'd be off again. When mustering time came Dolly and my cousins' horses were trucked up the mountain to Dorrigo, and we followed in the old station ute.

Dolly was boss when we were mustering. She knew exactly what to do, and she took charge. All I had to do was stay in the saddle and anticipate her sudden swerves as she chased a wayward beast. We had our hairy moments – I still have a faint scar on my knee to remind me of the time when, at a gallop, we misjudged the distance between a large tree and a barbed wire fence.

About midday we'd find a cool, ferny creek gully where we'd rest and water the horses and eat our corned beef sandwiches. Sometimes my uncle would bring out his demountable fishing rod and catch a trout or two for next day's breakfast. He'd wrap them in a wet tea towel, tie them to the pommel of his saddle, and let the air keep them cool as he rode. Then we'd be off again until, in the late afternoon, we'd have a good mob behind the bars of a holding yard.

We'd spend the night in an abandoned stockmen's slab hut that had a huge fireplace with an enormous cast iron pot hanging over it. I can still smell that place ... smoke

and dust and saddles and horses, and the ravishing aroma of huge prime steaks sizzling over an open fire to feed us hungry musterers. Pretty soon we'd roll into our blankets and sleep till dawn.

Dolly and her kind have now been largely replaced by helicopters and motor bikes for mustering, which is supposed to be more efficient. But you won't catch a motor bike giving you an affectionate nuzzle in the back, and snickering 'g'day' as it waits to start the day's work. And it doesn't smell as good.

Vale, Dolly, you wuz a kind hoss.

Helen Young



Vive la Difference!

A young man of five recently informed me that he believed his sister's brain was orange as she really liked eating oranges. He then asked if people with dark brown skin had the same colour bones as his family – that is, people descended from Irish stock with fair skin and hair. I assured him that our skin was like a jacket covering everything inside – some people wear light jackets and some dark depending on where their parents come from. We all have pink muscles, white bones and teeth, and organs all the same.

The first time he met my friend, a Zimbabwean refugee now living and working in Sydney, my little man hid under the table until he felt it was safe to come and talk and play with a man with black skin. My friend spoke the same, laughed the same and felt things just the same as us "whities" so by the time he and the family had eaten lunch together, our little five year old and his sister had learned a valuable lesson in acceptance of difference. They certainly had lots of fun together after lunch!

Wouldn't it be great if our government and some of our population stopped "hiding under the table" in fear. Sharing our space is so much more fun. Food, music, dance and culture – we have so much to learn and enjoy through our earth neighbours.

Leonie Higgins, Wyong

Modern Times?

Change

Charles Darwin developed his theory of evolution and, central to his theory, was the idea that species handed down their characteristics, and that some of their progeny survived to hand down their characteristics. The environment went through changes, and some species could handle those changes, and pass down their characteristics. Some species survived, and some didn't.

It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent that survives. It is the one that is the most adaptable to change. Charles Darwin

Change is happening in our world at a very frightening pace; it is challenging to even keep up with knowledge of what they are, let alone keep up with the changes. The biggest changes seem to be in technology, with everything going digital. Change does seem to be creeping into everything. Can I avoid changes? Do they make life better? What happens if I don't want them?

For years after everyone had moved into fancier washing machines, I still had a wringer – washer, very labour intensive and time consuming. Now I love the front loader, with its program options, all computer driven, on which I turn knobs, push buttons and walk away. It takes so little of my time, uses so little of my energy and does not use much energy or water on my choice of a cold-water wash. I adore having a computer, which makes communication easy and cheap, and enables me to 'Google' many queries that come to me in the course of a day. My daughter bought me an e-reader for Christmas, and while setting it up is a challenge, I will be able to carry up to a thousand books on it whenever I travel. As a voracious reader, I found finding books to read difficult, in non-English speaking countries, and carrying them added so much weight to my back-pack. My microwave recently died and I am bereft because, living alone, it has become essential. I will be buying a new one. Look at the advantages of digital scales, microwaves, clocks, cameras, alarms, phones...I have a collection of old clocks, but don't use one, because they all require winding up and setting and make loud noises. I like my simple, quiet, battery-driven, digital clock.

