The LLL Alumnae Association
http://alumnae.llli.org

Continuum

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This issue is dedicated to Betty Wagner Spandikow, LLL Co-Founder

September 27, 1923 – October 26, 2008

Hearing of the recent deaths of two Co-Founders makes me appreciate, even more deeply, who they were and the way they gave themselves to helping mothers. I treasure every moment I've spent with them, and cannot help but wish we had more time with these wonderful mentors and role models, even to the point of showing us how to be good grandmothers. Martha Sears, Dana Point, California from LEAVEN, Issue 4, 2008

Martha summed up the feeling of many of us upon hearing of Betty's passing. Below are comments made by Mary Ann Cahill, Judy Torgus and Mary Lofton at the November 14, 2008 Celebration of Life Service for Betty.

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Memories of Betty

Betty had many wonderful traits that endeared her to us, but one that stood out increasingly for me as I worked with her was her openness, her willingness to share. There was no ego in Betty. She was readily accessible to others and an excellent listener. She sought their opinions and ideas and, where possible, put them into effect. I truly believe this characteristic contributed greatly to the growth of the League. Mothers felt welcomed and respected. They wanted to be a part of this organization. Working together, they/we tapped heretofore hidden talents and accomplished miracles. It's a reason to celebrate, a lasting legacy, a joy to remember!

Mary Ann Cahill, LLL Co-Founder

A Leader among Leaders – A Mentor and a Friend

Betty was my friend for almost 50 years. We met in 1960 when I was attending La Leche League meetings with my first baby—my oldest son, Tom. Betty already had six children, and her youngest at the time was Dorothy, who Betty described as a "clingy" toddler, who did not like to be separated from her mom. In those days, mothers did not bring "older" babies to meetings. Nowadays, mothers bring babies or toddlers of all ages to meetings. So Betty was not attending regular LLL meetings very often. I got to know her better once I started helping out by responding to letters from mothers and sending out the loose-leaf copies of THE WOMANLY ART OF BREASTFEEDING, which mothers from all over the country were ordering for $2.00 each. I would pick up the books and postage from Betty's house because at that time she was the Treasurer. And of course we would chat about our families and what was going on in LLL. *(continued on p. 2)*

A Leader among Leaders–A Mentor and a Friend *(con't. from p. 1)*

In 1964, after LLL held its first Convention in downtown Chicago, the Co-Founders recognized that this organization they started to help mothers in their local communities was taking off all over the world. So some of us were asked to join the "Executive Board" to help out in various ways. After that, I worked more closely with Betty and we would actually meet together almost every week. I continued to do a variety of volunteer jobs for LLL and attended many different meetings and Conferences with Betty over the years. I recall traveling to Canada with her in the early 1970s to attend an Area Conference. I remember we stayed in different people's homes and had dinner one evening at the home of Margaret Bennet-Alder, ACL of Canada at the time.

In 1976, when my kids were all in school, I began working at the LLL office in Franklin Park in the Publications Department. This is when I really got to know Betty because she was the Executive Director. Betty had a natural instinct for managing people and she set up policies that were far ahead of their time. Betty said she liked to hire mothers because they knew how to get things done. Today we call that "multi-tasking." Betty encouraged her employees to work flexible hours to meet the needs of their children. Other management experts took years to discover that was the kind of atmosphere that built loyalty and commitment. She closed the office between the holidays of Christmas and New Year's because she believed that it was important for families to spend that time together. Today we see many other businesses doing that, too.

These are just some examples of the creative ways that Betty was instinctively able to lead a staff that grew to more than 60 employees at one time. The truth is that she really cared deeply about each one of us and she taught us to care about each other. When an employee or a family member had a serious problem, Betty didn't hesitate to allow them to take time off. She didn't need a Family Leave Act to tell her this was the right thing to do. And she knew that somehow the work would get done because others would fill in and help out—because she had taught us to care about each other. If she thought another employee could help out in a crisis, she sent that employee off to help. Again, she knew that somehow the work would get done but it was the people who were most important.

Janet Jendron & Betty
at a past LLLI Conference

In spite of being such a kind and caring person, Betty's instinctive leadership skills brought the organization through a lot of challenging times. Many times, Betty's common sense and down-to-earth approach helped her sort out the issues and resolve the problem. And she also knew how to delegate responsibility when others were more knowledgeable about a situation than she was. In those cases, she stayed in the background, supporting and encouraging those who stepped in to help.

When I started writing this, I thought I was going to focus on some of Betty's practical mothering advice which was often found in her regular *LLL News* column, "Notes from Grandma." She was very proud of the fact that she was the first Co-Founder to become a grandmother! But when I looked through some of those columns, I found many of her suggestions would not hold up in our "safety conscious" world today! For instance, she suggested that a fussy baby might nap better if you put her down in a basket of clean laundry that was warm from the dryer! And she strongly encouraged tucking a sleeping baby into bed with an older sibling to encourage the baby to sleep for a few more minutes. But Betty's overall theme was finding ways to keep a baby happy while caring for the needs of the rest of the family. And that's a message that still holds true for busy mothers today.

La Leche League was very lucky to have Betty Wagner Spandikow as one of its Co-Founders. And the organization was lucky to have her as its Executive Director for 19 years. Her family was lucky to have her as their mother and grandmother and great-grandmother. And all of us were very, very lucky to have her as a friend.

