The LLL Alumnae Association
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Continuum

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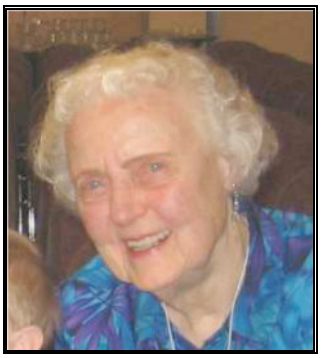
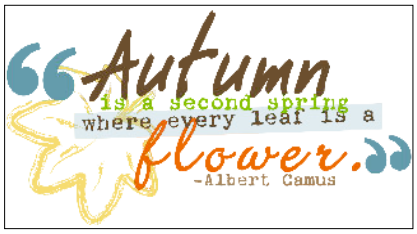
This issue is dedicated to Edwina Froehlich, LLL Co-Founder January 5, 1915 – June 8, 2008



Many a blue eye shines, Edwina Froehlich's eyes have a sparkle that almost crackles! When they do, things start to pop–and La Leche loves it! Articulate, warm-hearted, Edwina is the perfect choice for handling correspondence, or for that matter a telephone call or an impromptu speech on breastfeeding.
from THE LLLOVE STORY, p. 25.

Edwina "had always had a strong belief in the natural order of things and who had had plenty of experience marching to the beat of her own particular music even before she joined with others to form La Leche League.
from THE REVOLUTIONARIES WORE PEARLS, p. 9.



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Memories of Edwina

Over 300 persons–family members, LLL Leaders, LLLI Board Members, LLLI staff (past and present), children, and breastfeeding babies–all gathered to celebrate the life of Edwina Froehlich on July 12th, a beautiful summer afternoon in Chicago. It was a celebration that she would have loved, surrounded by those at the top of her priority list, her three sons, Paul, Dave, and Peter, their wives and her nine grandchildren. Greeting attendees were: photos with her beloved husband, John; photos as a young mother; wedding photos; LLLI Conferences and travel photos; and photos with friends, old and new. Her life was always vibrant, with an optimistic spirit, openness to new ideas, love of learning, and a desire to make other's lives better. The celebration reflected those characteristics in photos, conversations, and tributes by her friends and family. "Do not fear death so much, but rather the inadequate life," (Bertolt Brecht), concluded Edwina's son, Dave Froehlich, a most appropriate way to end the celebration of a woman whose "influence is too profound to fade."

A video was shown that included Edwina talking about her parents. Janet Jendron was one of the speakers and shared these thoughts. "At my first LLLI Board meeting in 1987, I remember being struck by the fact that the Founders all talked about their parents. It struck me that the way the Founders were PARENTED had a lot to do with the nature and quality of LLL and how we grew as an organization. For this reason, I feel the need to say something about Edwina's mother. Edwina had a very independent mother, Anna Hearn. Her son Dave commented, "I know my mother learned about being independent and taking care of her children above all else from her mother who basically raised three girls on her own in Evanston, Illinois. I am not sure how she provided for her family, but she had to be pretty tough to get by on her own." Dave found out later from a cousin that Anna had worked for a bank in Chicago and was given a plaque from the Harris Bank for 20 years of service *without missing one day of work.* This tells me where Edwina got her tenacity! "

(continued on p. 2)

Memories of Edwina *(continued from p. 1)*

Janet continued, "At that same LLLI Board meeting, I spent a lot of time appreciating my dad and mom. My mom couldn't breastfeed me but she was a fabulous mom. I was struck by the tone of acceptance for all mothers––all the Founders had this in common. It reinforced my inclination to approach all mothers with a focus on what we have in common, not how we do things differently. As I used to hear the Founders say, 'Just help the mother breastfeed and then let the baby teach the mother.' In April 2008 Edwina, Mary Ann Cahill and I took the train from Chicago to the Michigan LLL Conference. Edwina was recovering from foot surgery. I can still picture her, flipping her bag over the train tracks as we walked to the station. I commented on how small her bag was. She told me, "I have no choice! And remember, I only had to pack one shoe!"

As we got on the train, there was a woman who noticed Edwina's bag with "LLL" on it and remarked, "I love to see that." I turned around to her and said, "Do you know who these women are?" Somehow she felt the need to defend LLL, and said it was a great organization. I told her who Edwina and Mary Ann were, and she was stunned. The woman was Nancy McDonough, a retired LLL Leader! We asked her to sit with us and she quickly told her girls that she needed to spend time with these women. She told her youngest, "This would be like your meeting Hannah Montana!" We all shared an incredible visit. It was a healing time, and we all walked off the train feeling uplifted and empowered. This is only part of the train trip memory. You can read more about it online at <http://www.carolinasunshine.org/Edwina/edwina.html>"

"Edwina's death in June was a sad event in the life of LLLI. Not only did *The New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal* cover her death, but so did newspapers around the world. Her death was noteworthy not only because she was a remarkable woman but because she was one of the Founders of this remarkable organization."
Jane Tuttle, LLLI Board Chairman, from a talk at US Western Division TEAM08, Phoenix, Arizona, July 2008

Edwina, according to her co-Founders, had an indomitable spirit. When difficulties stood in the way of La Leche League, Edwina said,

We are not going to let this kind of thing get in the way. This is a problem that we are going to have to live through, and work through, and resolve, so that we can continue to do what we originally set out to do—help mothers successfully breastfeed their babies.

An early memory from Pete Froehlich:

Our childhood home of 3332 Rose Street was the first "mailing address" for the League. Mail came to the house, but, was then sorted and distributed to the other Founders for their reply. There was a whole bedroom that was stacked floor to ceiling with brochures, flyers, and pamphlets. It was essentially the League's initial storage locker until Mom determined that my oldest brother, Paul, needed his own room.