It is not necessary to change. Survival is not mandatory. V. Edwards Denning

Is it possible to ignore change? The ones I've adjusted to have huge advantages. Not everyone agrees. Not everyone is "on-line", for instance. I guarantee that most people have taken into their homes much of the digital revolution, and have adjusted to it. Eventually everyone will need a digital TV and radio to get cheap transmission. Is it sensible not to be computer literate?

Lorraine Inglis

Migration

The past's a foreign country
from which the old migrate
the old who were young, when a war was begun
which killed sixty million from hate.

But those who survived could not revive
a world which was never theirs,
said at last, this world's much too fast
so stop it and we'll get off.

So get off they did, and some of them hid
their heads in the sands of time,
but others looked up at the brimming cup
of wealth to descendants accrued.

Then they claw their way back to acquire the knack,
Of surfing the Internet,
But are never quite clear or have no idea
Of expenses that have to be met.

But high tech's a curse and cyberspace's worse
a computer technology's forge,
by the sweat of their brow they now must find how
to make it its knowledge disgorge.

So they join in the race painful joints to replace
and anything else that goes wrong
they take many pills for a number of ills
in the hope that their lives will be long.

But the price of aged care makes bureaucrats swear
and they warn of enormous cost,
so they say to the old, "now do as you're told
and go back to that country you've lost".

Helen Monaghan



Mindgames

Handy to Know

Not so long ago I needed some cash to do some shopping and to replenish my empty wallet. I went to the ATM outside the Westpac Bank where I have an account. I drew \$100 and was so busy reading the receipt, to find out how much money I had left, I walked away without collecting the cash. When I suddenly realised what I had done some ten minutes later I raced back to the ATM to find, of course, that there was no money sitting there waiting for me. I was sure that someone would have picked it up thinking it was their lucky day!! But I decided to check in the Bank in case an honest person had taken the money in to the tellers.

The Enquiries Clerk checked around for me but drew a blank. Nobody had come in with \$100 in hand that didn't belong to them! So I turned away and said to the Clerk that it was my own stupid fault, and, as I started to leave, she said 'Don't go yet. Give me your account number, because if you haven't taken your money from the machine within 60 seconds it is sucked back into it, and our balance at the end of the day will be wrong. So if we find we are over by the amount you withdrew we will pay it into your account!'

I was very sceptical but lo and behold when I checked my account next day there was \$100 paid into my account by the Bank. It seems I was lucky enough to have no one use that machine within the 60 seconds, at which time the money was sucked back in.

Now I don't know if this applies to all banks but if your account is with a bank other than Westpac it would be well worth your while to check if their ATMs do the same thing. As long as there is a bank nearby which services the machine it wouldn't matter whether it is the branch where you have an account or not as they can arrange a credit to your account from any branch.

That of course is, if you are silly enough to walk away without collecting your money!!!!!!

Cate Turner

Out for the Count

In September last year I was a patient in St. Vincent's Hospital for eight days. I was pretty crook but as I got better I, like so many others, had trouble sleeping. I asked for, and was given, a sleeping pill. I normally do not take medication to sleep so it was very effective; I was out like a light.

I woke quickly when I felt my bed moving, it was dark and there was very little sound. I could see little orange lights as I looked up and we were passing these lights pretty quickly.

The first thought in my mind was, because I was in such a deep sleep, they thought I was dead. The moving trolley was taking me to the mortuary. I tried to lift my feet to see if there was a toe tag attached, but my feet were bundled up in a white sheet on my bed, ok no, I had a shroud on, what to do. I tried to lift my head but the bed was flat and I could not lift my head up or down, and then I saw a clock and the time was 3.15am, the time when most people die.