I'd like to close with a quote from Betty that was published in the book LEARNING A LOVING WAY OF LIFE. I think it represents the kind of wisdom that Betty shared with us throughout her life, the way she handled the challenges she faced in her own life, and I think it would be her advice to each of us as to the way we should live our lives:

"We often look for that bluebird of happiness in the future. We are so busy thinking how much better the future is going to be that we miss the present. We don't take time to enjoy what we have. Each stage in life is challenging and demanding in one way or another. But each is special and should be savored, because when it is gone it will never return." ☙

Judy Torgus
River Grove, Illinois USA

A Practical Piece of Advice

My husband and I met Betty in 1975 at an LLL talk on parenting when we were together with her on a panel discussion. We so enjoyed her stories of family life and good sense about raising children. She was very devoted to her family and talked about each one with great love. But where I really came to know Betty was in 1980 when I came to work at the LLLI office. Betty was very good at recognizing what a staff member's strengths were. Although I was doing administrative work initially, she was very encouraging of me in three other areas that I eventually worked on throughout the years.

First, breastfeeding and legal issues. I found much support from Betty in continuing this area of work that Marian had initiated and expanded. Actually, I was hesitant and unsure at first and yet it ended up being something I became very passionate about and found great satisfaction in.

Second, promotion of breastfeeding in the WIC clinics. In 1982, I was contacted by the WIC clinic in Altgeld Gardens in Chicago. This was a neighborhood of minority mothers and none were breastfeeding. It seemed like an impossible hurdle, but Betty encouraged me and even attended a meeting there with me as did Vi and Mary Ann Cahill. This work, and the work of many other Leaders, became the forerunner of the LLLI Peer Counselor Program in 1987.

Third, the Peer Counselor Program began with high hopes and at first no money, but again Betty responded to our vision that this was a very important part of the work of La Leche League. And again I found myself working on a project that I truly enjoyed.

We often think of Betty as very practical and business like. But one time after a very late frost in the spring, she lamented that the early flowers had their little noses frostbitten. I thought it was such a sweet and caring remark. I also admired her sense of humor and her warm full laugh. She could always see the humor in a situation and did not dwell on the negative. Finally, Betty said to me many times (and maybe to others, too):

Whatever you don't want to do,
do it first.

This was such a simple and practical piece of advice. It has been a guiding principle (somewhat shaky at times when my procrastination sets in) but it has been very freeing and made me a more productive and efficient person. Thanks to Betty for this and for all she has given to me and to all who have had the pleasure of knowing her.

Mary Lofton
Riverside, Illinois USA

Philadelphia Trip: Oct. 30 – Nov. 2, 2008
Being with Friends, Old and New

"Make new friends but keep the old. One is silver and the other gold." Familiar to many of us, these lyrics perfectly described our Philadelphia Alum trip. I embraced old friends, exclaimed over Internet friends that I had never seen, and met friends that I hadn't yet had the privilege of meeting. Twenty-nine of us were expertly toured around the *City of Brotherly Love* by local resident and tour guide extraordinaire Evy Simon and by the Alums' own trip specialist Phoebe Kerness.

Arriving at the Holiday Inn Historic District on Thursday, I joined my roommates Susan Baker from Massachusetts and Nancy Franklin from Texas and the others for a buffet supper at the hotel. I was delighted to visit

Marie Nielsen & Andi LaMar

with Marie Nielsen, a long-time Active Leader from New Jersey and a long-time online friend. Introductions included interesting and unique facts about us – and nothing about our children or grandchildren! If a prize were given for the Leader who traveled the longest distance, Villy Kaltsa would have won. She came from Athens, Greece where she is the Area Coordinator of Leaders. As we toured historic sights, I enjoyed thinking about our country's history as seen through her eyes.

Friday we set out for our walking tour. We tossed lucky pennies over our shoulders onto Ben Franklin's tombstone, learned about the famous crack in the Liberty Bell as well as how the bell got its name, toured the house where Betsy Ross earned her living as a seamstress, sat in pews at Christ Church where our Founding Fathers worshipped, and imagined George Washington in his presiding chair at the Constitutional Convention in the State House, now known as Independence Hall. While the District of Columbia was under construction, Philadelphia served as the United States temporary capital from 1790-1800.

(continued on p.4)

Philadelphia Trip *(continued from p. 3)*

John Adams, our second President was inaugurated here. The Congressional Chambers were small with only 26 seats in the Senate for the13 original states. Our country's history came alive for me and after I returned home, I thoroughly enjoyed readable *Miracle at Philadelphia: The Story of the Constitutional Convention May to September 1878* by Catherine Drinker Bowen. I pictured the rooms where Constitutional Congress delegates debated till compromises were reached. The author described physical attributes of the delegates and I remembered seeing their statues in the National Constitutional Center. Bowen wrote about meals at the City Tavern, where our own delicious 18th-century style lunch was served by wait staff in period costumes.

Saturday included a tour of the moving National Liberty Museum, dedicated to defusing violence and bigotry. We were set free in the Reading (I learned it's pronounced "redding") Terminal to choose our own lunch among the many booths and stalls. My roommates and I picked up Amish cinnamon rolls fresh from the oven and fruit for the next morning's breakfast.