She ALWAYS put family first. And, our dining room table was used more for collating, typing, and hole punching than it was for eating meals. The League's "first phone line" was our home phone. As a youth, it seemed there was a phone attached to her left ear. I remember Mom needing neck massages because her head was tilted left to press the phone between her left shoulder and left ear all day long, in an effort to free up her hands to handle the needs of three young boys.

The phrase "multi-tasking" had to have been created with Mom in mind. These are my recollections as a five year old!

Adapted from Dave Froehlich's remarks at the Celebration Service:

The night before Edwina suffered her stroke (on May 25), Dave Froehlich and his wife took Edwina out for dinner. Edwina shared with them her horoscope for the day. Dave said that this was unusual for Edwina to read her horoscope, which read that there were going to be "big changes" for her.

Edwina's comment to them was, "You know, I'm going to be getting rid of this old body soon." And, in conjunction with this, Edwina mentioned her desires for her life with her friends and family.

She was reading the book, The Law of Attraction. She believed that very soon she would have a man in her life. Dave's conclusion was that John Froehlich (Edwina's husband) was the first person that she met in heaven and he had been waiting for her. "Yes," there were big changes for her 24 hours after she read that horoscope."

From Pete Froehlich:

"The amazing thing is, individually, all three sons felt as if we were the center of her universe. Later, as adults, we realized that she somehow was able to find time for a couple million other babies, the whole time making us feel like we were all that mattered. It was her energy, indeed, that made her special. And, she proved to us that Love is not finite."

From *The Wall Street Journal*, June 2008:

Her home became one of the group's official hot lines, with callers at all hours from around the nation. Joan Beck of the Chicago Tribune watched her in action a few years later: "A long extension cord lets Mrs. Froehlich keep up with her housework while she dispenses the blend of encouragement and information the mother needs." Ms. Froehlich stayed involved and was in demand as a speaker. She recently visited Greece. Her oldest son, Paul, is an Illinois State Representative who sponsored a successful bill protecting the right of women to nurse in public. "Mom always found the 25th hour in each day," said her son Paul.

Memorial gifts should be sent to LLLI, Edwina Froehlich Memorial Fund, 957 N. Plum Grove Road, Schaumburg, IL 60173 USA or by visiting www.llli.org.

Nurtured by Edwina

From **Barbara Nicholson,** Founder of Attachment Parenting International (API), as posted on the API web site:

She exemplified what La Leche League was all about; the capacity to share the most up-to-date medical information with warmth, nurturance and wisdom. Thousands of Leaders and parents can testify that hearing her speak was an unforgettable experience–she had a treasure trove of stories from her own mothering experiences, and the experience of counseling so many parents. She will be missed, but we are all so inspired by her example! Even into her 90's she was speaking, advocating, and enjoying life to the fullest. To the Froehlich family we send our deepest love and gratitude for sharing their wonderful mother and grandmother with us all. And some of my final thoughts…Edwina was one of the most balanced people I've ever known.

- *She was always a great listener, yet was able to share herself candidly.*
- *She was a sacrificial person, but took the time to take care of herself emotionally, physically, mentally and spiritually.*
- *She combined vision with attention to the details of what needed to be done to reach that vision.*
- *She never missed an opportunity to talk about her wonderful family - sons, daughters-in-law and grandchildren, without any sense of self-pride or "taking credit."*
- *She shared her faith in words, actions and attitude, without judgment of others whose spirituality might be different.*
- *She was a devoted wife, mother and grandmother… yet still a fiercely independent woman.*
- *She was fully aware of the impact LLL has had on the world, but able to let her ego go, and be fully present in the moment to anyone around her.*

Every moment with her seemed somehow cosmic to me, and I feel her spirit and presence still. And I know that we all do.

Who nurtures the mother? This was the topic for the luncheon speaker, Founder Edwina Froehlich, at our 2001 Area Conference. Edwina says that we are ultimately responsible for nurturing ourselves and that doing so makes us better parents and better people. There was much food for thought, which I would like to share with you in as close to its natural state as possible. Take a cleansing breath and read slowly. Savor the wisdom from our eldest Founder. Edwina began with the necessity of taking care of oneself. She said that we women in La Leche League should be the best at nurturing ourselves. "After all, you do it for the baby all the time." She reminded us to take a look inside and see what needs are there. "Take care of your emotional side. Remember your spirit. There is more to us than our physical body. It's not a luxury. It's a necessity. Children without parents suffer, and people who don't nurture themselves suffer." We see the suffering most vividly when hard times hit. Just as many in the audience were mentally logging the reasons they can't take time for themselves, Edwina switched to a gentle, but firm tone.

"It just takes a few minutes of being with yourself. It's not selfish. If your spouse needed [the time], you'd figure it out. If you knew that your child needed it, you would find the time. Love would make it happen. Young mothers say, 'I don't have enough time. It's not possible.' What you're saying is, 'I don't have enough love.'" Wow! That statement made me sit up. She continued, "'Love thy neighbor as thyself.' Think about that! What does that say about taking care of ourselves?" Okay, Edwina, I'm convinced. For the sake of my family, I should take time to nurture myself. Edwina described how she got some time to herself when she had a baby. "My mother came over every Monday…and gave me an hour or an hour and a half to do whatever I wanted to do. I bolted out the door! Sometimes I just sat on a stool at the pharmacy and had a Coke after a long walk along the waterfront. It was blissful. You don't need a week away, just a little time to be free for a few minutes."

Edwina shared some thoughts on the necessity of taking time to learn from our mistakes instead of repeating the frustrating pattern and becoming resentful. Just as children learn from their mistakes, we need to, too. "You have to set aside time. Ask yourself, 'Why did I get mad? What am I going to do about it?'" She continued, "If you are resenting something you have to do regularly, explore that. Why hate it? If you don't look at the problem, it won't go away." Nurturing yourself will make it easier to live with what you can't change. "If you can't change the situation, change your attitude." As an example, Edwina talked about growing old. "I can't change that I'm growing old. I can't do a lot of stuff, but fighting it and resenting it…what good is that? I have to learn to accept my limitations. I never minded the idea of growing old, but frankly it's the physical limitations that get me."

