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

Continuum

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Seasons of Motherhood

We Grieve Over More Than Death

Agnes Leistico became a Leader 33 years ago. She writes that her "LLL career spanned 20 years—starting in South Carolina, then moving to California in 1979. I think I became an HRE instructor in approximately 1982. I was an active HRE Instructor approximately eight or nine years. While an HRE Instructor I developed the program for using HRE with our children. It was extensively used throughout LLLI for many years. I was on Western Division Staff from 1980 to 1994 or 1995. My LLLI experiences led me directly into the Bereavement Care Director position at the mortuary in 1997." Agnes retired from the mortuary in 2007.

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Grief is normal, natural, *and* precious. Grief allows us time to adjust ourselves to a new normal in our lives. Grief, much as it can hurt, is our friend. Through grief, we change. This change is the precious part of grief because we stretch ourselves in ways we could not imagine. We shed our "Old Normal," taking on a "New Normal" in our lives.

The definition of grief given by the Grief Recovery Institute is the most meaningful one I've heard. Let what it says about grief sink in until you are able to absorb this meaning into your life: *Grief is the conflicting feelings caused by the end of or change in a familiar pattern of behavior*.

Nothing in that definition limits grief to only death. Any loss circumstance in our lives can cause us to experience grief. Among the many losses we have in our lives are: moving (even if it is only a block away), divorce (so many conflicting emotions here!), death of a pet (pets can play a big part in our lives), starting school (whether we are seven or seventy!), death of a former spouse (which often catches people by surprise when it happens to them), end of addictions (which means learning a new set of behaviors), major health changes (whether it is having a debilitating disease or regaining health after a siege of poor health), retirement (even when the retirement is eagerly anticipated), financial changes (winning the lottery as well as bankruptcy or anything in between), holidays (often a big cause of grief), legal problems (lawsuits, crimes—even when it involves others who are significant to us), and facing the empty nest (they are out on their own and we are still at home!).

All of us experience loss many times in our lives. Despite this, most of us are unsure of how to regain our sense of well-being and to adjust to our new normal. One of the most important things we can do is stay open to grief—either in our personal life or in the lives of those we love. We can't make loss go away, but we can give ourselves permission to feel our grief.

(continued on p. 2)

We Grieve Over More Than Death *(continued from p. 1)*

Knowing that something has changed our familiar (comfortable) patterns of behavior makes a big difference in how we accept what is happening to us. We don't have to like the conflicting and sometimes very painful feelings we are experiencing. Being open to our sense of loss, of grief, enables us to move on.

Loss can generate conflicting feelings

There can be a mixture of relief, anger, confusion, and gladness, even joy. Name any emotion you want—it can be a legitimate part of our grieving.

When our grief is intense, we have to expect that we will not be "normal"—yet this is a normal part of grief! Life isn't "normal" while in grief. We are searching for a new "normal" to our lives, while at the same time maybe trying to bring back the "old normal."

For instance in divorce, you can know that this is the best action for you, yet at the same time yearn to go back to the way it was–simply because it was a familiar way of acting. Talk about conflicting emotions — divorce brings so many to the surface.

Grieve, know that you are normal, and find someone who will simply listen to you without judging, criticizing, or giving you advice. When we give voice to our emotions, we also hear them and are better able then to make sense out of our loss. What a friend someone is who will just listen without needing to say anything.

As I told people who came to the Grief Recovery Program, "Find someone who can be a heart with ears for you."

Agnes Leistico
Lompoc, California

My Mother

Photo: Marilyn Thompson

My mother, Elaine Shaner, passed away on January 4, 2008 after a short illness. She was 92 years old and was living on the farm where she and Dad raised seven children and had 17 grandchildren, 27 great-grandchildren and one great-great-grandchild.

Mom was one of those rare people who had a gift of listening and making everyone feel special when you were around her. She loved us unconditionally. In the years when Mom gave birth, 1939-1951, artificial feeding was the wave of the future. Much to her regret and disappointment she did not successfully breastfeed her children. Even her mother (who did breastfeed Mom and her siblings) did not dispute the new modern way of thinking.

Even though Mom did not breastfeed, she always supported and encouraged her daughters and granddaughters in this womanly art.

Breastfeeding your baby became a way of life for our family. In fact, Mom couldn't imagine why any mother would do anything else.