A welcome bus ride took us around Philadelphia as we viewed many public murals that beautify the city. The Pennsylvania Resource Organization for Lactation Consultants (PRO-LC) is raising $15,000 for a breastfeeding mural. In honor of Phoebe and Evy and their excellent planning, we collected over $300 towards the project. See http://muralarts.org/ for more information about the mural. To make a contribution make checks to PRO-LC and send to Donna Sinnott, 252 N. Aberdeen Ave, Wayne, PA 19087. Saturday evening we dined at a Turkish restaurant and later enjoyed a Philadelphia Philharmonic Orchestra performance in its magnificent cello-shaped concert hall. Sunday we welcomed the bus again and set out for historic Mount Pleasant, called by some as the finest colonial house north of the Mason-Dixon line and built in the 1760's by a Scottish sea captain (a pirate, perhaps). Tours of the Museum of Art and the Rodin Museum wound up our cultural dabblings. We lingered as long as possible over our farewell dinner at a fine Italian restaurant, enjoying the wonderful companionship of friends.

Being with my friends, old and new, reminded me how fortunate I am to have found La Leche League and made it a part of my life. I'm already planning and saving for the next Alum trip, wherever it might be, because I know my friends that I seldom see and my friends I've not yet met will be expecting me. I hope you'll be there!

Edna Kelly
Houston, Texas USA

Editorial Note: Phoebe Kerness, Alumnae Trip Coordinator, received input about the next trip from those who attended the Philadelphia event. Phoebe reports that the western United States will be the location of the next trip. The date and specific destination will be determined in early 2010. Information will be published in *Continuum* and on the Alumnae Web site at that time.

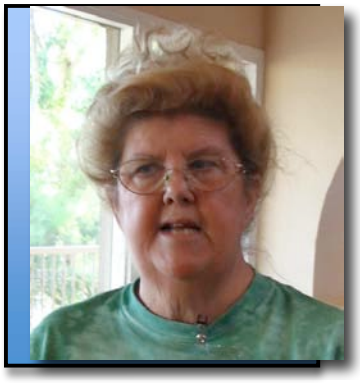
Protecting Your Alumnae Membership Information

The LLL Alumnae Association is committed to protecting your privacy. LLLI, Areas, and other entities within LLL have requested our mailing list. Alumnae members may also contact us to reach another member. In support of La Leche League, the LLL Alumnae Association shares member contact information with LLL entities for their use only. We do not share your information with any companies or organizations outside of La Leche League. If you would like to request that your information not be shared with any LLL entities, you can notify Sue Steilen, Membership Coordinator, to designate which LLL entities or specify for a specific purpose(s) only. If a member requests your contact information, we will contact you for permission before sharing any data. Would you like a membership directory? We do not have one at this time, but this is something we may consider in the future. For more information or to share your thoughts, contact: Sue Steilen, Membership Coordinator, at: 13958 Grenelefe Lane, Homer Glen, IL 60491or 708-301-0890 or suesteilen@comcast.net

We Remember

The La Leche League Alumnae Association records names of deceased La Leche League Leaders in a record book, *We Remember.* The current list of names is online at: http://alumnae.llli.org/Alumnae/WeRemember.htm We need your help to keep the list up-to-date. 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. Thank you.

Staying in Touch With LLL Leaders: It's a Wonderful Thing!



Have you ever pictured your dream week? I lived mine in the summer of 2007 at LLL's 50th Anniversary celebration. Over 30 years ago seven women, who are now retired LLL Leaders, formed a group based on our lasting friendships. We call ourselves WITTY WOMEN (**W**omen **in T**ouch **T**hrough the **Y**ears). Pam Bridgmon, Judie Ellison, Pat Orzech, Sue Perno, Brigette Stuetze, Carolyn Vermullapalli and myself are the members.

In 2005 we started planning and saving so we could all meet and attend the Conference. Pat, Carolyn and I flew from Tucson to Indiana where Judie lives. We drove by van to Chicago. Can you picture a scene: four LLLeaguers who have not been together for a year headed out for Chicago? We experienced a special feeling as we pulled up to the Hilton! Being home!

As we walked in the door, several old friends and the LLL banner greeted us. The next two days were spent seeing the wonderful sights of Chicago—old houses, large buildings, and sidewalk cafes! Then the best began! Old and new friends met with us for dinner and the Alumnae-sponsored dinner-cruise aboard the *Spirit of Chicago.* There was lots of sharing and caring as we met with ACEs (Area Coordinator of Events) from around the world.

At the Opening Ceremonies, six Founders came out of the 50th anniversary cake. We marched with the Alums in the Opening Parade of Nations. At the Founder's Tea, we wore our hats, pearls, and gloves and were joined by Michele Crockett who now lives in Washington. We heard special speakers and attended fantastic sessions. We enjoyed the World Faire and visited the Arizona booth where AZ Pets (geckos) were sold. Gathering together in my room with Area Leaders was a special time for us. The Western Division get-together, the Alum gathering for Leaders over 25 years, the final banquet were fun times, too.

