THE LLL ALUMNAE ASSOCIATION
http://alumnae.llli.org

Continuum

Volume 20, No. 2 ~ Sept–Dec 2007

Seasons of Motherhood

Holiday Season: Escape the Coulda-Shoulda-Wouldas

Are you a member of the "sandwich generation?" Whether you are a nearby or long-distance caregiver to a spouse, family member, or friend, the holidays can be a time of added stress. You may have friends who have taken on the caregiver role on a temporary or long-term basis. Several years ago, I was the caregiver for my parents. They were in their late 80s when they lived in our home. I survived the fears, obstacles, and challenges that came with this commitment. There were times of frustration and joy that we overcame together. I don't regret the challenges that I couldn't always embrace in the moment. Remember to take care of YOU during the holidays and throughout the year. May your fall and winter holidays be filled with much peace and love.

In This Issue

1 Holiday Season: Escape the Coulda, Shoulda, Wouldas

2 The Alumnae Association and the Founders' Parlor

3 Our Tribe Goes to the Conference

4 Becoming a Bat Mitzvah

5 Alum Escort Service

6 Tribute to Sue Christensen

7 Forever Friends

9 Fall 2008: Philadelphia, Here We Come!

9 Alum Independence
9 LLL Breastfeeding Helpline – US

10 Alumnae Council
10 Alumnae in Action

11 Phrases from Fran, *Continuum* Editor

Alumnae Membership Form

Enjoying the holidays as a caregiver includes letting go of a mindset called "coulda-shoulda-woulda," also known as the "if-only syndrome." If there were such a thing as Caregivers Anonymous, the first step to combating these thoughts would be to rid yourself of a little voice inside that says, "I can do it all. I am responsible for everything. Whatever I do, it's never enough. I need more hours in the day. Everyone else comes before me. I coulda-shoulda-woulda…" Here are some tips that may be helpful to ease this caregiver stress and avoid the "if-only syndrome" during the holidays or family events anytime.

When planning holiday events, ask guests to visit you rather than taking a loved one out. Celebrate at home so a loved one can celebrate in a familiar and comfortable setting. It avoids a disruption in their usual routine, too. If needed, they can go to a room more to their liking without dampening spirits or breaking up the party. Plan a potluck. Each guest brings a dish. This can reduce undue stress. Ask guests to help set up a serving table or pitch in when it's time to clean up. If potluck isn't your style, ask guests to bring a beverage or dessert. Your meal stays consistent and eases the expense and the workload.

Invite people over for a meal during the loved one's regular mealtime. If you decide to serve a complete dinner, make something easy to prepare in advance, like lasagna or stew. Make something on the grill, buy prepared food, or order out. Paper and plastic make clean up much easier. Being together is what counts! There may be times when a loved one is not able to join in holiday celebrations. A frail parent may no longer enjoy staying up to greet the New Year or attending evening gatherings after working hours of family members. Staying at home with a companion or other family member may be more enjoyable than being dragged into a social situation that may be too tiring or uncomfortable.

(continued on p. 2)

Holiday Season: Escape the Coulda-Woulda-Shouldas *(continued from p. 1)*

If you are comfortable with this approach, attend holiday events without the loved one—even if it is for a short duration. This may help you feel refueled. At times you may not be able to refuel without some distance and change in your environment—even if it is to another room in the house or to have coffee or tea with a supportive friend. While taking this break, take time to focus on being away—mentally and physically—as best you can. When a family member is dependent on you or working his or her way back to a recovery level of independence, holidays are not the same as they were in the past. In order to get through these days and still enjoy them, try making *little* changes in planning and celebrating. Make the most of your time.

Avoid the "coulda-shoulda-woulda syndrome." Make the holidays enjoyable for you (the caregiver) and the care recipient, too. Acknowledge your limitations and enjoy the here and now.

Many of these ideas may sound familiar to you, right? Back in the days when you had a newborn, it was called prioritizing and scaling down, e.g., "Just relax, nurse, and meet your baby's needs. These days will pass; soon baby will be a toddler, teen and then an adult before you know it." You can draw on this sage advice at other times in your life.

Finally, remember to take pictures or ask a family member to bring a camera for some candid shots. On the next holiday, share them with the loved one and family. Stories and photos connect you to *your* heritage. Take time to pass down stories and photos to connect your children and younger family members to *their* heritage.

A good photo can stop a moment from running away. Those memories can hold a special place in your heart where you can find comfort in the treasured times you shared together.

Fran Dereszynski
Huntington Beach, California USA

The Alumnae Association and the Founders' Parlor

The Alumnae Association again hosted the Founders' Parlor at the International Conference, an opportunity for small groups to visit with one or two Founders in an intimate setting. Both visitors and Founders overwhelmingly enjoyed this chance to chat informally about their families, La Leche League, and any topic of interest. One visitor wrote, "The Saturday morning chat time was so intimately personal and refreshing. Thanks for the laughs, too!" while another said, "What a gift it is to be able to share time and experiences with someone who has so influenced my life as a mother. Thank you!"