I must have made myself heard because a male voice said, "won't be long now and we'll be there". In a feeble voice I asked where I was and the voice answered that a bed was vacant in the gastro ward and he was taking me there!!

All the medication, all the examinations, all the pricking of veins, the last Rites, did not scare me as much as that journey from one ward to another.

If just one sleeping pill can play havoc with my imagination so much, is it any wonder that I will never take another?

Josie Jackson

Walking for Health - a guided bush walk program specially designed for older women

Here are the dates for the 2011 walking dates and locations.

- Saturday, **12 March**, Fullers Park & Blue Gum Reserve, Chatswood, 10am - 12:30pm, Grade: Easy
- Saturday, **9 April**, North Arm Track, Mangrove Section, Castle Cove, When: 10am - 12:30pm, Grade: Medium (Some steep steps, please bring a walking stick.)
- Saturday, **7 May**, Where: Wilksch Walk, Artarmon, When: 10am - 12:30pm, Grade: Easy to medium

There is a courtesy bus at 9:30am to take you from Dougherty Centre, 7 Victor Street, Chatswood to the starting point of the walk and back.

Booking is essential, please phone 0416 166 789

Regards, Rhoda rhodasexton@gmail.com



Treatment of Lymphodema

The treatment of Lymphodema (arm swelling because the lymph fluid can't drain itself) or rather lack of it, is reaching crisis point. The free public clinics, which were available in most hospitals ten years ago, have all been replaced by private or incomplete services. In my case I was bandaged daily for a week, then measured for a compression sleeve and left untreated (not bandaged) for ten days until my sleeve came, and of course it no longer fitted. This was the treatment from the Lymphodema clinic at Royal Women's Hospital. Approximately half the breast cancer patients who have lymph nodes removed develop Lymphodema which, if left untreated, can result in cellulitis and a week in hospital on intravenous antibiotics- not fun.

Fortunately I have the money to pay for treatment - over \$2,000 this calendar year plus compression sleeves three times a year at \$250 per sleeve (you need two or three because they have to be washed daily) that's nine at \$250 and nothing from Medicare or the Private Health Funds. Women affected by Lymphodema are welcome to contact me.

Annette Butterfield

abutterfield_852@hotmail.com

Heart Attack and Aspirin

Did you know that you **should not lie down** while waiting for the ambulance?

Heart attack info NEW ASPIRIN/ Serious stuff, no joke!!

Just a reminder to all: purchase a box, keep one in your car, pocketbook, wallet, bedside, etc. This is something that we can do to help ourselves.

Bayer is making crystal aspirin to dissolve under the tongue. They work much faster than the tablets.

Why keep aspirin by your bedside?

There are other symptoms of a heart attack besides the pain on the left arm. One must also be aware of any **intense pain on the chin**, as well as **nausea and lots of sweating**, however these symptoms may also occur less frequently.



Note: **There may be NO pain in the chest during a heart attack.** The majority of people (about 60%) who had a heart attack during their sleep, did not wake up. However, if it occurs, the chest pain may wake you up from your deep sleep. If that happens, immediately dissolve two aspirins in your mouth and swallow them with a bit of water. Afterwards: CALL 000 - then say "heart attack!"

- say that you have taken two aspirins.
- phone a neighbour or a family member who lives very close.
- take a seat on a chair or sofa near the front door, and wait for their arrival and...

DO NOT lie down.

Contributed by Barbara Malcolm



It's the little things...



Childbirth at 65

The trouble with technology is that it tends to be too specific. Often it deals with a particular problem without taking other attendant considerations into account.

Take late-life fertility. With all the new technology in this area, Anna was able to give birth to a healthy son at the age of 65. When she went home from hospital, her friend Mary went to visit.

'I can't wait to see the new baby' she said.

'Not yet,' said Anna, 'I'll make coffee and we can talk for a while first.'

Thirty minutes had passed, and Mary asked, 'May I see the new baby now?'