Pam, Sue and Brigitte flew in to join us for the dinner so all the WITTY WOMEN members were together that evening. During that time when we honored the seven Founders and LLL's 50th anniversary, I looked around our table of seven wonderful friends brought together by LLL—THIS IS THE DREAM!

The week ended with the seven of us having a down home Indiana slumber party at Judie's home. It lasted for several days! While we were all together in Indiana we started planning our next WITTY adventure to be held in Tucson about six months after the LLLI Conference. Judie planned her annual trip from Indiana to Tucson.

So in February 2008, we set aside the entire weekend—Friday evening until Sunday evening—for a retreat at my house. We planned potluck healthy meals and semi-healthy desserts. Using the old LLL circle time format, we updated each other on our families and ourselves on what happened in the past six months. To stimulate our memories and sharing, we used questions in *A Mother's Legacy Journal: A Family Treasure for Your Children* by J. Countryman.

Although we have known each other for over 30 years, we all learned a lot of things we didn't know about each other and remembered about ourselves! We shared the latest family photos and DVDs.

Our Christmas celebration and gift exchange was postponed until that February when we were together. Each one of us gives a small gift that means something special to the other person! Stranger than ever was the fact that we rejected gadding about town to do things and decided to just be *together*. The weekend had a special wrap-up feeling when we attended church together. This was followed by a very enjoyable brunch at Tanque Verde Guest Ranch! As always, our WITTY bond was strengthened!

I thank LLL for the way I raised my four sons. I have eight loving grandchildren. My sons are great fathers **and I feel it is** due to how they were parented. Along with having six wonderful friends, I have the proud honor of being a member of LLL for 46 years and an LLL Leader for 44 years! A thank you sounds like so little but I also thank the seven Founders and all the LLL Leaders that have touched and changed my life in the last 44 years!

I am touched by what LLL has done for the seven members of WITTY WOMEN. Do stay in touch with LLL Leaders who have touched your life! It's a WONDERFUL thing!

Joan Meyer
Tucson, Arizona USA

The Art of Making Friends and a Leader-to-Leader Connection

Janet Jendron has been an LLL Leader in South Carolina for over 30 years. As a member of the LLLI Board of Directors for 11 years, she chaired many committees, including committees to evaluate and revise the Leader Accreditation Prerequisites and Guidelines. Since then, she has served as Area Conference Supervisor for LLL of South Carolina and on the Alumnae Association Council. You may remember her as the Mistress of Ceremonies for the Founders' Teas at three LLLI Conferences. For the past 15 years, she has worked for the Assistive Technology Program at the University of South Carolina School of Medicine. She is a member of the Board of Directors for Attachment Parenting International. She's active in Episcopal Cursillo in several capacities. Janet and her husband Bob have four grown children, ages 33 to 26, and a four-year-old granddaughter. Janet meets "new best friends" wherever she goes!

Lost LLLuggage!

In March 2007 I planned a trip to Chicago for the Alumnae Association Council meeting at Pam Oselka's house in nearby Michigan. I flew through Philadelphia to find the entire airport iced-in. I sat for several hours on the plane with Kathy from New York, on her way with her husband, to see her son's last college ice hockey game. His team was in the "final four" for the national championship. My sons had played college soccer, and I had a heart for her despair over possibly missing the games. We talked about La Leche League and my purpose for the trip; she was supportive. We agreed that situations like ours would make a mother glad she had chosen to breastfeed. We bonded as mothers. Then we stood in line with a lot of people for another five hours, while we waited to get a stand-by on a plane the next day. We started to make friends with the people nearest us in line. Luke was a young man in the Coast Guard who was going to a friend's funeral. Another was a young man who was meeting college friends for St. Patrick's Day in Chicago. Another was a young man who worked for the US Department of Transportation.

A turning point occurred when I was on the phone with my LLL Alumnae Council friends, telling them about my delay. Being the spontaneous person I am, I popped up to tell them, "I'm a little concerned about all the bottle-fed babies in the airport. I may have to relactate and feed them all." Just as I said this, there was a lull in the conversation in line; everyone around me heard my comment! The two young men laughed and asked, "Who are you?" That was the beginning of our becoming "new best friends." Thinking we might get flights out that night, we sorted ourselves out. Luke came first, to attend the funeral. The soccer parents came next. I came next, since I figured the world could be saved through breastfeeding that weekend, without me. Todd was last; he admitted that St. Patrick's Day in Chicago was a lower priority! We ended up eating dinner together, bonding, and sharing wonderful times. I spent the night in the USO Welcome Center in the nursery with a real blanket (albeit a baby's afghan) and a stuffed rabbit for my pillow, courtesy of Luke, who told them I was a relative. In the morning at the gate for our flight to Chicago, there were a number of angry customers and a lot of loud voices. One airline employee walked off the job and a call to the police was made! What a difference, I thought, in the way our group handled the situation–with compassion, curiosity, and patience. We suspended judgment about first impressions and really got to know each other.

Luke wasn't on the flight the next day, but the rest of us re-arranged our seats on the flight out to Chicago so that we could sit together. We kept in touch afterwards. We heard from Kathy, with the news that they made the last game on Sunday when her son's team WON the National Championship and he scored a goal! Then we commiserated about our searches for lost luggage. It took a long time. My luggage went back and forth from Chicago to South Bend several times, caught between US Air and United. It was frustrating to say the very least. The luggage delivery service at the South Bend airport tried to deliver luggage to Pam Oselka's house twice, several weeks after I was home. Kathy Brien, who worked for the luggage delivery service, became my "new best friend." She really cared about a total stranger! She made a million calls to the Chicago airport, walked all over the South Bend airport finding people who remembered seeing the luggage, and was an incredible emotional support to me.