The current breastfeeding statistics for the Shaner family stand at 36 children breastfed over a period of 694 months or 57+ years, four LLL Leaders, and three administrators: Rebecca Magalhães, LLLI External Relations and Advocacy Director; Marilyn Thompson, Alumnae Association Coordinator; and Barbara Magalhães, former ACL of Iowa!

Marilyn Thompson
Plymouth, Minnesota

Being Yourself: Listening with authenticity

As we learn to listen more completely we may find ourselves noticing that there are a lot of people in our lives who could learn to listen better. The sacred art of listening is an individual journey, so each person enters and learns at his or her own pace and desire. Until a person is ready, what we can do is listen from our own hearts, with no expectation that he or she will then listen to us in return. This simple act of letting go often opens the door for a subtle shift in your relationship, which then translates into deeper communication.

From SkyLight Paths Book Club Pick of the Month, December 2007,
The Sacred Art of Listening, by Kay Lindahl, 2002 Ed., p. 125. Kay is a Retired LLL Leader.

When Will My Alumnae Membership Expire?

With the mailing of this issue of *Continuum*, the line above your name on the mailing label/address features your membership expiration date. Compiling the Alumnae Association membership data is still an ongoing process.

A little over a year ago, LLLI transitioned their membership records database from a system called CGI to Kintera. The membership records we received from the CGI database include expiration dates based on the number of *Continuum* issues received.

Membership records we received from the Kintera database do not provide membership payment dates or expiration dates. However, we do have some records of memberships paid with LLLI Conference registrations and recent payments made directly to LLLI that were submitted with Leader dues.

The best LLL Alumnae Association membership records are the ones paid directly to the Alumnae Association or Susan Geil, Alumnae Association Treasurer. As of the printing of this issue of *Continuum*, the LLL Alumnae Association (LLLAA) has not received any monies for Alumnae memberships paid to LLLI. Nonetheless, we are committed to honoring all Alumnae memberships.

Please review your address information on the back of this issue.

The top line of the mailing address indicates the status of your membership record and what we understand your expiration date to be. An explanation of what the top line means is indicated below.

*********** – indicates that you have received Continuum in the past, but there is no known payment or expiration date for an Alumnae Association membership and LLLAA has not received any money for your membership.

***00/00/00** – an asterisk with a date indicates that we have a record of payment to LLLI and a possible expiration date, but the LLL Alumnae Association has not received any money from the membership payment, e.g., 12/1/2007.

00/00/00 – a date **without** an asterisk indicates that the LLL Alumnae Association has received money from your membership payment and your membership will expire on the given date, e.g., 11/30/2008.

Please review your address information on the back of this issue. If you have a row of asterisks or an asterisk with a date printed above your name and can verify an LLL Alumnae Association membership payment, please contact Sue Steilen at suesteilen@comcast.net or call 847-380-2930. Thank you.

As part of our move to become independent, the LLL Alumnae Association has chosen to maintain our own membership database. This will allow us to update our records on a timely basis and maintain information that is relevant to the LLL Alumnae Association, which will ultimately provide better membership service.

Sue Steilen
Alumnae Membership Coordinator

Commemorative Pearls Available

In honor of LLLI's 50th anniversary and LLLI's new book, *The Revolutionaries Wore Pearls* by Kaye Lowman, LLL of So. California/Nevada sold strands of pearls at the Chicago LLLI Conference in July. They were such a hit! More pearls were received so that mail orders can be taken. The pearls are 7 mm real, high-luster fresh water knotted pearls, with a silver-plated claw clasp and a 4" silver-plated chain extender. Each strand is choker length, 14" (without the extender).

Think ahead to birthdays, Mother's Day, anniversary gifts as well as lifetime gifts for daughters, daughters-in-laws, grandmothers, other relatives and friends. Share this opportunity with interested mothers and friends, too!

The pearls are $30 each (Leader price) and $35 each (non-Leader price).

Make checks payable to: *LLL of So. California/Nevada*. Mail to: Gayle McLean, 10285 Cardinal Ave., Fountain Valley, CA 92708. Include name, address, phone and email. Order form is also available at: www.lalecheleaguescnv.org.

Save the Date for the Philadelphia Trip!