Parlor guests came from around the world including New Zealand, Taiwan, Japan, Germany, Italy, Spain, United Kingdom, and the USA. Guests included Leaders, Leader Applicants, husbands, children, and grown daughters of Leaders.

Mary Ann Cahill wrote that it was fun to recall the sessions and she hoped the tradition would continue. Parlor hostesses Anne Cook, Mary Shine, Ann Russell, Mary Ann Martin, Colleen Kennedy, Phoebe Kerness, Ellen King, Marian McCabe, Amy Clift, Susan Baker, Laura Probst, and Patty Spanjer greeted guests and facilitated the visits. Janet Jendron set up the Founders' time schedules—no easy feat with their many obligations.

This comment in the Parlor guest book spoke for many visitors, "I wanted to tell you so many beautiful things and thoughts of thankfulness for what you once started—for what you have accomplished. Tears came into my eyes and I couldn't say much. From the bottom of my heart, thank you beautiful ladies, powerful women, special human beings."

Alumnae Mail Service

We all missed Betty Wagner Spandikow at the LLLI Conference. The Alumnae set up a greeting card station in Alum Fun! Over 100 people chose a card from the selection provided and wrote a greeting to Betty. Mailing labels were provided, until we ran out. Postage donations were collected. Thanks especially to those who left extra postage stamps. Others took cards to mail later. Betty enjoys receiving mail, especially cards picturing babies and children. If you would like to send Betty a note, her address is:

Betty Wagner Spandikow
Sunrise Assisted Living
95 Carleton Avenue, Room 14
Glen Ellyn, Illinois 60137.

Edna Kelly
Houston, Texas, USA

Our Tribe Goes to the LLLI Conference

Have you ever wished to be a member of a tribe? A tribe is defined as a group of persons having a common occupation, interest, or habit. You've probably never given this much thought. Let us tell you how our tribe works, and you'll soon be defining your own tribe. When stressed, women instinctively have a "tend or befriend," response rather than the "fight or flight" response which is typical of men. Women may clean the house or bake cookies (tend) or connect with friends to get support (befriend). A tribe can provide a framework for tending and befriending.

About ten years ago a group of Active and Retired LLL Leaders (authors included) formed the *Spice of La Leche Life (SOLLL)* Yahoo! group, similar to the Power Surge online group that had a full membership. Membership required that the women be LLL Leaders at least 40 years old. Over the years, we have developed the essential elements that bind a tribe.

1. Spend lots of time together (online and whenever we have the opportunity to meet)
2. Work together
3. Have rituals

Our *SOLLL* tribe looked forward to the 2007 LLLI Conference session, *Finding Your Tribe,* presented by Teresa Pitman, author, former Executive Director of LLL Canada, and *SOLLL* sister. Teresa's session was held on the afternoon of the last day of the conference; it was a warm and affirming way to wrap up the Conference.

To begin, Teresa showed us shapes, simply drawn on sheets of paper: a heart, a triangle, a house, a diamond, and so on. Everybody moved around the room to gather with others around the single shape that they most related to. Scribes wrote down what each shape brought to mind for each group member. The members of each group didn't all have the same ideas. We were loosely aligned by interest in a single shape and had varying points of view. Tribe members, we learned from Teresa, don't always agree on everything.

This type of bonding

takes

"living life together."

Teresa encouraged purposefully forming tribes. She talked about her own experiences of getting together regularly with another young mother to cook, bake, clean house, tend children, and share family meals, as they formed their own small tribe. Being with each other satisfied their need for socialization as well as working together to accomplish something. Other families have bought houses next to one another, even taking down fences to create one big back yard for all.

Teresa gave suggestions for finding a tribe.

1. Advertise
2. Vacation with friends
3. Look in the organizations to which you already belong

Prior to joining *SOLLL*, Teresa felt that forming an online tribe was not realistic. She's changed her mind after seeing how "tribe-like" the *SOLLL* list has become.

Many members of our *SOLLL* tribe attended Teresa's session and we enjoyed hearing her relate one of our rituals. One of our online tribe members is a hasty and enthusiastic typist who sometimes makes humorous typos. Once, in response to a request for good thoughts for a stressful situation, she meant to write, "Got it!" Instead, she typed, "Go tit!" Now that's our code for good luck, prayers coming, congratulations, sympathy, good wishes, and more as our online befriending ritual. So at the conclusion of *Finding Your Tribe*, we shouted in chorus, "Go tit!"

We feel so lucky to have become a tribe. It did not come quickly or easily. This kind of bonding takes "living life together." Members have dealt with divorce, career choices, death of a spouse, deaths of parents and children, and have shared many children's weddings and births, as well as the problems and difficulties inherent in raising teens and helping them leave the nest.