After almost six weeks when I finally got my luggage, I immediately called Kathy to let her know. She was elated and relieved, and asked me, "Why were you coming to South Bend?" I told her it was for an LLL Alumnae meeting. Her response was, "I was a La Leche League Leader 25 years ago!" As it turned out, she had been to Chapter meetings at Pam's house years ago. Her children had gone to high school with Sue Christensen's kids in South Bend. I knew there was something incredible about Kathy. She never gave up, trying to fit the pieces of the puzzle together. She gave me empathy, understanding, and practical help. She called me back many times, to let me know what she'd researched. She had no reason to do this, as her company had no responsibility for my luggage. Sound familiar? It reminded me of the time when a new mother had called me and I made my phone call to my first LLL Leader, Carol Deretchin (still one of my best friends).

When Kathy and I realized what we had in common, we both laughed and said, "Why would we be surprised? Once a League Leader, always a League Leader!"

Janet Jendron
Chapin, South Carolina USA

This experience took place in 2007. In March 2008, I attempted a plane trip to the same meeting, and was delayed by weather again! I have another story about that trip and a new best friend!

The Role of Alumnae in Today's LLL

1968-2008 – The July 2008 Texas Area Conference was my own personal anniversary for having La Leche League as a major influence in my life. Forty years! How could it have gone by so fast? There I was at the Conference among babies, toddlers, young children, teens, and their parents. There were other parent/child dyads in attendance. Peggy Halford was there with her daughter, Lori Criswell, who is an LLL Leader. What a legacy! My daughter, Karen, was also with me. I attended my first LLL meeting when Karen was three weeks old. Because I had no idea that people actually took babies to any sort of meeting, I left Karen at home with her dad, older brother, and a bottle.

The first Area Coordinator of Texas, Kathie Lyons, was there with her daughters. I was the second Area Coordinator (AC). Sue Mundell, who followed me as AC, helped me with planning for the Alum Room at the Conference. She also led some discussions in the Alum Room. Anita Dettmer, who was a part of LLL of Texas almost from the beginning, was there, attending her first LLL event in a very long time. The first CLA in Texas, Cecily Harkins, greeted old friends. Cecily currently lives in Oregon but is still very involved in LLL and LLL International Division. The list goes on and includes: Edna Meeks, Edna Kelly, Cathy Liles, Nancy Franklin, and Diana Lewis. It was such a treat for Janet Jendron to come from South Carolina to help!

This introduction was a means to let you know that the LLL Alum group really does have a place in today's organization. Texas LLL provided a room for Alums and anyone else interested in the sessions we held. We started with a Meet and Greet on Friday night, which was a time for a lot of "I haven't seen you in years," and "You haven't changed a bit!" or "What are you doing these days?" discussions. While this session was well attended, we had hoped for more Leaders to be there. We also knew that this was new ground we were covering and another new beginning.

Saturday and Sunday were filled with round table discussions and presentations by outside speakers. No one sat at some of the discussion tables. I had planned for that possibility by telling everyone to not worry about "over-preparing" in case no one showed up for that topic! However, the Leaders of each of the discussions were certainly prepared – bless them! Our outside speakers were excellent. Topics included: Grandparenting; Dealing with Grief, The Art of Living Alone; Adapting and Adjusting; How to Spend 90% of Your Time Doing What You Want to Do; Making Your Own Environment Green; Traveling with Grandchildren; Adult Children and Their Children Living with You; Bird Watching in Texas and Other Places; Final Plans for Your Own Death; and Continuing LLL Involvement as a "Retired Leader."

The financial security session was well attended–lots of dads, as well as couples, joined in on that one. Another one was *True Colors*, a nationally recognized program on personality evaluations and how to understand your own personality type and also how to co-exist with the other personality types. It was great fun! A good friend of mine from Houston came to present that session. At the end, she asked participants to design a "La Leche League Information Room" at a hospital. True to form, each of the grouped personality types designed a room that fit their personalities the best! Yet another special person was Larry Kelly, Edna's husband. He led a great session on Tai Chi–it looks so beautiful, but have you tried it? It's not easy to look that graceful!

I am thankful to Edna Meeks, Edna Kelly and Charlotte Walkowski (who was not able to attend the Conference) who met with me last fall when we went over the list of retired Leaders for a mail-out asking for volunteers. I must admit that it netted minimal response. We'll go back to the drawing board to come up with another way to entice retired Leaders. I would like to encourage each of you to find a way to have Alumnae included as a part of Area Conferences or Leader gatherings held in your Areas. I so appreciate Texas LLL for being willing to have special sessions for Alumnae. I hope that we'll be able to do it again. We were a relatively small number but I feel that we will find ways to grow and to include even more people for whom La Leche League was a huge influence in their lives.