With the New Year upon us, Evy Simon and I are working to fine tune the plans for the Alumnae Trip to Philadelphia on the weekend of October 30–November 2, 2008. Evy is a long-time LLL Leader and a Communication Skills Instructor (CSI) currently living in Philadelphia. In her professional life, Evy is a tour guide in the city. She is working with me to plan our trip.

The contract has been signed for us to stay at the *Holiday Inn Philadelphia–Historic District*. As the name implies we will be located in the midst of Philadelphia history and able to walk to most of the attractions we'll be visiting. This will definitely be a walking trip, come rain or shine. The preliminary itinerary for the weekend is as follows:

We will arrive on Thursday afternoon, October 30, when we will enjoy getting to know each other through the registration hours and an evening dinner and "meet and greet."

On Friday, October 31, we will take an overview walking tour throughout the Historic District, soaking in the history of the city with visits to the Liberty Bell, Independence Hall, Christ Church, and Elfreth's Alley, the oldest residential street in the United States.

We will have lunch at an historic tavern. After lunch, we will continue our tour, ending with a visit to the National Constitution Center. Dinner and evening plans are still undecided. Evy is investigating Halloween happenings in which we might participate.

On Saturday, November 1, we will start our day with a tour of the fascinating National Liberty Museum.

Lunch will be on our own at the Reading Terminal Market. The Market is a complex of crafts and eateries housed in a former terminal of the Reading Railroad. After lunch we will take a bus tour through the city to see the Mural Arts Program. To quote from their brochure:

> *Across Philadelphia, walls that were once blank and scarred are now adorned with colorful murals of peaceful gardens, exotic landscapes, historic figures, victims of violence and local heroes. Since 1984 the Philadelphia Mural Arts Program has created over 2600 murals and works of public art, earning Philadelphia international recognition as the "City of Murals."*

After free time we're hoping to go to a wonderful Turkish Restaurant that Evy and I stumbled upon and possibly a performance at the Kimmel Center for the Arts.

Look for registration information in the next issue of Continuum.

Sunday, November 2, will find us at the Philadelphia Museum of Art for a tour and lunch. In the afternoon, we will go to the Rodin Museum. After free time, we will convene at Positano's for a farewell Italian dinner.

We will leave each other on Monday, tired but hopefully fulfilled with the combination of history, art, entertainment and good food, along with the joy of reconnecting with LLL Alumnae from across the country.

See you all in the City of Brotherly Love. Look for registration information in the next issue of *Continuum*.

Phoebe Kerness
La Leche League
Alumnae Association Trip Coordinator

We Remember

We Remember honors the memory of La Leche League Leaders who have died. The current list is online at: http://alumnae.llli.org/Alumnae/WeRemember.htm If you know of a Leader or former Leader who is missing from this list, please contact Nancy Franklin at NBFLLL77@aol.com Include the Leader's name, date of death, hometown, state, and country so her name can be added to the list. Thank you.

Joan Crothers: Literacy Advocate

Is there really life beyond La Leche League? Of course, there is! Read what Joan Crothers has been doing.

Joan has two sons and three grandchildren who were all breastfed. Josh and his wife live in Rockville, Maryland with their two children (5) and (2). Seth and his wife have a son (2) and they live in Prescott, Arizona.

She has been an Active Leader for 35 years. During those years, she started a new Group, was a CLA and a RALA, and was a member of the LLLI Board of Directors for six years.

She was also the editor for Accord, newsletter for the International Division, and Co-Chair for the Leader Accreditation Department (known as the Leader Applicant Department in those days). Currently she is a member of the LLLI Grievance Commission. Joan's hobbies include knitting, reading and doing yoga.

Since 2002, she has been the principal at a K-3 School in North Kingstown, Rhode Island. Joan oversees 440 students and 50 staff members. She often assists teachers who are returning to work while continuing to nurse their babies.

During the 2006-07 school year, I challenged my students to meet the achieved literacy standard. Each student was expected to read 25 books at his/her reading level. The kindergarteners were exempt as most are not reading at the beginning of the year. I told them that if they all achieved that reading goal, I would dye my hair "Stony Lane Blue." Our school mascot is a whale and the school colors are bright blue and white. Here is an excerpt from the parent newsletter about the challenge.