For many of us, this tribe has been the glue that kept us involved in La Leche League. Maybe encouraging more young Leaders to form such tribes would be a way to keep them involved longer.

Edna Kelly ~ Houston, Texas USA
Laura Probst ~ Lawton, Michigan, USA

We worry about what a child will become tomorrow, yet we forget that he is someone today.
Stacia Tausch

Life Beyond LLL

Becoming a Bat Mitzvah

Phoebe Kerness became an accredited LLL Leader in New York 38 years ago. She has five adult children and six grandchildren. For 30 years Phoebe has been a Communication Skills Instructor (formerly known as an HRE Instructor). Phoebe has also held Area and Eastern United States (EUS) Division positions including Area Conference Supervisor, local Chairperson for an EUS Leader Development Seminar, Communication Skills Department Associate Administrator, and has served as an LLLI Board Member (July 2003 – March 2005).

She wrote, "I cannot imagine what my life and the life of my family would have been like without La Leche League. It has been the wings beneath my sails that kept us afloat over the years. Further-more, I still cannot imagine my life without La Leche League."

Becoming a Bat Mitzvah is Phoebe's latest passage in life. She shares her story with Continuum readers.

On December 30, 2006, surrounded by all of my children, my six grandsons, assorted relatives, a myriad of friends including six women and their families who I have or currently co-lead La Leche League meetings with, and a sanctuary full of congregants, it was my privilege to conduct Sabbath Services and to chant from the Torah as I became a Bat Mitzvah.

I wish to thank all of my La Leche League family who sent me cards and emails from across the country in honor of this occasion. The D'var Torah that follows is the speech that I presented during my service as a commentary of what this day meant to me and of the Torah portion that I chanted.

D'Var Torah

Phoebe Kerness
Bat Mitzvah,

Good morning! Shabbat Shalom!

Whew! It has taken me a long time to get here. Coming from a background devoid of any religious experience or spirituality, I have traveled a long and winding road to get to where I am today.

My journey began when I got married and started to live a Jewish life. Very gradually I began to observe Judaic practices and to begin to feel somewhat comfortable doing so. My Jewish education began when my children started religious school and I would devour their textbooks. I eventually graduated to textbooks of my own. I participated in any and all adult education offered at Temple Beth Emeth in Albany, NY, two separate Torah study groups as well as many Union for Reform Judaism Regional and National Biennials. Even though I was born a Jew, I even took part in a 17-week Conversion Class to help to put a perspective on all that I was learning.

As my knowledge and confidence increased, I became more active in Jewish life. I became trained as a facilitator for study groups for Interfaith Families. I served on the Outreach Committee of the Northeast Region of the Union for Reform Judaism and for the past eight years I have been a member of the Union for Reform Judaism/ Central Conference of American Rabbi's National Conference of American Rabbi's National Committee on Outreach and Synagogue Membership.

(continued on p. 5)

Becoming a Bat Mitzvah *(continued from p. 4)*

The day that I was asked to serve on the Board of Directors at Beth Emeth was momentous for me. I could not believe how far I had traveled.

All my children became B'nai Mitzvah, were confirmed, and were active in our Temple Youth Group on a local and regional level. Inspired by them, I have had a desire to become a Bat Mitzvah for a long time. However, I was greatly handicapped by my ability to learn Hebrew. Five times I tried to no avail.

Three years ago a B'nai Torah class was introduced here at Mickve Israel to teach Hebrew as well as the philosophy and structure of Jewish prayer and classical Hebrew. Taught by the two Jewels, Julie Hirsch and my Jules (husband), a group of us have diligently prevailed in our studies. I finally conquered the reading of Hebrew, which enabled me to stand before you today.

I offer many thanks to Julie for her inspiration to me as a teacher and as a Jewish woman, and to Jules for leading our family into an observant Jewish life. As a Jewish educator, he served as an example to our children—several who have taught in religious schools and two are actively teaching today. I thank him for his patience in preparing me for my Bat Mitzvah.

I offer many thanks to the Rabbis I have studied with along my journey: Rabbi Bernard Bloom was my first Rabbi and the one who led us into Reform Judaism; Rabbi Martin Silverman of blessed memory; and Rabbi Belzer. Rabbi Belzer was affectionately called "God" by one of our foster daughters who was very taken by the fact that he was a Rabbi. Arnie has been more than a Rabbi to me, but a friend, a cousin, and a savior in times of troubles in our family.

I have been privileged to chant one of the most powerful Torah portions in the whole Torah. It contains the dramatic high point of the Joseph saga. Joseph, as an arrogant adolescent, has deeply hurt his brothers. They, in kind, take vengeance upon him, selling him into slavery in Egypt and occasioning many years of pain and suffering until Joseph interprets Pharoah's dreams and becomes second in command over all of Egypt. In the Torah portion I read today, Joseph finally confronts and becomes reconciled with his brothers and says to them that the events that have occurred were not their doing, but God's plan. And God's plan includes forgiveness. Joseph and his brothers forgave each other and move on with their lives.