'No, not yet,' Anna said.

After some time, Mary asked again, 'May I see the baby now?'

'No, not yet,' replied Anna, and this was her reply when Mary asked once again to see the child.

'Well, when CAN I see the baby?' Mary asked in exasperation

'WHEN HE CRIES!' said Anna.

'WHEN HE CRIES?' Mary exclaimed, 'Why do I have to wait until he CRIES?'

'BECAUSE I FORGET WHERE I PUT HIM, O.K.?!'

Helen Young



Where did I go wrong?

For almost 20 years my New Year's Eve celebration has been to greet the new year with a glass of wine in hand step out of the front door, to take a good look at the sky and drink to the incoming year.

This year I was lost in a good book and suddenly it was the first of January, too late for wine and good wishes.

A couple of days later – early in the morning and still in bed – thinking what have I to do today? Shopping was No 1 activity; I seemed to be fresh out of everything.

Couldn't find the car keys, not in their usual place in my handbag. Quick search of the car and unit, phone call to daughter, "Did I leave my car keys at your place yesterday?" "If you'd left your keys here, you couldn't have driven home". Oh! True! Daughters can be so positive. Another quick search of my bag and the car, no luck: so collected the spare key from my desk drawer.

Another week later I'm dusting the top of the freezer in the garage, found the keys nice and safe under a small basket – luckily my finances were still recovering from Christmas so I'd delayed spending \$240 for a new key.

A week later daughter and I were off to visit an old friend in hospital. When I went to lock up I couldn't find the house keys – they are not in the handbag which is their usual resting place. Those of you with daughters will understand the lecture that followed, "You must be more careful etc, etc". I found them that night in my dressing gown pocket.

Mona Wacker

When the tables are turned

Your Humble Client

A 98 year old woman in the UK wrote this to her bank. The bank manager thought it amusing enough to have it published.

Dear Sir

I am writing to thank you for bouncing my cheque with which I endeavoured to pay my plumber last month.

By my calculations, three nanoseconds must have elapsed between his presenting the cheque and the arrival in my account of the funds needed to honour it. I refer, of course, to the automatic monthly deposit of my Pension, an arrangement, which, I admit, has been in place for only thirty eight years.

You are to be commended for seizing that brief window of opportunity, and also for debiting my account £30 by way of penalty for the inconvenience caused to your bank.

My thankfulness springs from the manner in which this incident has caused me to rethink my errant financial ways

I noticed that whereas I personally attend to your telephone calls and letters, when I try to contact you, I am confronted by the impersonal, overcharging, pre-recorded, faceless entity which your bank has become.

From now on I, like you, choose only to deal with a flesh-and-blood person. My mortgage and loan payments will therefore and hereafter no longer be automatic, but will arrive at your bank by cheque, addressed personally and confidentially to an employee at your bank whom you must nominate.

Be aware that it is an offence under the Postal Act for any other person to open such an envelope.

Please find attached an Application Contact Status which I require your chosen employee to complete. I am sorry it runs to eight pages, but in order that I know as much about him or her as your bank knows about me, there is no alternative.

Please note that all copies of his or her medical history must be countersigned by a Solicitor, and the mandatory details of his/her financial situation (income, debts, assets and liabilities) must be accompanied by documented proof. In due course, I will issue your employee with a PIN number which he/she must quote in dealings with me. I regret that it cannot be shorter than 28 digits but, again, I have modelled it on the number of button presses required of me to access my account balance on your phone bank service.

As they say, imitation is the sincerest form of flattery.



Let me level the playing field even further. When you call me, press buttons as follows:

- 1 To make an appointment to see me.
- 2 To query a missing payment.
- 3 To transfer the call to my living room in case I am there.
- 4 To transfer the call to my bedroom in case I am sleeping.
- 5 To transfer the call to my toilet in case I am attending to nature.
- 6 To transfer the call to my mobile phone if I am not at home.
- 7 To leave a message on my computer (a password to access my computer is required. A password will be communicated to you at a later date to the Authorized Contact).
- 8 To return to the main menu and to listen to options 1 through to 8.
- 9 To make a general complaint or inquiry, the contact will then be put on hold, pending the attention of my automated answering service.