I will dye my hair "Stony Lane blue" in June if everyone at Stony Lane meets the standard of reading 25 books this school year. I have extended this to the adults at Stony Lane, too. I am not thrilled with the idea of having blue hair (I'm not that old, am. I?!), but I am thrilled with the idea of everyone reading 25 books. I do hope to be searching for (temporary) blue hair dye in a few months. I hope that you will all enjoy Reading Week with us at Stony Lane and that you will celebrate one of my favorite weeks by reading more to and with your children—and for yourself.

Each morning I read the names of students who had met the standard. By early June, all but 17 had done so. So, I made a list of these students. As I saw them in school, on the playground, or in the cafeteria, I reminded them, encouraged them, and cajoled them to meet that standard. Many students had read 25 or more books but had not logged them in according to the directions of the teacher. I kept doing this, reminding some children more than once. By the end of the school year only 5 out of a possible 363 students had not met the standard. In addition, 50 of the 93 kindergarteners also met the standard! So, I dyed my hair blue!

Joan shows off her blue hair! Fortunately, the dye easily washed out and her hair was back to normal!

A Newsweek article on food allergies sparked an online discussion on the LLL Alumnae Empty-Nesters group list last fall. My response to the discussion is the basis for this article. The discussion related to the November 5, 2007 article, "Fear and Allergies in the Lunchroom." It is online at: http://www.newsweek.com/id/62296 and available at the local public library.

Alumnae Listserv Sparks Allergy Discussion

Yes, you can get peanut allergy from breast milk. My second child, Jessi, was extremely allergic as an infant. She got rashes, eight-hour colic, mucusy stools sometimes flecked with blood, occasional projectile vomiting, and a stuffy nose from various things I ate.

When she was several weeks old I cut dairy foods from my diet to see if it made any difference. At that point Jessi was crying from about seven at night until two in the morning. I substituted peanut butter sandwiches for cheese sandwiches at lunchtime. One day I had a peanut butter sandwich for lunch and turkey for dinner. That night her nose was stuffier than ever and she began projectile vomiting. I cut out both foods but I didn't know which one might have been the culprit.

At five months of age, we had her tested by a pediatric allergist at the Children's Hospital in Seattle, Washington. First they did skin scratch tests on her back. She was so allergic to peanuts that they couldn't do any other testing. They told me not only to avoid peanuts but also to avoid all legumes in my diet until she was at least a year old. That meant no dairy and no soymilk substitute either for cereal. She tested allergic to other things and I eliminated lots from my diet. I lost 50 pounds that year. Fortunately I had gained lots for that pregnancy.

We were so happy to hear the allergist say, "Oh, yes, we see babies reacting to foreign proteins in their mother's milk all the time." No one in the health care field had believed us. The only other place I found any information about food allergies was in the "new" 1981 edition of THE WOMANLY ART OF BREASTFEEDING. And that was how I got the idea to try and eliminate foods from my diet in the first place.

I kept breastfeeding Jessi. Dorothy Patricia Brewster's book, *You Can Breastfeed Your Baby, Even in Special Situations (1979 edition),* mentioned that at some point the child's immune system should kick in. I called Jessi to me to nurse regularly for the third year of her life whether she was interested or not. I let her begin weaning herself the next year.

She outgrew the allergy. By age four she could eat peanuts and peanut butter. Although peanuts have never been a favorite food of hers, I am thankful she doesn't have to worry about anaphylaxis from a taste of peanuts.

Jessi couldn't tolerate food either until she was 11 months old. She flunked applesauce and banana that caused her to have stomach cramps, colic, and blood and mucus-flecked stools. But she tolerated peaches, pears, rice, and carrots. Her first birthday cake was a two-layer rice flour cake (pear for one layer and carrot for the other) made with baking soda, a safe vegetable oil (not corn, peanut, or soy), and a non-apple cider vinegar to make it rise. No frosting either.

Jessi is my food girl today. In college she majored in international food issues. She attended an international food conference that included discussions about breastfeeding and artificial baby milk in Ontario, Canada while in university. Now she is learning farming from the ground up on an organic farm in Ontario. She bakes, cooks from scratch, and is extraordinarily healthy and wise about food.

During my next pregnancy I did more reading and avoided many foods that my other two children had reacted to. I did this for the last three months of pregnancy and the first six months of breastfeeding. I think I avoided dairy foods for three months and my youngest was my happiest and least allergic of all my children. No colic to speak of, either.

I don't think it is common for a child to have as many allergies as Jessi did. I found out during the course of caring for her that my mother-in-law had many food allergies through her life. Genetics apparently played a big part for our family in having allergy susceptible children.