This wonderful culmination can best be summed up by the prayer we recite during Yom Kippur morning service entitled "Confession of Sin" which states, "I hereby forgive all who have hurt me, all who have wronged me, whether deliberately or inadvertently, whether by word or by deed. May no one be punished on my account. As I forgive and pardon those who have wronged me, may those whom I have harmed forgive and pardon me, whether I acted deliberately and inadvertently, whether by word or by deed."

It is with heartfelt thanks that I thank the members of the choir who have worked so hard to prepare for the services for my Bat Mitzvah and to all with me today sharing in this joyous occasion in my life. Amen.

Phoebe Kerness
Savannah, Georgia USA

The Alumnae Escort Service

On behalf of the Alumnae Association, Janet Jendron and Edna Kelly offered to recruit a few Leaders to accompany any Founders who requested a companion for a day as they made their rounds of the Conference. Escorts agreed to give up all or part of a conference day to help a Founder keep to a schedule, to navigate the crowded hotel, to carry stuff, and spend as much of the day as needed with them. Mary White wrote that the escorts were "tops," every one. Thanks to Vicki Cluley, Martha Collier, Kathy Dove, Ellen King, Sandee Lutkus, Marian McCabe, Barbara Nicholson, Lysa Parker, Kate Pennington, and Marge Yeager for helping out in this way. Sandee said that her day with Vi Lennon was the best conference day she had ever spent.

Edna Kelly
Houston, Texas USA

LEAVEN Subscriptions

Retired Leaders have asked how to subscribe to LEAVEN. Any Retired Leader, non-Leader, mother, or interested person can subscribe for $12/year. Send payment and mailing address to: LLLI, P. O. Box 4079, Schaumburg, IL 60168.

Tribute to Sue Christensen

This issue of *Continuum* marks a major change. A new Editor, Fran Dereszynski, has taken over the publishing responsibilities, and long-time *Continuum* Editor, Sue Christensen, has retired. The Alumnae Association has been blessed for nearly 20 years in having Sue as a major part of *Alumnae News/Continuum*. Sue also wrote and designed countless promotional brochures and flyers for the Alumnae Association, and she was responsible for developing the Alumnae Web site.

Sue has a rare combination of talents that gave her the ability not only to write and edit publications but also to do the graphic design and layout. She was so meticulous in her concern about the Alumnae publications that she selected a specific type of paper to be used for *Continuum*, and grieved when budget concerns forced a less expensive paper to be chosen.

But she realized that most subscribers were probably more concerned about content than paper, and she was even more meticulous in selecting and planning the articles to be sure each issue provided enough variety to meet the needs and interests of the wide range of Alumnae members worldwide.

She especially enjoyed doing interviews on various topics, such as your favorite relaxation techniques or favorite books, and pulling together the results into a fascinating overview.

Sue has contributed her enthusiasm and creativity to so many of the innovative projects that became part of the Alumnae Association traditions, including the Alumnae outings which originated as optional Conference activities and developed into long week-ends in Savannah and San Antonio, and two hiking trips to the bottom of the Grand Canyon.

Sue Christensen, Pam Oselka & Welda Hoerz

Working with Sue on Continuum has been a joy for me! She combines a creative gift with an attention to detail that always results in a first-class product. Her friendship has sustained me and her respect for others has been an inspiration to me.

When I grow up, I want to be just like Sue!

Janet Jendron
Chapin, South Carolina, USA

She was also responsible for other design projects for LLLI, including the design of the Peer Counselor and LAD logos. Sue's multi-faceted talents extended to production and analysis of surveys and she was responsible for a wide-reaching Leader Survey in 1993 and compiled the replies from more than 3,000 respondents into an extensive report that included not only the statistical results but also everyone's opinions and comments. Many decisions made by LLLI administrators in the following years reflected the input of Leaders from that survey.

In her personal life, Sue and her husband, Tom, have raised three daughters and a son, who now live in various parts of the United States. Two of her daughters are married, and she looks forward to becoming a grandmother sometime down the road.

In addition to La Leche League work she has done as a volunteer, Sue's professional work includes the development of a community-based nonprofit called *The Family Connection*. Since 2000, with a $5 million grant from the Lilly Endowment, *The Family Connection* has focused on coordinating an initiative to improve the quality of early childhood care and education through teacher training, program assessments, and parent support.

The Alumnae Association has grown and developed from the efforts of dedicated volunteers like Sue Christensen. Although she is turning over her responsibilities for *Continuum*, Sue will continue as part of the Alumnae Council.

Thanks, Sue, for all you have done and all you will continue to do for the LLL Alums!