Criticism is another thing that we are likely to have to learn to live with. Edwina reminds us to follow our hearts. "Criticism hurts and can affect your behavior if you're not following your heart and intuition. If we listen to our inside voices, we are able to turn a deaf ear to criticism." She talked about how changing to please someone doesn't make sense. There is no guarantee that the change would actually please the person and you will have gone against your inner voice. She was quite emphatic, saying, "It doesn't pay to stifle your inner voice." Edwina left us with the gift that comes with age: the perspective of looking back on a long and fulfilling life. "When your family is raised, you want to be able to say, not only did I do a good job on the family, I also did a good job on me." She reminds us that we are ultimately responsible for our own growth and development. Having a supportive spouse makes it easier, but if you don't, Edwina doesn't let you off the hook. She said in her characteristic gentle, firm way, "Don't blame anyone else for not making the time. Some women say, 'My husband wouldn't understand.' I say that's a copout!" Edwina's presence at our Conference added a wonderful dimension. I felt thankful she was willing to travel and share her thoughts on one aspect of mothering that is as pertinent now as it ever was. I left her luncheon speech feeling deeply satisfied and enriched by the meal, by Edwina's practical wisdom and by the wonderful Conference. I wish all leaders could have been there, because nurturing yourself is as important as eating.

Pam Young
Denair, California USA

Originally published in *Grapevine,* Area Leaders' Letter for Northern California and Hawaii, 2002

On the Train with Two Founders

Mary Ann Cahill, Janet Jendron, Edwina Froehlich, and Nancy McDonough on the train

My 55-year-old husband died of cancer in November 2007. He had been sick for three-and-half years during which time my sole focus was on how to save him. Since then, I felt devastated—grieving and generally unable to make many decisions. But, I thought it might do my daughters some good to get out of the house on their spring break, so I planned a two-day trip to Chicago. The girls had never been on a train. It was a lovely break for 8-year-old Callen and 14-year-old Annie. The days were filled with the Field Museum, a performance of *Wicked* and, of course, shopping at The American Girl Place. My heart was heavy. I missed my husband Michael and I had a very uneasy feeling that I should not be away from home, particularly since I have older children in college and now, I was a parent alone.

It was with sadness that I boarded the train on April 3, 2008. Michael would not be there when I arrived home in Bay City. The children and I quickly found our seats and then stood aside as more passengers boarded and walked past us to find their seats. An elderly woman passed and I noticed the familiar mother-baby logo on her bag. I was surprised and thought to myself, "Why would an older person have that bag?" as I spoke out to her and said, "I like that organization." She kept walking, clearly not hearing my comment. Suddenly a younger woman walking behind her responded, "Do you know that organization?" I misread her tone to be critical, and felt the need to defend La Leche League. I launched into a litany of why La Leche League is invaluable.

The woman [Janet Jendron] stopped me in mid-stream, and asked, "Do you know who those women are*?* They're two LLL Founders!" An excitement swelled in my soul as she continued, "Would you like to meet them?" Of course, there was no hesitation. Edwina Froehlich and Mary Ann Cahill were seated just a few rows in front of us. I leaned over into my daughters' faces and said with as much volume and urgency as was possible, "Please, be good! *My meeting these women is just like you had met Hannah Montana right here on this train!"* In sudden and complete understanding of the gravity of the situation, they froze as I moved toward the two women with Janet. Then Janet introduced me. I did feel just like a teenager meeting a rock star, except that the work these women had done was even more important and I told them so.

I bubbled over in excitement and told them of my love for La Leche League and how they had changed my life, how I became involved shortly after my son was born and how they were responsible for my having six beautiful children and nursing them all until THEY were done. They asked me to join them for the trip and I could not believe it. I was joyous.

My girls saw the joy in me as we rearranged our seats so that Edwina and I faced Janet and Mary Ann. We moved the girls so they were in the seat behind us. My daughters politely introduced themselves to the group, returned to their seats, and quietly passed the time. I settled into my seat and knew that I was in for the thrill of a lifetime. I was able to tell the Founders of La Leche League how was my husband who had first called La Leche League when nurses tried to feed our first child sugar water in the hospital. It just did not make sense to us. But I had been a teacher and Mike was a lawyer; what did we know? A Leader showed up at the hospital within an hour with the literature and sources to back us up. Michael was so impressed. We learned all we could though LLL publications and Dr. Sears' books. I also attended Series Meetings. We excitedly shared our discoveries. It all fit together like a puzzle; it was common sense. Soon, I became a Leader and a lactation consultant and my third, fourth, fifth, and sixth babies were born at home. We chattered about their children and how proud they are. These women exuded an intelligence, charm, beauty, and sincerity. I learned about their families and lives. Edwina glowed as she talked about her three sons. Periodically Janet and I would laugh about my initial reaction to her—I had somehow felt the need to defend LLL to Janet, who had devoted 30 years of service to LLL, including being on the LLLI Board, the Area level, and now with the LLL Alumnae Association. Now she was traveling with Mary Ann and Edwina to the LLL Michigan Conference.

I shared my grief over my husband and learned that Mary Ann had lost her husband at the same point in life. *(continued on p. 5)*

On the Train with Two Founders *(continued on p. 4)*

This was incredible to me and made our chance meeting seem like destiny. They comforted me and helped me. We connected on so many levels and had the rapport of old friends reuniting. The trip passed as if in the blink of an eye. As my children and I said goodbye to Edwina, Mary Ann, and Janet, we headed to our car.