Ellen Goodrich King
Houston, Texas USA

Changing Your Email? Moving? Remember to Notify Alums

Your help is needed! In the future, we hope to send out email reminders before your dues expire. If you don't think we have your current email address or it recently changed, please contact Sue Steilen to notify her of this information. Also please include the Alumnae on the list of subscriptions you notify of your new address. Don't miss an issue of *Continuum*. Bulk mail is not forwarded. Send changes to Sue Steilen, Alumnae Membership Coordinator at: 13958 Grenelefe Lane, Homer Glen, IL 60491or 708-301-0890 or suesteilen@comcast.net. Thank you!

Alumnae Association Donates to the Helpline

In 2008, the Alumnae Council approved the 2008-2009 budget that included a $3,000 projected donation for the Helpline.

In January 2009, a check for $3,000 was sent to the Helpline in an effort to continue to help mothers seeking breastfeeding information.

LLL Breastfeeding Helpline - US Update

La Leche League Breastfeeding Helpline - US is a toll-free line for mothers to call if they have questions about breastfeeding. Over 400 Leaders have volunteered for the LLL Breastfeeding Helpline-US (LLLBHUS) in the past 19 months and 100 Leaders are currently active to help callers. More than 20,300 calls were logged between 6/1/2007 and 12/31/2008. Unlike other call centers with employees, volunteers staff the Helpline. The phone system expenses for a toll-free incoming call center are $0.04 per minute. When callers are connected live, the cost is higher to the Helpline than if they are helped via voicemail. Calls are returned by Leaders using their free long distance phone service, which saves the Helpline about $1,000 per month. Current monthly phone expenses are $425 to $475 with the majority of callers helped by returned voicemail. The Helpline has a website at http://breastfeedinghelpline.com, a CafePress store at http://cafepress.com/lllbhus, and a Facebook nonprofit page, all with donation and advocacy information.

As a result of our grant application and subsequent negotiation, Salesforce.com donated the nonprofit version of their customer relationship management web tool with 100 licenses. This tool is the Helpline's entire call center database of cases, contacts, donations, and volunteers and has been extensively customized to meet the Helpline's specific and unique needs. Purchasing the license for this service would cost nearly $50,000 annually. After the first year, Salesforce, Inc. renewed the grant for a second year. The Elena and Olivia Parry Fund provided essential startup and ongoing costs. MotherLove Herbal and ErgoBaby participated in the dual sponsorship program of World Breastfeeding Week Celebrations and LLLBHUS for one year. A complete list of donors is available at: http://tiny.cc/kChn9 The Helpline was recently awarded a contract by Department of Health and Human Services for a working mother project, which includes funds to advertise to working and breastfeeding mothers and hire Leader operators to take live calls and accommodate the increase in call volume during high-volume business hours. To donate funds directly to the HELPLINE (1-877-452-5324), please mail donations to: LLL Breastfeeding Helpline, c/o Pamela Dunne, 7295 Highland Estates Place, Falls Church, VA 22043. If you have questions, contact Pamela at: pameladunne@msn.com

NEW! Alumnae Memberships and Donations Now Online!

Susan Geil, Alumnae Treasurer says: "I'm very excited to report that we are now accepting memberships and donations on the Alumnae Web site. Visit <http://alumnae.llli.org/Alumnae/Join.html> to see the new set up. The membership forms have been changed to reflect the fact that the only way we take credit cards is online. Membership by mail is only for those who pay by check."

Please look at the back page of each issue your receive. Note the expiration date. If this issue indicates LAST ISSUE, it means your dues will have expired between November 2008 and April 30, 2009. Please renew soon so you don't miss the May/June issue of *Continuum*.

Take advantage of renewing online and/or donating anytime, day or night. Renewing online means you don't need to take extra time to write a check, fill out the membership renewal form, find an envelope, and a stamp. If you renew earlier than the expiration date, your dues will start from that expiration date to give you full credit for renewals.

If you know of an Active or Retired Leader who would like to join, share an invitation to join the Alums.

The Alumnae Association is not just for Retired Leaders. Those Leaders or members who have younger children, teens or young adults and who have a love of LLL and the mothering beginnings that they got from their first contact with LLL are welcome to join the Alums.

LLL Reunion in Western Massachusetts

Photo of current ACL and five past ACLs, from left to right: Current ACL, Anne Marie Lindquist of Lexington, MA; Lezlie Densmore of Chicopee, MA; Lavada Wright-Munoz of East Longmeadow, MA; Mary Jeanne Hickey of Weymouth, MA; Carol Albano of Wilbraham, MA; and first ACL Doris Preston of Agawam, MA. (October 2007)

Alumnae Leaders in the Western Massachusetts area wanted to plan an *LLLI 50th Anniversary Reunion* in the fall of 2007. The last reunion we held was in 1995 to celebrate the 25th anniversary of one of our long-time LLL Leaders, Jan Kozub of Wilbraham, MA. We used our Leader list from that special occasion as a starting point. Most of the preliminary planning was done by three Leaders who met with me: Jan Kozub, Linda Desmarias of Chicopee, MA, and Darlene Utzinger of Southwick, MA. We met three or four times to determine what jobs needed to be done and to create a current list for a database, including some Leaders from nearby Connecticut. We tried to pull names basically from the Greater Springfield, MA LLL Chapter so we would all know each other. It was a lot of work to get an up-to-date database!