Judy Torgus
Former LLLI Publications Director
River Grove, Illinois USA

Forever Friends

Sue Christensen & Pam Oselka arriving at the airport to meet, dressed alike!

Do you have a long-time friend in La Leche League, someone with whom you have worked, shared varied experiences (including meals and beds!), someone who actually understands this LLL style of parenting from infancy up through the adult years, someone you could always count on? For me, this friendship has been the one I have enjoyed for nearly 30 years with Sue Christensen.

As of this issue, Sue is stepping down as editor of *Continuum* (previously called *LLLI Alumnae News*), although she will continue as a writer and an Alumnae Council member. For more than 20 years, Sue's creativity, writing skills, and ability to balance articles and topics in the Alumnae membership publication have delighted readers and defined the role of the Alumnae Association within the wider organization La Leche League International.

Sue and I met almost 30 years ago when she was my District Advisor. I have a vivid memory of Sue and other Leaders from my District in Indiana/Michigan in my living room. Sue was lying on the sofa in the early weeks of her third pregnancy (1978), attempting to feel better as she met many of the Leaders in this District for the first time. I remember that we had an "instant connection," a connection that I think many of you will understand. I had three young daughters at the time, similar in ages to Sue's soon-to-be three children. We even discovered that we were accredited as Leaders in 1973 (Sue in North Carolina, myself in Indiana) within a month of each other.

Although Sue and I live 42.7 miles from one another, and never led meetings in the same city, our friendship grew as we attended, planned, and hosted Chapter and District meetings, Area workshops, Area conferences, International Conferences, and worked together on the Area Council for Indiana in various positions.

Sue and Friends, Havasupi Trip 2002

In the early 1980s, I was the Area Coordinator of Leaders, and Sue became the Area Planning Chair. We had an incredible team of administrators, the Indiana Executive Council. Sue coordinated the project *IN Focus,* an idea ahead of its time. *IN Focus* was an intensive project that looked at the state of breastfeeding and mother-to-mother support throughout Indiana. We drove many miles, interstate highways and country roads, north, south, east, and west in Indiana.

In the back of one of our vans were our youngest daughters, Casey and Kelly, our "dual pregnancy" infants. We marveled at the way these two young babies entertained one another, side-by-side in their car seats, from a very early age. Sue and I led discussions throughout the state in small focus groups, and Sue created, collected, and analyzed surveys. *IN Focus* involved collecting data from all of the "stakeholders" in Indiana—Leaders, LLL members, health professionals, and community members, resulting in a detailed report, written by Sue, and an exciting new direction for LLL of Indiana at the conclusion of the *IN Focus* project. Sue and I enjoyed LLLI Conference experiences so much, and attended most of them, with the exception of the one held in Kansas City in 1983. That is a story, too—in December 1982, our holiday cards crossed in the mail. Each of us commented that we had been so tired and just not feeling as energetic as normal. We both declined invitations to speak at the 1983 LLLI Conference; then realized that our fatigue had a name—pregnancy. We were both expecting our fourth babies in August—Casey and Kelly. The girls were born within days of one another in 1983.

We continued working together in Indiana as co-Area Conference Supervisors, and we also spent many days at the LLLI office in Franklin Park, IL USA writing the breastfeeding curriculum for Peer Counselors. We laugh now about the illusion at the office of Casey and Kelly as the "perfect LLL preschool children" who could entertain one another with a basket of toys in the office for the entire day while we worked. *(continued, p. 8)*

Forever Friends (continued from p. 7)

Alumnae Havasupi Canyon Trip 1992

Havasupi Canyon Trip 2002

Alumnae Council Meeting March 2006

Sue and I have worked together on the Alumnae Council for at least 15 years. We hiked the Havasupai Canyon, Arizona USA twice, shared the charms of Savannah, Georgia USA with Alumnae friends, and have seen our circle of friendships widen even more. The laughs we have had together make me smile as I write. This is an exciting time for the Alumnae Association, as we become independent from LLLI. The future is bright!

What can I say to summarize this incredible friendship with this incredible person? Sue is creative in so many ways, as a graphic artist, a writer, a web designer, a grant writer, a discussion facilitator, and in any position she has held, or work that she has done, including *The Family Connection*, the small not-for-profit agency she created in South Bend, Indiana USA.

It is difficult to summarize and acknowledge all that Sue has done for LLL, and particularly the Alumnae Association, since much of her work is "behind the scenes." Sue has been so generous with her skills and time through the years with LLL of Indiana, LLLI, and the Alumnae Association, while working a full-time job and finishing her master's degree in Social Work. Her intelligence, her attention to detail, her ability to "dream," her skill of looking thoroughly at an issue from all sides, her ability to really listen, bring people together, and engage others in creating solutions to challenges has truly been an inspiration to me. Sue is one of the most optimistic persons I have ever met, through whatever situation she has been in. Sue, thanks for many years of friendship—there will be many more, I have no doubt! You are a "forever friend!"