I felt changed. Some-how, I was healed, just a bit, I felt stronger, just a bit, and I even felt a little hope. My children saw a big change. They had not seen me that smiley or excited in a very long time. When we returned home, they excitedly told all our friends and relatives that mom was crazy excited because of the ladies she met on the train and they were very, very important people! As I reflect with sadness in hearing of Edwina's passing, I am struck by two things. First, if my life was so changed by her work, imagine the thousands of other women whom she has touched. And secondly, yes, her legacy will live on, but she is an individual, brilliant, beautiful soul whose personal contact had the power to connect, befriend, console, excite, and change me in a short time, in an unplanned meeting, on a train out of Chicago. The day I visited with these women, I realized that I had left La Leche League behind in my life. I thought I was too old and had passed out of that stage in my life. When I met them on the train, MaryAnn was 80, Edwina was 93, and Janet a mere 60! If these women were still traveling to conferences and had so much to offer, maybe I should not let La Leche League slip away from me. In fact, maybe they could still teach me and maybe I still had something to offer. After all, I am only 50! When I returned home, I found the LLL Alumnae Web site. I have since sent in my dues and am very proud to be a member once again.

Nancy J. McDonough
Bay City, Michigan USA

To see more photos and read more memories of Edwina online, visit: http://www.carolinasunshine.org/Edwina/edwinamem.htm

It's Tough to Say Goodbye

I loved reading [on the Web] Nancy McDonough's perspective of meeting the Founders on the train! Here's my perspective. On the day before the 2008 Michigan Area Conference, I was in my car in the parking lot of the Kalamazoo train station, waiting for the train from Chicago and watching the meter-maid get closer as she wrote tickets. I fished out some dimes. I inserted the coins into the meter when he was two cars away. Then I heard the train approach. So I crossed the street to meet Edwina, Mary Ann and Janet. As passengers disembarked from the train, the first people I noted were a woman and two girls carrying American Girl Place bags. They were looked very happy and excited; I smiled as they passed me. I wanted to speak to them but they were engrossed in each other. Finally, Mary Ann, Edwina, and Janet got off the train and they hugged me in welcome. We crossed the street, loaded their luggage and tucked Edwina's long frame into my small car. They excitedly told me the story of meeting Nancy McDonough on the train and how the time just flew by. I wished I had a town car for the drive to the Area Conference in Grand Rapid to chauffeur the Founders, these "LLL Rock Stars!" After the conference was over and we went back at the train station on Sunday morning, Edwina let Mary Ann and Janet board the train before her. She hugged me as the engineer yelled to "keep all that crying and kissing on the platform or get on the train." Edwina whispered to me that she didn't know if or when we'd see each other again, thanked me for the weekend, and climbed aboard. I couldn't see my friends to wave, so I walked back to my car and waited for the train to leave. I sat there and cried–partly because of her comment and partly because the weekend was over and the adrenaline was fading. It was tough saying goodbye–no International Conference to look forward to and really not knowing when you'll be together again.

Laura Probst
Lawton, Michigan, USA

Soon after Edwina's passing, my husband Don and I went out on a lunch date. I told Don about Edwina's love of a cosmopolitan cocktail. I also told him about wearing pearls to honor her. Several hours later when we returned home, he went to our safe, took out my pearls, and hung them around my neck, over the t-shirt and capris I had changed into. Then he went to the bar and mixed two cosmopolitans. We settled down to read the weekend paper, *The Wall Street Journal*. He exclaimed, "Oh, look!" There was a recent photo of Edwina, smiling at us both along with a lengthy write-up. I felt quite emotional about the personal remembrance, which he set up for us.

Mary Baker
Thousand Oaks, California USA

When I was a relatively new Leader and a new District Advisor (DA), I was standing in the back of a room at an International Conference listening to Edwina share that she was going to return to Group leadership in her town, Franklin Park. Her husband had remodeled the basement into a finished family room for meetings. All of a sudden I felt a sinking feeling in my stomach. She would be in my District! I was going to be the DA of a FOUNDER! Gulp! Edwina, like all of the Founders, has always been "one of us." We may have put Edwina on a pedestal, but she never put herself there. At any LLL gathering, Edwina would introduce herself: "I'm Edwina Froehlich. I have three wonderful sons and three wonderful daughters-in-law who are all wonderful mothers!"

Katy Lebbing
Villa Park, Illinois USA

June Campbell wrote: *Memories of years in La Leche League always warm my heart. Renewal of old LLL friendships occurred a couple of years ago when Leaders found us on the Internet at http://www.campbellcottage.com. A group of six Leaders visited us for a weekend, perfectly timed since our home had recently suffered major water damage from a winter leak while we were in Florida. We were temporarily living in a condo while almost half of our house was being rebuilt. I cannot express how wonderful it was re-connecting with these six old friends, and especially during our house emergency. Friendships, which began 35 years ago at LLL meetings, seemed to have never suffered from a gap of 20 years as they helped me through the crisis with our house. Then some of us shared the 2004 Savannah Alumnae adventure (and later the 2006 San Antonio trip). Isn't it great how friendships begun in LLL can sustain us much beyond the nursing years? I am so grateful they found me and that LLL continues to influence our lives.*

You Have Cancer and These Are Your Choices

Many times I thought about what I would write for *Continuum* to share my recent experience with breast cancer and mastectomy. But I have had "writer's block." Now I realize that is because I don't have a really interesting story. It was just so simple. "You have cancer and these are your choices," gave me only momentary pause before I knew what I wanted to do to rid myself of cancer.