While this may, on occasion, involve a lengthy wait, uplifting music will play for the duration of the call.

Regrettably, but again following your example, I must also levy an establishment fee to cover the setting up of this new arrangement.

May I wish you a happy, if ever so slightly less prosperous, New Year.

Your Humble Client
Contributed by Kyran Lynch

OWN Sydney Notices

WOW! Subscribe NOW!

Subscription to *OWN Matters* is \$22 per year, due every JULY 1!
Subscribe NOW for 6 months for \$11.

Want to join **OWN Sydney** at the same time? We can fix this up in the same way, if you tick this box and include just another \$5

Would you like to donate? \$.....

Payment method

I enclose a chq/money order for \$11 - covers to Jun30, 2011 made payable to OWNNSW **OR** Please debit the following credit card for \$11 (plus any donation)

Visa

Mastercard

Bankcard

Total amount:

Card no.

____/____/____/____

Exp. date __/__/__

Name on card (please print)

Signature

Address

State & Post Code

I need the large print version (on A3)

I'd love it on email

Email only - don't post
Email address:

Looking for a gift idea?

Please send the above subscription to:

Name:

Signature

Address

State & PC

With my best wishes!

Members and friends are welcome to attend all activities

Wellness on Wednesdays

9.30am-1.30 pm every Wednesday
Held in Mott Hall, Argyle St., Millers Point.

9.30 - 10.30 Gentle Exercise.

10.15 - 10.45 Tai Chi.

Drumming

12.15 - 1.30pm Wednesdays, Mott Hall, Argyle St. Millers Point.
\$8 per session. Drums and gourds are provided. If you would like to drum please contact Lorraine: 9569 0051 Also please check times as some sessions in March will start and finish earlier.

Lost Ladies

10.00am every Wednesday during school terms, exploring various locations or topics of interest.

Contact Annette Butterfield: 9665 5369 email (changed) :
abutterfield_852@hotmail.com

Film Discussion group

You are invited to join us on **Tuesday 8 March**, to see **True Grit**. Recommended for viewing is **Rabbit Hole**. Please ring Yetty on **9665 2050** to check details.

Bondi Junction Coffee and Gossip Group

25 March 11am The Coffee Shop, Eastern Suburbs Leagues Club.
Last Friday of every month. Contact Yetty on **9665 2050** to check details.

Book Club

21 March 12.30-2.30 pm at 87 Lower Fort Street. This month's book is: **Lolita** by Vladimir Nabokov. Come at 12 and bring a sandwich for lunch at midday. Any questions, phone Anne Marie on 9622 0717. Note: Book to be discussed at the April 18 meeting is **On the Black Hills** by Bruce Chatwin.

Aboriginal Support Circle

21 March 10.30 am Monday. Meeting at the entrance of the Australian Museum, College St, Sydney to see the exhibition on Aboriginal Culture. Confirm all details with Pat Zinn: 9389 1090 or email patzinn@hotmail.com

Saturday Social Group at Birkenhead Point

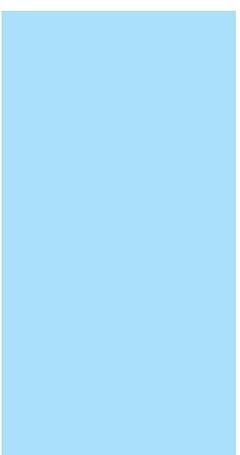
We meet from 10.30 a.m. to 12.00 noon at Birkenhead Café, 1st floor Birkenhead Shopping Complex. Contacts: Nora Huppert 9181 3918 and Bev Cameron 9957 5367. The dates are Saturdays 12th and 26th March.

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

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