Kris Dobyns
Richmond, Indiana

"Never Completely Dressed, Never Completely Dry"

In 1977 I became a "certified" LLL Leader in New York State–before NY State was split into two Areas and New York City became part of NY-West. Our Group was called the Uptown Group and later the Upper West Side Group as LLL expanded. I retired (or petered out) around 1990, partly because I was book review editor of the *Journal of Human Lactation* from 1988-1994. I also worked full time. Something had to go. I have two grown sons.

My husband died in 2004. He was always completely supportive of my LLL activities and when I discovered the book, *Poor Miss Finch*, we dissolved in laughter together. I retired as a college librarian and archivist and now work part time at the Grolier Club Library, a club for collectors of fine editions, rare books, book designers, archival and manuscript collections, etc. I process and catalog the non-book collections of manuscripts and archives. It is nice to work two days a week! I have also published articles on two of my favorite novelists: Victorian novelist, Charlotte Mary Yonge, known for her wonderful very long novels about very large families, and the 20th century author, Barbara Pym. My own interests (besides breastfeeding!) are strongly literary and historical. Over the years I have gathered a great deal of material from literature and from historical events that involved breast-feeding. One of my heroines is Sacajawea, the Indian woman who breastfed her way across half the continent while guiding Lewis and Clark.

When I want a good laugh, I re-read Wilkie Collins' novel of the 1870s, Poor Miss Finch. Collins describes Mrs. Finch, who is breastfeeding, as: "Never completely dressed, never completely dry—with a baby in one hand and a novel in the other." That has certainly been me at times.

I have been a truly voracious reader ever since I can remember. For many decades, nineteenth century English novels have been among my most satisfying reads. Outside of the pantheon of Dickens, Thackeray, George Eliot and the Brontes are many very good novelists. One of my favorites is Wilkie Collins, intimate friend and colleague of Dickens and author of the best-selling *Woman in White* (1860) and *The Moonstone* (1868).

In 1869 Collins set up what the Victorians would have called "an irregular establishment" and fathered three children. His novel of 1873, *Poor Miss Finch*, is about a blind pianist and her love affair with a man who has a strange handicap of his own. The story is told from the viewpoint of Lucilla Finch's companion and the companion's humorous view of the nursing couple. This suggests that the companion's creator (the author) had seen the breastfeeding of young infants at very close range.

On arriving at a remote country rectory, the new companion is left to find her own way to the "lady of the house" and in her search through a maze of rooms she sees many children. When she finds Mrs. Finch, Lucilla's stepmother, that woman

> *"had evidently been amusing herself by walking up and down the room at the moment when I appeared. If there can be such a thing as a damp woman—this was one. Her hair was not dressed; and her lace cap was all on one side. The upper part of her was clothed in a loose jacket of blue merino; the lower part was robed in a dimity dressing gown of doubtful white. In one hand, she held a dirty dog-eared book, which I at once detected to be a Circulating Library novel. Her other hand supported a baby enveloped in a flannel, sucking at her breast. Such was my first experience of the Reverend Finch's wife—destined to be also the experience of all aftertime. Never completely dressed; never completely dry; always with a baby in one hand and a novel in the other…"* (Chapter 3)

Mrs. Finch reveals that novels "compose her mind"—she obviously was not reading one of Collins' own exciting sensation novels. As Mrs. Finch talks to the narrator,

> *"the baby began to emit symptoms of having taken more maternal nourishment than his infant stomach could comfortably contain. I held the novel, while Mrs. Finch searched for her handkerchief—first in her bedgown pocket; secondly here, there, and everywhere in the room."*

A few weeks later Mr. Finch attempts to give his family a cultural treat by gathering them together for a reading of *Hamlet*, including the stage directions. He gets very little further than the beginning of the first scene:

> *Elsinore. A Platform before the castle. Francisco on his post. Enter to him Bernardo: "Who's there?" "Nay answer me. Stand and unfold yourself."*

(continued on p. 8)

"Never Completely Dressed, Never Completely Dry" *(continued from p. 7)*

"Mrs. Finch unfolds herself—she suckles the baby….As the ghost of Hamlet's father enters, the group can hear the baby sucking. As Horatio prepares to address the ghost, "the baby is satiated. Mrs. Finch wants her handkerchief." (Chapter 23)