My cancer was diagnosed by mammogram at the very earliest stage possible: ductal carcinoma in situ (DCIS). It had not spread outside the milk ducts (Stage 0), so it was not necessary to remove lymph nodes. My choices were: (1) Lumpectomy followed by radiation treatments for six weeks of five days per week or (2) Simple mastectomy. The five-year survival rate is the same with either method, although there is a small chance of another cancer in the same breast. Also, with radiation, reconstruction is more difficult because of damage to the soft tissue (muscle and skin). Reconstruction is readily possible with mastectomy. I chose mastectomy. Because it was DCIS at Stage 0, no chemotherapy was necessary. Because I am 70 years old (young!), Tamoxifen was not advised.

[Ed. Note: This drug decreases cancer risk and is mainly used to inhibit growth in estrogen receptor-positive breast cancer.]

The surgery was pretty easy, much easier and shorter recovery for me than C-sections and hysterectomy. The next morning I was released from the hospital and felt good enough to stop for lunch. A few weeks later a couple of very understanding and helpful ladies provided a prosthesis which I use with my regular bras; and our lives went on as before.

We decided to keep the information limited to only a few very close friends and family who have kept our secret, so we haven't had to deal with nosey neighbors, "friendly" gossips and the experiences of others everyone might want to tell. So we have had an easy recovery without outside stressors. Since I look and act "normal," even I forget about it until I get ready for bed and look in the mirror. Even then, it isn't so bad. My dear husband seems OK, maybe because he always seemed to prefer the other breast anyway. However, I did hope I would hear him say, "I love YOU, not just your breast." While he never voiced that, his constant companionship and support told me what I needed to know.

Having breast cancer and being cured was not an emotionally wrenching experience for me. My breasts nursed and nurtured our babies many years ago. My breasts provided pleasure and satisfaction. They did what they were supposed to do. I was fulfilled. Maybe that is why I didn't mind giving up one.

I urge my friends to get regular annual mammograms and to not be afraid. You have more to fear by not knowing that cancer may be growing in your breasts! To all my LLL sisters: Your love and support were with me, even though you did not know it. Thank you for your loving spirits, which helped me through it. There are no better friends than LLL friends! My life is really wonderful!

June Campbell
Kelleys Island, Ohio USA

June and her husband, Bill, are retired. They own and operate *Campbell Cottage Bed and Breakfast* on a small island in the middle of Lake Erie.

Philadelphia Trip: Space Available!

Still deciding about going to Philadelphia on Thursday, October 30 to Sunday, November 2, 2008? There are still openings and time for you to sign up. From past trips, Susan Switzer raved, "I'll go anywhere with this crowd." Sharon Fairborn said, "Nothing can be as unique as our group." Those who joined us on previous trips to Savannah and San Antonio enjoyed an exciting, weekend full of fun, friendship, history, art, music and good food. There's still time to be with the group in the "City of Sisterly Love." More information about the itinerary, accommodations and remaining fees are in the last issue of *Continuum* or online at: http://alumnae.llli.org. For additional information, contact Phoebe Kerness, Trip Coordinator, at: pjmkdd@comcast.net or call Phoebe at 912-897-9261.

(Photo: *Love Park*, Philadelphia)

Book Review: The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down: A Hmong Child, Her American Doctors, and the Collision of Two Cultures

Rarely do I find a book difficult to put down. Award winning reporter and author, Anne Fadiman, beautifully shares the true story of a Hmong family's experience with Northern California's Mercer County health care system that was described by some as the "best in the world." The Hmong are a nomadic, pre-literate society with strong family ties. They originated in the mountains of Southeast Asia where many Hmong helped the USA during the Vietnam conflict.

The reader learns the political history of these families and their unwilling immigration to the US. Examples of their fearfully heard rumors about the US medical system are: blood is casually taken from people, including children (the Hmong believe that the body contains a finite amount of blood that is not replaceable); doctors anesthetize patients and in so doing put patients' souls at large, leading to illness or death; and when Hmong are admitted to the hospital, doctors cut the "spirit-strings" from their wrists, thus disturbing their "life-souls." American doctors, in turn, often consider the Hmong to be ignorant, backward, and too reliant on unacceptable practices. You may wonder, as I did, what choices you would make if you were Nao Kao or Foua Lee (the parents) and if Lia was your daughter in this strange country. I recommend this book to those interested in the culture of medicine and both how it interfaces between different cultures as well as the power dynamics in the doctor-patient relationship. I was deeply inspired by this "uneducated" family's devotion to their chronically ill child. Fadiman writes in a way I can't imagine–there is no judgment. I could understand the medical way of thinking (although not agree with it). I could understand the deep love and "primitive" way of mothering as well.

I look for easy answers and for people to "get along." This book reminds me of how there are many ways to look at something. The challenge is to create a bridge where differences may be expressed. This is so hard to do when there is a lack of trust and respect. The author suggests ways health care providers (HCPs) can improve care with patients from different backgrounds and cultures. When the Hmong family moved to a different culture, they met challenges. Those of us who were born in the US and have lived here all of our lives may also face challenges when dealing with the same health care system. We may be familiar with the system and know what it involves yet feel the need to speak up when our own beliefs are not mainstream or in agreement with the HCPs. This calls to mind my own experiences through the years when I dealt with HCPs and how difficult it had been to stand up for baby-led weaning, the family bed, etc. I am also reminded of how much more Western medicine has to learn when it comes to a sense of family and the human heart. This book would make an exciting book club selection or a gift. I found it to be a fascinating read as well as timely with our country's growing diversity!