A Friday evening seemed to be the best time. So the event was slated for 5:00 pm Friday, October 17, 2007 at a church hall in Hamden County. The facility required a $95 insurance or rider fee. We planned a catered meal and charged $30/person. The caterer charged $25; we added $5 to cover incidental costs. We planned a raffle and asked each person to bring a gift for the raffle. Then we set the program and mailed the registration form to 70 people; 40 came to the reunion! Attendees were asked to bring old scrapbooks, group photos, memorabilia, and past issues of LEAVEN, LLL NEWS and other LLL publications. Everyone had a good time looking at the materials. There have been nine Area Coordinator of Leaders (ACLs) in the state. Five out of the nine attended, including me! Other Leaders present had served as a District Advisor or former Area Professional Liaison. Half of those present had held an Area position. About three to four Active Leaders were present; most were retired Leaders.

We started the evening with introductions and shared updates on our children–their names and current ages, etc. Mary Jeanne Hickey and Darlene Utzinger spoke about their trip to the LLLI Conference in July. We also showed a videotape interview with Marian Tompson and Mary White. It had been aired on a Chicago TV station earlier in the year. Mary Jeanne talked about the LLL Breastfeeding Helpline-US and the funding they need to keep it going. With that in mind, the Alumnae decided to use the proceeds of the raffle for the Helpline. Raffle tickets were $1 each or 6 for $5. The $418 proceeds were sent to the Helpline. Almost everyone brought a raffle item. Mary Jeanne was the oldest Leader in attendance; Jan Kozub was the Leader with the longest LLL tenure. Ann Marie Lindquist, current ACL of MA/VT, encouraged retired Leaders to be active at some level and reminded us of the importance of supporting breastfeeding in some way and to find a way to do it. Linda Desmarias led us in a group activity. As we stood in a circle, Linda asked a series of questions such as "Have you ever counseled a mother about sore nipples," etc. If each Leader answered affirmatively she would move forward to the center of the circle. The next question with an affirmative answer might bring even more Leaders to the center circle. A subsequent question with an affirmative answer would instruct the Leaders to move back to the original outside circle. So back and forth we moved in this undulating circle, realizing with all the movement that we had all had similar experiences as a Leader–the same experiences that had bonded all of us together during our tenures as LLL Leaders. Linda's good timing, creativity and pleasant voice were key to this fun time. When it ended, we realized how much we had in common. In the background was the music of "We Are the World" as we went in and out of the circles. This activity took about 15 minutes. We lit a candle and had remembrance moments for Dr. David Seigelman who passed away about four years ago. He was a medical advisor for the Area and worked with Doctors Without Borders. We also had a silent moment for Cindy Rindone of East Longmeadow, MA. She was a Leader who had passed away after a long struggle with cancer.

Time flew by so fast at the event. Some of the Leaders had to leave by 9:00 or 9:30 pm since they had two hours or more travel time ahead of them. Looking back: email helped make it a minimum of work. To create a reliable database was lots of work! We did not take enough photos because we were so busy visiting and talking! We must remember to designate a photographer the next time. A husband was there to videotape the reunion. As the evening drew to a close, music from a CD played in the background. Some of the Alums want to do it again in five years and to plan the program so we have more have time to be together.

Lavada Wright Munoz
East Longmeadow, Massachusetts USA

Friendships Shape Who We Are and Who We Are Yet to Be

A landmark UCLA study suggests friendships between women are special. They shape who we are and who we are yet to be. They soothe our tumultuous inner world, fill the emotional gaps in our marriage, and help us remember who we really are. By the way, they may do even more.

Scientists now suspect that hanging out with our friends can actually counteract the kind of stomach-quivering stress most of us experience on a daily basis. A landmark UCLA study suggests that women respond to stress with a cascade of brain chemicals that cause us to make and maintain friendships with other women. It's a stunning find that has turned five decades of stress research–most of it on men–upside down. "Until this study was published, scientists generally believed that when people experience stress, they trigger a hormonal cascade that revs the body to either stand and fight or flee as fast as possible," explains Laura Cousino Klein, Ph.D., now an Assistant Professor of Biobehavioral Health at Penn State University and one of the study's authors. "It's an ancient survival mechanism left over from the time we were chased across the planet by saber-toothed tigers. Now the researchers suspect that women have a larger behavioral repertoire than just 'fight or flight.' In fact," says Dr. Klein,"it seems that when the hormone oxytocin is released as part of the stress responses in a woman, it buffers the 'fight or flight' response and encourages her to tend children and gather with other women instead. When she actually engages in this tending or befriending, studies suggest that more oxytocin is released, which further counters stress and produces a calming effect. This calming response does not occur in men," says Dr. Klein, "because testosterone–which men produce in high levels when they're under stress–seems to reduce the effects of oxytocin. Estrogen," she adds, "seems to enhance it."

This material is based on an article, *UCLA Study on Friendship among Women*, by Gale Berkowitz

Thoughts on Friendship and a Tip for Grandmothers

Those Leaders who stay active for the long haul are the same kind of lovely, genuine, caring women as the ones who founded LLL over 50 years ago. At the 2003 Conference Founders' session, one of the Founders wished for all of us a lifetime friend, such as those she made in LLL. I have already found several lifetime friends among LLL Leaders, and I wish the same for you. Open your heart to someone special among your LLL circle. Nurture that friendship and treasure it for a lifetime.