When there is a domestic upset, which Mr. Finch attempts to settle in his own bombastic style,

"…Mrs. Finch, deeply affected by her husband's noble conduct, begins to sob hysterically. The baby, disarranged in his proceedings by the emotions of his mama, set up a sympathetic scream. Mr. Finch crossed the room to them with domestic healing on his wings. 'This does you credit Mrs. Finch; but, under the circumstances it must not be continued. Control yourself in consideration of the child…' Marvelous and beautiful sympathy, which makes the maternal sustenance the conducting medium, of disturbances between parent and child. Nature! Maternity! Inscrutable Providence!" (Chapter 35)

Collins' portrait may not be flattering, but the dampness, audible suckling and—shall we say—less than perfect grooming—certainly captures my own memory of the early weeks with my babies.

Barbara J. Dunlap
New York, New York

Visit www.wilkiecollins.com
Poor Miss Finch is available on interlibrary loan from your local library or at amazon.com.

What Alumnae Groups Are Doing

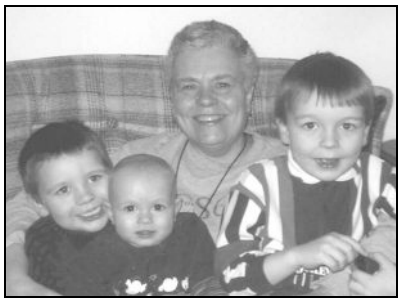
Our "Breakfast Group"

Over thirty years ago when I was giving and receiving support from a group of women at LLL meetings, little did I dream that some of them would still be my good friends many years later.

As our children grew beyond the breastfeeding years, several members of the group decided that the friendships we had developed were worth maintaining.

However most of us no longer attended meetings. One member suggested meeting in a local restaurant on Fridays at 6:00 a.m. And so it was that our breakfast group began. Some women came in and out of the group. Now there are seven of us. When one member started on a special diet many years ago, we decided to meet in our homes.

One member, a mother of five children, is still an Active Leader, a lactation consultant and childcare provider for her grandchildren. Another member also has five children and is a Title I coordinator and sought after speaker in the area. Another



Ellen Palmer & grandsons: she has three children and is a retired Montessori teacher.

member has six children and is a paraprofessional for special needs children in a local school. After her children were raised, one mother got her college degree and is now a special education teacher. Another mother has five children, is a former church secretary and ESL teacher. Currently she is an advocate for the Hispanic Community. Another member, who has seven children, was never in LLL but was invited to be part of the group at a summer baseball or soccer game when she told one of the other members how lonely she was after moving here from the East Coast. She now works at a local university.

Why did we decide to meet at 6:00 a.m. on Friday? When else, but when our husbands were home, could we count on getting away weekly? Now that we are all over 50, it is hard to get up so early, so we are more flexible. One mother is often our social coordinator, calling to see who can be hostess and when the most of us can get together. Sometimes we meet on Friday nights with or without our husbands; or it may be on a Saturday morning or Sunday evening. Sometimes we meet at a restaurant. Other times we gather in a home.

Just this past February, I hosted the meeting. We had five group members plus my husband. We sat around my kitchen table for a simple breakfast of oatmeal, bread, and grapefruit. Several years ago after New Year's, another member and her husband hosted a gala sit down dinner for the whole group.

(continued on p. 9)

Our "Breakfast Group" *(continued from p. 8)*

Years ago, a daughter complained that she could not sleep during the breakfast group since we were laughing so loud.

Another daughter commented that one of the sons who was having problems would be all right in the long run since "he comes from a good family." One member was featured in an article in a local magazine. She asked the reporter to come to breakfast group because that is where she was most herself. In the article, another daughter was quoted as saying, "If anything happened to my mom, there are lots of moms I could go to in the breakfast group."

The group has given support to each other through the raising of 35 children. We rejoiced over successes and cried over sorrows. When one mother's oldest son died suddenly, it was breakfast group that she asked to help host at his funeral. When one of us is hospitalized, we all make it a point of visiting. We supported each other through mental illness of children and husbands, through drug addiction of several children, unexpected pregnancies of our daughters and cancer in two of our children.