Louise Cox
Windsor Locks, Connecticut USA

Reflecting on Seasons of Leadership

Cindy Suda was accredited in Colton, California and is a long-time Leader. She and her family moved to Southern Oregon in 1994. In the past, she served as Area Leaders' Letter Editor for two years and was also a member of the Area Conference staff. Cindy writes: *Primarily I have been focusing my LLL career on serving at the most grassroots level by meeting new mother's needs on the phone and at monthly Series Meetings. My husband Norm and I just celebrated our 30th wedding anniversary and are blessed to have an awesome couple of people in our lives: a son, Brian who will be 25 this November, and a daughter-in-law Emily, 22. I had the most incredible experience at our August Series Meeting that I just had to share it with Continuum readers.*

Why I'm Still Doing What I Do or My Morning of Bliss

August marked a big milestone for me when I attended my first LLL meeting twenty-five years ago. Wow, that seems hard to believe! The baby I carried inside me to that meeting is a grown married man completing grad school and living 3,000 miles away on the opposite side of the country. And here I am, still leading LLL meetings. It seems strange to write my name of the sign-in sheets, especially listing my child's age as very possibly older than some of the *mothers* there! I some-times wonder why I'm doing this.

Not being able to model ways to respond and meet my child's needs with a real live baby or toddler makes leading meetings more of a challenge. I have to tell myself that Edwina Froehlich was leading meetings well into her 80s. I have to remind myself that if I help just one mother and baby, then what I am doing has great value. That was why I wanted to become a Leader–that was my goal. I know that doing what I do has truly made a difference in the lives of countless mothers and babies. My "paycheck" has always been the joy I feel watching these babies grow into incredible young adults.

But at this month's meeting, I received the most special Leader bonus! A Group mother with three-month-old twin boys came to the meeting. In my experience, mothers of multiples may make it to one meeting, if that, after their babies are born. The fact that this mom has been to three LLL gatherings with both her sons is remarkable to me. This morning, the mother was anxious to talk about the crying of one of the boys. Was it colic or reflux? When he started to cry, she picked him up to try to soothe him, only to have her other son begin to cry. *(continued on p. 8)*

Why I'm Still Doing What I Do or My Morning of Bliss *(continued from p. 7)*

Not having enough arms, she put one son down in order to pick up the other–and you guessed it, he wasn't happy about that! I casually mentioned I had a second set of hands if she needed them. Much to my surprise, she handed me the "fussier" son and he and I spent an incredible morning leading that meeting together.

Now truthfully my mind went into standby mode at times, especially when he would flash me his beautiful smile. Once I got home, I realized that I never did talk about memberships, though I did manage to mention where the bathroom was located! It had been *so* long and it was so delightful to be able to comfort a fussy baby instead of just talk about it! Towards the end of the meeting I'd put him in the colic hold and could feel his whole body yielding to sleep.

My whole body felt at peace and very relaxed. It was as if the prolactin was back again! I handed a little bundle of warm, contented dreamland back to his mother and carried the joy of my morning filled with bliss throughout my day…the most valuable reward on earth!

Cindy Suda
Grants Pass, Oregon USA

News from LLLI: Hats Off to Tania, LLL Leader in Bulgaria

Tania Ruseva of Bulgaria is one of thousands of LLL Leaders worldwide who is a shining example of multi-tasking. Her great work includes leading two LLL Groups, working with six Leader Applicants, translating LLLI materials into Bulgarian, and raising five-year-old Maya with her husband, Borislav. From information Tania has gathered, it is apparent that mothers in Bulgaria desperately need more resources available in their native language. Such materials are an essential part of ensuring that the 95% of Bulgarian mothers who initiate breastfeeding continue past the early months. Tania has translated two LLLI brochures, one about the early days of breastfeeding and the other about breastfeeding and employment, and was able to find graphic designers to donate their time to work on these projects. Tania is just one example of the many Leaders worldwide who need funding for translations, one of the core projects in the Strategic Plan for La Leche League International.
Tania planned many activities for World Breastfeeding Week. One of the projects was to create a video entitled, "La Teta…to give the breast is to give life." The short version is online on You Tube:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ttAvhsckqe4 >
LLL of Bulgaria shares more details: "A small Bulgarian freelancer producer company, Welldone, offered their help to shoot a video, promoting breastfeeding. Together with La Leche League Bulgaria this short clip was produced and shot on July 18th, 2008 in Sofia. A well-known Bulgarian singer donated one of her songs, *Sea of Tenderness*, which is gentle one for this clip. It took some enthusiasm, ten mothers, who volunteered for the video with their babies, very little money, a whole bunch of friends (of Welldone productions), who worked for free and lent us a camera and the studio, Vania Kostova (the singer), who gave us her gentle song for free, and of course, our friends Welldone productions and La Leche League Bulgaria."

Cecily Harkins, LLL International Division, says, "One prominently featured mother is LLL Leader, Tania, a dynamo of ideas, energy and media outreach. She is the dark-haired woman who faces the camera mid-way through the video and also the woman who smiles at the camera at the end."
Ed. Note: Let us know what you think of the YouTube video.

Alumnae Membership Report

Since July 2007 the LLL Alumnae Association has operated independently from LLLI. At that time, the membership fee was set at $20 per year. I am pleased to report that finances are in good order; membership dues will remain the same. Donations to the LLL Breastfeeding Helpline–US have been made on behalf of the Alumnae with the goal to continue to help mothers and babies. After finances are further evaluated, we are hoping to make another contribution. Organization of the membership database of current and former Alumnae members has taken place. *Continuum* is being published three times a year on a consistent schedule and has been mailed to names on the configured database using former and current members. The database is in order and mailing lists can be generated for Alumnae reunions or functions. Beginning with this issue, *Continuum* will be mailed only to paid members. Thank you to all readers who checked for expiration dates and mailed dues to Susan Geil, Alumnae Treasurer. Please continue to check for the expiration date written on the address section of each issue. We are working on a notification system to use in the future to notify members before memberships expire. In March 2007, the Alumnae Council set forth ideas for establishing a structure for the organization. We anticipate the announcement of a new Alumnae Coordinator before the end of the year. A job description and a response form are on page 5 of this issue. The Council looks forward to working with the Coordinator and completing a strategic plan that provides benefits to Alumnae members and as well as ongoing support of La Leche League.