Thanks to Sue's family: husband Tom, and grown children Jenni, Justin, Lizzie, and Casey for sharing your mom and her talents with La Leche League!

Pam Oselka
Union Pier, Michigan USA

The Christensen Family at Casey's Wedding, 2006

Fall 2008: Philadelphia, Here We Come!

Philadelphia is known as "The City of Brotherly Love!" On October 30 - November 2, 2008 (Thursday to Sunday) the lovely city of Philadelphia will become "The City of Sisterly Love" when the members of the La Leche League Alumnae Association will come to town for a biennial Alumnae Association trip.

Housed in a hotel in the midst of the city, we will explore the birthplace of American history, with visits to Independence National Park District, home of the Liberty Bell and Independence Hall, the birthplace of our nation. Our tour will include stops at the National Constitutional Center, National Liberty Museum, and Elfreth's Alley, the oldest residential street in the country. Our trip would not be complete if we didn't pay our respects to Rocky's favorite museum, the Philadelphia Museum of Art. With more art, a concert or two and fine food, the weekend will be a testament to the bond that the women of La Leche League share through our love of breastfeeding and the many mothers and babies we have helped over the years.

Further information will follow in future issues of *Continuum*, the Alumnae newsletter. In the meantime mark your calendars and start saving. The trip will be limited to 50 participants. Stay tuned! For online updates, log on to: <http://alumnae.llli.org/Alumnae/Trips.html>

Phoebe Kerness
Savannah, Georgia USA

Alumnae Independence

Major LLLI changes impacted the Alumnae Association, now operating as an independent organization. The Alumnae Council is studying options related to legal requirements and finances, mission, goals, organizational structure, budget, membership, recordkeeping, fund-raising, Web site redesign, and *Continuum* for starters. **Leaders can no longer join the Alums or subscribe to *Continuum* when they pay Leader Dues.** Do not send Alumnae dues to LLLI. Payment goes directly to Susan Geil with the Membership Form found in this issue or at: http://alumnae.llli.org. You may copy this form for interested Active/Retired Leaders and LLLI Members. This issue of *Continuum* is being mailed to those in our current database. During this transition, all names from LLLI's files may not be transferred.

We need your help! We are not able to send reminders when Alumnae memberships expire. We'd appreciate it if you take the time to check your 2006 records. If you think it is about time to renew, please use the Membership Form in this issue. **Whether you are a past or current Leader or Member of La Leche League, we hope that you'll RENEW or JOIN the Alumnae Association!**

La Leche League Breastfeeding Helpline - US: Volunteers & Donations Needed

The Helpline wishes to thank the Alumnae for their generous financial donation above and beyond the quilt raffle proceeds. (See p. 10 in this issue for details.) Since June 1, 2007, this toll-free number has helped over 6,000 mothers. Without more volunteers and funding, phone lines may soon be closed. Telephone and other resources require funding. We need Leaders to volunteer from two hours once a week or other weekly shifts. Scheduling is flexible, based on a Leader's family schedule. Questions? Want to volunteer? Contact Susan Prado: sueprado@gmail.com.

Were you a mother helped through LLL's former toll-free number? Did your LLL Group gain memberships through referrals? Are you thankful that the Helpline is available to answer mothers' calls 24/7, even on holidays?

As the holidays approach and you consider how to make the most of your gift-giving, please think about making a donation to the LLL Breastfeeding Helpline - US. Donations made to the helpline can be done in several ways:

1. Make checks payable to "LLL Breastfeeding Helpline-US." Send to:
   *Carroll Beckham
   2101 Woods End Drive
   Fayetteville, NC 28312
   cbeckham@nc.rr.com

2. Make checks payable to the "Elena and Olivia Parry" to benefit the helpline. Send to:
   *Elena and Olivia Parry Fund
   c/o Pam Freedman
   104 Crofton Springs Place
   Chapel Hill, NC 27516
   PMfree3@aol.com

**Both sources ensure that 100% of the funds donated go directly to the Helpline.*

3. Make a donation via credit card. Send the information to Carroll or Pam or donate at the following website: http://donate2lll.org/helpline *When people donate to the helpline via credit card payment, 4% of the donation goes to the EUS Division to cover the cost of processing the credit card transaction.*

4. Donate through LLLI: At the LLLI online site, choose "restricted gifts." Then select "LLL Breastfeeding Helpline – US" or "LLL Breastfeeding Helpline – US in Spanish." By mail, indicate on the check: "Restricted Donation for LLL Breastfeeding Helpline – US." *All donations made through LLLI incur a 15% administrative fee from LLLI.*

Thank you!
LLL Breastfeeding Helpline – US
1-877-4-LALECHE or 1-877-452-5324

Alumnae Council

Coordinator:
Marilyn Thompson
3650 Forestview Lane
Plymouth MN 55441
763-559-2173
<marilyn_cinnamon@comcast.net>