This year another member's daughter's heart stopped beating at college. There were prayers from all of us through the crisis. We have attended weddings of some children and enjoyed pictures of other weddings. We are also supporting each other through the stresses of caring for and dealing with the death of our parents. There are now 14 grandchildren and many more to come. So far, all of them have been breastfed.

Ellen Palmer
St. Cloud, Minnesota

"The 'Breakfast Group,' as it is lovingly referred to by our loved ones, is a strong group of women who know each other well, support and encourage one another, celebrate joy, share pain and challenges, and love one another unconditionally. I feel safe and connected to these friends. The investment we place into the group brings us lifetime security! The more we share, the more we care. None of us were born and raised in this community. When we first began meeting, none of us had relatives in the area. Perhaps our group met a need to have family and we created our own. It is also curious to me that our spouses are not all friends, nor are our children, but they all know that the women in the 'Breakfast Group' love them!"

Jan Miska Keaveny,
St. Cloud, Minnesota
Leader since the 1980s

LLL Breastfeeding Helpline-US: Funding Report

In February, the LLL Alumnae Association sent the Helpline a check for $1,000 to cover the expense of the toll-free phone bill for one month. In order to meet its day-to-day expenses, the Helpline continues to rely on donations from many sources. Many individuals gave generously over the holidays, including one Leader who raised over $1,000 through a holiday *Fannie Mae Candies* fundraiser. There were also many donations received as memorials.

Contributions from World Breastfeeding Week Celebrations totaled over $1,000 and a portion of the funds raised in 2008 has also been designated for the Helpline. Retired Leaders and Alumnae members have given generously as well. A group of retired Leaders in western Massachusetts raised over $400 at a reunion in September 2007. The So. California/Nevada Alumnae donated $100. All of these donations have assisted the Helpline in providing telephone support to more than 1,600 mothers each month.

However, the Helpline only has enough funds to operate for a few more months. To cover the ongoing cost of providing the toll-free Helpline–including the telephone system, continuing education, and human resources to oversee the day-to-day operations–a committee has been working to obtain $100,000 in grant funding. If successful, the Helpline should be able to continue assisting mothers without interruption. Additional donations from the wide variety of other sources should cover any remaining expenses for one year.

The Helpline grant committee is seeking individuals to assist in writing grants. If you are able to help this committee in any way, please contact Sue Steilen at suesteilen@comcast.net or call Sue at (708) 301-0890.

Suzann Coral has been an LLL Leader for 28 years. She has one daughter and four sons. Their ages are 27, 24, 18, 15 and 11. Suzann co-leads meetings with Susan Overton for the Northeast Tampa Group and is currently the Assistant Area Conference Registrar. Over the years, she has been the Tampa Leader Counsel Director, Assistant Area Leaders' Letter Editor, Local Conference Supervisor, Assistant Area Conference Supervisor, AAPL and APL.

The Month Of May Is Important in My LLLife

May is an important month for me. As a Catholic I have a special devotion to Mary the mother of Jesus whom we honor in May. This fits in well with my life in LLL. Our organization's name came from a visit to the Shrine of Our Lady of La Leche.

In May of 1978 I attended my first LLL meeting while pregnant with my first child, Tellina. Our hostess that night, Marcy, was in the process of becoming an LLL Leader and soon became my best friend. I took home a copy of the little blue WOMANLY ART OF BREASTFEEDING and devoured it. I could barely wait for the month to pass so I could attend another LLL meeting.

By May of 1980 I was accredited as an LLL Leader; Marcy and I began our 15-year career as co-Leaders. We did a lot of co-mothering too. Our children grew up as "cousins."

Traveling with Marcy to LLL Conferences was a *blast!* We traveled together all over the state and the country attending at least six LLL International Conferences, sometimes as co-speakers. We both held local and Area leadership positions. I have stayed active on the local level and still help at Area Conferences. Marcy moved on and became a high school boys' soccer coach! Our children are still "cousins."

In May of 2001 my daughter and I were back at Marcy's house, this time to celebrate my Tellina's upcoming wedding. Marcy and her daughter threw the bridal shower in the same living room where we had all met 23 years before.

The very next May my current co-Leader, Susan, called to be sure I could lead the Series Meeting. She said she had an important Italian class or something. When I arrived at Susan's for the meeting, I was shocked to see my daughter there. She and her husband lived in Kentucky! What on earth was she doing standing there in my co-Leader's house with a little bouquet of flowers? She had flown in that morning to tell me this was her first LLL meeting as a mother. She had come to tell me she was expecting my first grandchild. How perfect is that?