Sue Steilen
Membership Coordinator

LLL Alumnae Association Transition

This is a transition time for the Alumnae as Sue Steilen mentioned in her article on page 4. Transitions are exciting, challenging, fun and difficult. So much is happening in LLL and the Alumnae Association has the ability to be a very important part of breastfeeding support. I have decided to step down as coordinator at this time. We need to look for someone to take us into the future. I have been honored to be a part of such a talented group of women. It's been a pleasure to work with the Alumnae Council, LLLI Conference volunteers and other Leaders whom I have met during the past two years. I'm confident that we will find a new Coordinator who will enthusiastically and lovingly take the Alumnae Association into the future. Below is the job description and response form. Share this information with a Leader(s) who would be interested or consider yourself for the position. Reply by November 7, 2008. I look forward to communicating with anyone interested.

Marilyn Thompson
Plymouth, Minnesota USA

LLL Alumnae Coordinator Job Description

The LLL Alumnae Association is seeking an energetic volunteer Coordinator who can devote about 10 to 15 hours per week on Alumnae work. The LLL Alums are in an exciting new phase–financially independent from LLLI, reshaping our structure, and setting a course for a sound and vibrant future.

Coordinator qualities:

- Good organizational skills
- Ability to delegate and work comfortably with other volunteers
- Positive outlook and good sense of humor (the Alumnae believe in fun as well as hard work!)
- Broad network of Alumnae members (active and/or retired LLL Leaders; active and/or retired LLL members)
- Appreciation of teamwork and collaboration
- Email access is a must

Coordinator responsibilities:

- Leading the restructuring process, in collaboration with current Alumnae Council members and in alignment with the Association's financial independence
- Recruiting, overseeing and communicating with Alumnae Council members who will be focusing on membership, finances and budget, resource development, public relations, and programs and activities
- Assuring that LLL Alumnae Association goals and budget are set and reviewed annually, written materials and external communications offer a positive reflection of the organization, and questions and concerns from Alumnae members/retired Leaders are responded to in a timely and respectful manner
- Communicating and coordinating Alumnae involvement with the LLLI Development department as well as other LLL entities and areas
- Scheduling and planning one to two Alumnae Council or special Alumnae team meetings per year, budget permitting

Interested candidates: **contact Marilyn Thompson by November 7, 2008** at: marilyn_cinnamon@comcast.net. Please provide the following information with your response:

Name: _____ Fax: (____)_____

Address: _____ City_____ State___ ZIP_____

Email: _____Phone: (_____)_____ (home); (____) _____(cell)

Past LLL Experience: _____

Present LLL Position and/or Leader status: _____

Alumnae involvement or experience: _____

Questions you may have about the position: _____

Voice Changes with Pregnancy and Lactation

A mother who is a classically trained singer recently called LLL about changes in her voice and wondered is she should wean her baby. Several Professional Liaison (PL) Leaders discussed this question. I had suggested that the hormone relaxin might play a role in voice changes. This hormone allows muscles, tendons, and ligaments to stretch, allowing for pregnancy growth. Many women who have lot pregnancy weight have noted they still have larger hip and shoe measurements. The curve of the eyeball changes, so it is not a best time to get new contact lenses after recovering from pregnancy.

During lactation, the body is estrogen poor–a normal condition. This inhibits ovulation and has a natural contraceptive effect. Mucous membranes are affected by hormones and the vocal cords are no exception. Singers may note varied changes premenstrually or with lactation which may include the voice "breaking," difficulty with certain pitches, ease of flexibility singing certain scales and/or arpeggios, breathiness, and weak voice. Many singers prefer not to perform extensively during the premenstrual phase of their cycle and may be more conservative while lactating. Not all women will notice such changes but if they do note changes during their cycle, they will probably note them while lactating. Other factors may cause changes to the voice such as pre- and post-menopausal hormonal shifts and pregnancy. Progesterone and estrogen can cause vocal cord tissues to swell. This changes the quality of the voice. Upper ranges of notes may be hard to reach, warm ups may be more difficult and some upper voice notes may be lost. Compensation by the head, neck and throat muscles may damage the voice, perhaps permanently. Such difficulties call for singers to seek expert attention from a laryngologist or ear/nose/throat physician with special training in voice disorders.

Pregnancy strains, sometimes even separates the abdominal muscles. Some singers may need special vocal coaching and/or bodywork during pregnancy to avoid compensatory muscle use which could be voice damaging. Some singers perform through pregnancy but note problems after the fourth or fifth month. Obviously, after childbirth, some "reconditioning" is needed to assist the body back to normal. Singing helps this, as does leg lifts, crunches and Pilates work.

Gastroesophageal reflux (GERD) is common in pregnant singers. It can cause a "tickle" in the throat and cough. Singers may use unhealthy muscle compensation, which can cause vocal cord strain and damage vocal fold mucosa. At the very least, GERD makes singing harder.

The stresses and fatigue of childcare, loss of sleep and less energy can have a "whole-body" effect on voice. Carrying the extra weight of the baby (slings would be great here!), diaper bags, or car seat is not only fatiguing but poor body mechanics can cause an imbalance in the larynx. Women must learn to breathe properly when lifting heavy objects since breath holding, especially while vocalizing, can damage vocal cord folds.

Some combinations of oral contraceptives can also cause a temporary lowering of the voice making higher ranges difficult to reach. Singers who perform in other countries should be careful to fill their over-the-counter prescriptions in the United States (US). Oral contraceptives from outside the US may be less regulated and may contain androgenic agents, which can permanently lower the voice.

Obviously, we know of many vocalists who take their breastfed babies with them as they perform or tour and they don't seem to have any problems. Perhaps they have enough sleep, get sufficient breaks and rest, have enough help, eat nutritiously or change the type of music, temp and range of their voice.