Publications/Web Site:
Sue Christensen, 1304 Leeper Ave.
South Bend IN 46617
574-288-7151
<s.christe@sbcglobal.net>

Public Relations/Web Site-/Online Discussion Group Coordinator:
Janet Jendron, 634 Timberlake Dr.
Chapin, NC 29036
803-736-1585
<jjendron@usit.net>

Publications/Continuum Editor:
Fran Dereszynski
5502 Maryport Dr.
Huntington Beach, CA 92649
714-840-1136
<dereszyn@gte.net>

Alumnae Treasurer:
Susan Geil, 4868 N. Hermitage Ave.
Chicago, IL 60640
773-561-2229
<srgeil@yahoo.com>

Alumnae Resource Development/ Membership Coordinator:
Sue Steilen, 13958 Grenelefe Lane
Homer Glen, IL 60491
708-301-0890
<suesteilen@comcast.net>

Alumnae Liaison to LLLI:
Pam Oselka, 9701 Kruger Rd.
Union Pier, MI 49129
269-469-2706
<poselka@hughes.net>

Interim Area Alumnae Representative (AAR) Coordinator & Special Projects
Nancy Franklin, 3425 Turtle Village
San Antonio, TX 78230
210-979-6372
<NBFLLL77@aol.com>

Alum Administrative Assistant:
Wendy Masters, 703 Audubon Dr.
Valparaiso, IN 46383
219-462-9709
<wendy38mm@yahoo.com>

LLLI Conference: Alumnae in Action

This summer LLLI Conference attendees discovered the Alums! They now know we are active and definitely know how to have fun! Our presence began on July 17 with greetings at the Resource Faire and Physicians' Seminar and continued with daily activities until the July 23rd Closing Ceremony. There was something to interest everyone. Pre-conference activities included a Dinner Cruise on Lake Michigan and a private viewing of mother-baby art at the Art Institute. Alum Association Representatives were able to meet and share a picnic in the park with other Alumnae volunteers. First time attendees obtained conference information and learned more about the Alumnae Association at a special Orientation/Navigating Table.

Every day attendees were able to walk, kick, or splash with us for early morning Rejuvenation Activities. And that was just the start! Throughout the three days of the Conference, the Alum Fun room was full of activity—exercises, crafts, food, and massage sessions—all mixed in with fun, laughter, and sharing. Many visitors returned several times and brought their friends. The room flourished with activity. It became quite a challenge to close the room for meals and late night activities.

Thanks to many generous donors, the Donation Drawing and Silent Auction items seemed to multiply every day. Excitement came from the donations for a week's lodging in France or the North Carolina woods and the Alumnae Quilt drawing. We heard "Oohs" and "Ahs" over the many items. The Alumnae Association supported the LLL Breastfeeding Helpline – US by selling Helpline merchandise and auctioning the quilt panels that the Pizzazz Committee created for the Grand Ballroom. Helpline merchandise sales totaled $963. Quilt panel auctions raised $700. With additional Alumnae donations of $337, we were pleased to send the Helpline a check for $2,000. The Late Night Chat with Alums and the 25-Year Leader Gatherings were well attended. Friendships were rekindled and new connections were made.

And how about that Tea? A recent LEAVEN article was titled "Tea for Two…or Seven Hundred?" Well, how about tea for more than 1,200? The Founders' Tea hosted by the Alumnae was a favorite. An upbeat fashion show of the new LLLI apparel kicked off the Tea. Many of us wondered, "How did that model stay in such great shape?" Songs, memories, award recognitions in between fun conversations made for a delightful afternoon. This truly was a wonderful opportunity to introduce many attendees to the Alumnae Association. Following the Tea, we shared LLL history at a Gala Awards Night and demonstrated the lasting friendships that are made in LLL. And, we did not stop there. The closing celebration had one last Alumnae touch. Through a generous donation and work of the Alumnae, we were able to enjoy entertainment by Billy Dean, American country singer and songwriter. As Billy played his guitar, he sang *Let Them Be Little*, his 2005 Top-10 hit, that brought tears of joy to the families and friends in the audience.

For some, the conference was a way to wrap up 50 years of La Leche League. For the Alumnae Association, it was a beginning. We were a significant presence. We demonstrated our support for La Leche League. And—always important—we continue to have lots of fun!

Sue Steilen
LLLI Alumnae Conference Coordinator

Phrases from Fran, *Continuum* Editor

At a time when the Alumnae Association becomes an independent organization, I am thrilled to be the new *Continuum* editor. With this change, *Continuum* has a different appearance. The interesting and enriching topics and articles will continue as in the past.