Tellina's family moved each time her husband was promoted. So I traveled to Kentucky, Indiana and Ohio where they lived at the time. Tellina's first baby, Matthew, was born in 2002. Ella Mae was born in 2004. Another son, Samuel, came along in 2006. I was able to attend all her births. I stayed with her family for the first month after each baby was born. My youngest sons are homeschooled so they came with me to help with the babies. Tellina's babies were/are breastfed and she attends LLL meetings in the Milford, Ohio area.

May 2008 will mark my first 30 years in La Leche League. I wonder what the next 30 will hold. After Tellina, we had five sons. That could be a lot of daughters-in-law to introduce to La Leche League.

Suzann Corral
Tampa, Florida

World Breastfeeding Week 2008

In celebration of the 2008 Olympics, the World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA) is pleased to announce the slogan for World Breastfeeding Week 2008: Mother Support: Going for the Gold. WBW 2008 calls on all society to support mothers in achieving the gold standard of infant feeding: breastfeeding exclusively for six months, and providing appropriate complementary foods with continued breastfeeding for up to two years or beyond. More and updated information on WBW 2008 can be found on both the LLLI website www.llli.org or the WABA website www.waba.org.

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From the Mailbag

A special thank you to the Leaders who contributed articles to this issue. I received some uplifting messages from readers to share with you.

Got the latest issue this weekend and gotta say, Fran, GREAT JOB! I really enjoyed all the articles.
Thank you for all you do!
Charlotte Walkowski, The Woodlands, Texas

Add me to the list of thank you notes for a lovely issue.
Cecily Harkins, Portland, Oregon

Just a quick note to say that I enjoyed the latest Continuum! It's great to see your work again. Just want you to know I appreciate you!!!
Rosetta Bartels, Inman, Kansas

Thanks for much for tracking down why I did not receive Continuum this past year. Finding the address compatible with US bulk mail solved the mystery. What a joy to read Continuum! I was reminded of receiving LEAVEN as a young mother and Leader and stopping everything to read it. I look forward to receiving more issues in the future. You are doing an excellent job of creating this newsletter. It looks great and I was happy to read about Phoebe's achievement (bat mitzvah) and her pride showed through loud and clear. Neat lady! Ah-h-h, Philadelphia! I'll be there for sure! Thanks again!
June Campbell, Kelly's Island, Ohio

I just finished reading the latest LLL Alum publication and noted item renewal reminders. Why not copy the magazine label idea of putting an expiration date on the mailing label so our aging memories get a little jog each time an issue arrives?
Ann H. Sutherland, Petaluma, CA

Great idea from Ann! See page 3 for more information about the date/code used on the address labels for this issue. Have you thought about writing an article for *Continuum*? Here are ideas suggested by readers who returned the Spring 2007 *Continuum* survey:

- Life Lessons Learned
- Grandparenting; Raising My Grandchild
- Challenges of Retirement
- Communicating with Teens and Young Adults
- Surprising Changes and Stages of a Woman's Life
- What Your Local Alumnae Group Is Doing and Their Fundraisers
- How LLL Philosophy Applies to Your Life Now

I'd love to hear from you! Please send your articles and stories to me at: dereszyn@gte.net or by ground mail. Articles selected for publication may be edited for length, clarity, and adherence to LLL journalistic guidelines. *Send articles for the next issue by May 1, 2008.* As a much-need rain pours down in my part of the country, the calendar reminds me that spring will soon arrive in your part of the world, too. Happy Spring!

Until next time,
Fran

The first day of spring is one thing, and the first spring day is another.
The difference between them is sometimes as great as a month.
Henry Van Dyke, *Fisherman's Luck*, 1899

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Join the Alumnae!

Yes, I want to keep in touch and support the LLL Alumnae Association. Use the short form below or the online Membership Form at: http://alumnae.llli.org/Alumnae/Join.html

Enclosed is:

☐ $20 for year-long membership

☐ $ _____ donation

☐ Check to *LLL Alumnae Association*

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☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ Discover Card

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☐ Active Leader ☐ Retired Leader

☐ Current Member ☐ Former Member

Email: _____

Questions? Contact Susan at: <srgeil@yahoo.com>

Send payment to:

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