Judie Gubala,
Rocky Hill, Connecticut USA

This article owes many thanks to the Eastern United States (EUS) PL Leaders for providing much of this information. Of valuable assistance was the Web site www.operamom.com which contains very helpful information by Kate Emerich who is a Voice Pathologist, vocologist and Singing Voice Specialist.

LLLI Physician's Seminar

On August 15 - 16 in Providence, Rhode Island, US, the information-rich Physicians Seminar was attended by about 50 medical associates. According to Director of Education, Carol Kolar, the program was wonderful. Carol said she learned much during the Vitamin D session including the fact that we spend 98% of our day indoors when we need a minimum of 30 minutes of sun (in a swimsuit and without sunscreen) a day to produce enough Vitamin D. Carol reported that she also learned that methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus (MERSA), the flesh-eating bacteria, is killing more people than AIDS. It resists antibiotics. It is found everywhere, from nurseries to sporting fields and is of great concern in the context of c-sections and mastitis.

Moving? Remember to Notify Alums

Add the Alumnae to those you notify of a new address. Don't miss an issue of *Continuum*. Bulk mail is not forwarded. Send changes to Sue Steilen, Alumnae Membership Coordinator. Thank you!

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
803-941-7089
<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
<poselka1945@att.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

From the Mailbag

As I reflect on the coming fall, the autumn colors on the liquid amber trees in my backyard, and harvesting the tall corn in the vegetable garden next month, the season speaks to me that this *is* and *has been* a time of change for La Leche League and readers on many levels. A Founder is no longer with us. Deep sadness fills our hearts whether we met Edwina in person or were in awe of her as one of the Founders we had not yet met. Many readers have lost an elderly parent, friend or loved one or are dealing with a family member's long-term health condition or their own. Another change is that the Alumnae Association has been separate from the LLLI Office for one year! As June Campbell mentions in her article, it is important to get regular health screenings and to listen to your body. Edwina was an advocate of taking care of oneself no matter what age you are. Health screenings can catch problems early, especially cancer. And sometimes you can't "hear" silent health issues such as high blood pressure, an elevated cholesterol/blood sugar, or a kidney function abnormality! I found out this summer from a bone density study, that my bones show low calcium, just like my mother and aunt experienced. So now I have to take a calcium supplement twice a day and attend daily weight-resistant exercise classes. That's an example of a silent change in my body speaking to me to modify what I do. This means I lost the freedom to have mornings free for other activities. Now I go to those classes to stay healthy. I grieved at knowing that I had to bow out of morning meetings for Area Conference planning when they start this fall. At first I felt guilty that I let the committee down when I told them about the change. Now, I try to take a "big picture" attitude—that there are other Leaders on the committee and perhaps new ones will join to assume responsibilities without burdening others. There will be meetings set for weekends so I can continue to feel connected and help LLL.

I am grateful to Janet Jendron for sharing comments relating to Edwina's Celebration of Life and to Pam Oselka for comments and news from LLLI that are included in this issue of *Continuum.* I feel the Alumnae Association has been blessed to have Marilyn Thompson as the Coordinator for almost three years. I do look forward to the announcement of a new Coordinator to guide us into the future.

Comments I received from readers about the last issue:

Gail Gesley wrote: *Another Continuum where the lead article, "The Empty Nest," speaks directly to me as my youngest leaves the nest this fall to attend college out of state. Since I work with the US Western Division Events Network, the excerpt on Eleanore Ryan becoming convention coordinator would be perfect for me to share with Leaders who help plan Area Conferences. The article mentioned how Eleanore managed to combine family and conference responsibilities back in the early days of LLL. Leaders still look for ways to meet that same challenge in today's world. Thank you.*

Louise Cox wrote: *It was lovely to see my article, "The Empty Nest," in print and I'm hoping you will receive responses. It was also so refreshing to read the whole issue. Each article was delicious. I especially appreciated Francine's article on divorce, a topic many in LLL deny. And Barbara Gillentine's on grandparenting. This is what I've been so hungry for…I feel renewed. I appreciate your mentioning the Smithsonian article and everything else you wrote to spark our enthusiasm for the next issue.*

Mary Baker wrote: *I especially enjoyed your interview with Dr. Eleanore Ryan as well as "The Joys and Challenges of Grandparenting," particularly since we are just home from our elder daughter's home. Thanks for doing the Continuum so skillfully.*

Due to limited space, these anticipated articles, "When Grandma Becomes Mother" and "Anniversary Reunion and Alumnae Fundraising," will be published in a future issue. Send articles and photos 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. *Submit articles for the next issue by January 15, 2009.*

Until next time,

Fran *(published September 5, 2008)*

Winter is an etching, spring a watercolor, summer an oil painting and autumn a mosaic of them all. Stanley Horowitz

La Leche League of So. California/Nevada

This is your membership reminder:

Look at the address section here before you read this issue. If your membership has expired or expires by the end of 2008, renew now. **Only paid-up and renewed members will receive the next issue in January 2009.** You cannot renew through LLLI or when you pay Leader dues. Memberships are handled by our own Treasurer (see below), since the Alums now operate separately from the LLLI Office. Your support and timely renewal is appreciated!

Join the Alumnae!

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

Enclosed is:

- ☐ $20 for year-long membership
- ☐ $ _____ donation
- ☐ Check to *LLL Alumnae Association*

Dues are $20/year.

Send payment to:

Susan Geil, LLL Alumnae Treasurer
4868 N. Hermitage Ave., Chicago, IL 60640

Current LLL status:

☐ Active Leader ☐ Retired Leader

☐ Current Member ☐ Former Member

Name _____

Address_____

City _____

State/Province _____

ZIP/Postal Code _____Country_____

Phone (_____) _____

Email: _____

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