I have been married to my husband, Mike, for 34 years. We have lived in Huntington Beach during those years—in the same house we watched being built. We were born in different states on the East Coast but met many years after our families moved to So. California. A few years ago, Mike took an early retirement from his job as a heavy line mechanic. We do keep busy with our friends and family and enjoy being at home more than ever amidst the occasional dog or cat sitting when their owners (our kids) are out of town. We have three children: two sons (32 and 28) and a daughter (30). We spent years supporting our sons on their journeys to become Eagle Scouts and our daughter in achieving her Girl Scout Gold Award. They all went on to graduate from college and beyond—to graduate school or other studies.

Our older son lives in Huntington Beach, is a law enforcement officer with a nearby local police department, loves to do Ironman Triathlons, mountain biking, and fix up old houses.

Our daughter works at the branch of a nationwide animal hospital in West Los Angeles. She is a board-certified veterinarian specializing in internal medicine for small animals. The past 12 months was her first time at a "real good paying job" after 24 years of going to school and living on a limited income! She enjoys her work, is a member of a running club, and this summer participated in marathons in Alaska and San Francisco.

Our younger son lives in Montana where he is a fourth-grade teacher and studying for a school administration degree. He enjoys gardening, home improvements, basketball, and playing the guitar. His wife just started a private practice as a part-time marriage and family therapist. Their seven-month-old son is a cutie and loves breastfeeding, attachment parenting, and their family bed. His crib functions as a dresser for his clothes and toys!

Over the past ten years: we have helped to move our kids in and out of apartments; drove moving vans and animals from the West Coast to the East Coast for grad school attendance; developed an appreciation for furnishings found at thrift shops and garage sales; heard words of praise for our parenting style from our kids' friends, co-workers or supervisors; were caregivers for my parents in their final years with us; adopted our very first family dog that needed to be attachment companioned (she had separation anxiety when my daughter was away too long at college classes); supported our son's deployments in Eastern Europe and the Middle East; and began to experience the joys of long-distance grand-parenting.

I enjoy reading, photography, scrapbooking, card making, TV movies, going to lunch with past-PTA and LLL friends, and editing and working on publications for LLL. I have been a Leader for 30 years and have been a past Area Publications Department Coordinator and a member of the US Western Division Staff.

Occasionally I lead a Series Meeting when needed. I am also the current Area Leaders' Letter Editor for So. California/Nevada, Conference Program Committee member, Chapter Secretary and local Alumnae Chapter Secretary. Mike and I enjoy year-round gardening, planting summer vegetable gardens, and the openness of living next to the Bolsa Chica wetlands area and being close to our city pier and the ocean. As Mike and I tell our kids and friends, "Come visit us anytime. The key is in the mailbox."

I hope to visit your mailbox through *Continuum.* Coming up in the next issue in 2008 are articles about Life after LLL and Grief.

Fran

Thinking about writing an article for *Continuum*? Please send your articles to me at: dereszyn@gte.net. Examples of topics of interest to Alumnae: Life Lessons Learned, Grandparenting, Raising My Grandchild, Communicating with Young Adults (at home or out of your home), Surprising Changes and Stages of a Woman's Life, What Your Local Alumnae Group Is Doing, How LLL Philosophy Applies to Your Life, and Challenges of Retirement. Articles selected for publication may be edited for length, clarity, and adherence to LLL journalistic guidelines. *Send articles for the next issue by January 15, 2008.*

La Leche League of So. California/Nevada
LLL Alumnae Association Newsletter
Cindy Egner, Bulk Mailer
18196 Santa Sophia Circle
Fountain Valley, CA 92708

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Huntington Beach, CA
Permit No. 59

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

As an LLL Alumnae Member you:

- build on LLL philosophies as children grow
- participate in fun-filled gatherings and trips
- share joys and concerns about school-age children, teens, grandparenting, aging parents, and other family relationships
- continue to support LLLI's work
- stay in touch with others in LLL
- join Alum Online Discussion Groups, restricted to Alum members who tell us the groups provide invaluable opportunities to share wisdom and feelings about life's challenges (e.g., aging parents, challenging children)
- receive *Continuum* in 2008, when it is published in Jan/Feb, June/July, and Oct/Nov

---

If you paid Alumnae dues and do not receive scheduled mailings, contact Fran Dereszynski. Annual dues are $20/year, payable to "La Leche League Alumnae Association." Send address changes and payment to Susan Geil, Alumnae Treasurer, 4868 N. Hermitage Avenue, Chicago, IL 60640. Contact Susan at: srgeil@yahoo.com.

Grandparents are special people.
Grandparents play vital roles building strong families.
Grandparents now have a national magazine, just for them...

GRAND
The official magazine of grandparents

Don't be left out! *GRAND* Magazine costs $3.95 each but is ***FREE to YOU*** as a friend of La Leche League International.

Visit
www.GrandMagazine.com/LLLI
for your ***FREE*** Subscription!

GRAND Magazine is proud to support the goals of La Leche League International.