Something that a Group mother said once really seems to work when a new baby joins the family and an older sibling(s). When the baby is happy to be set down for a while and the older sibling is within earshot, the mother can put baby in a nearby safe spot while saying, "I'm sorry, baby, but you are going to have to entertain yourself for a while. I need to play with big sister now." This can be adapted to your own style and what fits your family members.

Laura Probst
Lawton, Michigan USA

Longest Time to Become an LLL Leader!

At the LLLI Conference in Chicago last summer, I had a wonderful visit with Edwina Froehlich at lunch. We shared a chuckle when I told her that I might just hold the record for taking the longest time to become accredited: 27 years. I had to put the application aside when I went through a divorce all those years ago.

When my grandson was born in 2002, my daughter got involved with LLL. She wanted to become a Leader since she'd grown up around all my Leader friends in Idaho. I tagged along with her to the Western Pennsylvania Area Conference and the Washington, D.C. International Conference to chase my grandson but got swallowed up.

Inspired by spending some time in a building with other like-minded people and getting to meet the Founders in D.C., (and a little nudge from Amy Shaw), I decided to "be a part of the change I wanted to see in the world." My daughter Ariel and I were both accredited in April of 2006. But she was accredited a few weeks before me.

I feel so fortunate to have been able to share my story with Edwina, but especially for my daughter and grandson to have the opportunity to be in Chicago to meet Edwina, one of my seven true heroes, the Founding Mothers.

Janet Burt
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania USA

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From the Mailbag

As I reflect on the past year, it brings back moments when we learned of the passing of two Co-Founders, Edwina Froehlich and Betty Wagner Spandikow. At the same time, I know Leaders who are mourning the loss of a parent, spouse, son or daughter and the grief that becomes entwined in their lives from that point on. In the same year, new grandchildren became part of the family constellation and joy will show its face as the little one grows, begins to talk, walk and give kisses to grandparents and loved ones. Reminiscing weaves guilt in me for not taking and making time to connect with nearby and long-distance family and friends who are still with us. I could have but did not. So I will make an effort to call my 99-year old aunt more often and my cousins living in the East Coast. Times like this bring to mind a quote by John A. Anderson that I would like to share with you:

> *Although time is eternal, we sure run out of it quickly. While we generally realize how precious it is, we seem quick to squander it. Busy little bees, we are. But really, how much time do we spend building relationships and making memories? How much of ourselves are we really willing to give? I'll admit–it's much easier to buy a gift or an assembly-line-produced card than it is to spend an evening with someone in need. Problem is, there just aren't enough lunchtimes or evenings to go around. So, use them wisely, but by all means–use them to bless the lives of those around you. I think of all the things I'd like to do to build my marriage, my children, my health–even my neighbors–and I must admit, I just don't do enough of it. I'd like to take long walks with my wife or spend hours tossing a ball with my sons–but I don't do it enough. I'd like to spend more time with my parents and siblings. There's so much we can give to others. But if you're looking to give the ultimate gift–remember, there's no present like the time.*

How about you? Does multi-tasking creep up to overwhelm you? Do you feel as if information is gorged and heaped on you from the media or Internet sources? How do you find time to get together with family with their busy work and activity schedules? How do you gather together to celebrate birthdays and holidays? What tips and creative ways do you do it? Who steps up to the plate to make it happen? What approaches do you take to be more connected with family and friends? Send your thoughts to me so they can be shared with other Alum members in future issues of *Continuum*. A few sentences or paragraphs would be appreciated.

Members submitted several articles during the past year. Other news, information, and more-timely articles were a priority and the articles have not yet been published. They are not forgotten and my plan is to include them in upcoming issues in 2009. Susan Geil, Alumnae Treasurer shares this comment from Dianne Mansfield from Indiana. Dianne sent it to Susan after she received the membership confirmation email:

> *Our youngest daughter is breastfeeding her 19-month-old youngest child. The other day he really wanted to nurse. She was working to arrange her clothes for him. When he saw her breast, he stood and clapped, then very happily nursed. It was really funny.*

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 April 1, 2009.*

Keeping in mind that "there's no present like the time,"

Fran

(published February 2, 2009)

"Enjoy the little things in life, for one day you'll look back and realize they were the big things."
Robert Brault

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

This is your membership reminder:

Look at the address section here before you read this issue. If your membership has expired or expires before April 30, 2009, renew now. **Only paid-up and renewed members will receive the next issue in May 2009.** You cannot renew through LLLI or when you pay Leader dues. Memberships are handled by mail or online by our own Treasurer (see below) because the Alums now operate separately from LLLI. Your support and timely renewal is appreciated!

Join the Alumnae!

Yes, I want to keep in touch and support the LLL Alumnae Association. **Dues are $20/year.**

Send checks to:

Susan Geil, LLL Alumnae Treasurer
4868 N. Hermitage Ave., Chicago, IL 60640
Questions? Contact Susan at: <srgeil@yahoo.com>

Enclosed is:

☐ $20 for year-long membership

☐ $ _____ donation

☐ Check to *LLL Alumnae Association*

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