



June 2026 - Volume 39, Number 2

Welcome, Penny Piercy!

Keep Up With Us



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Letter from the President

Well, here we are in the midst of graduations, some weddings, and lots of summer vacation plans!

What a wonderful time to announce that coming next May, the next Friends of LLL trip will take place on a cruise! If you are cruisers like my husband and I are, you will know the variety of experiences you can choose from. If you are venturing out with us on your "maiden voyage," we can fill you in on the inside scoop.

A cruise is accommodating for all activity levels from those requiring assistance (think, scooters, walkers or wheelchairs) to those who love a good walking tour. You may enjoy relaxing on deck, in one of the many lounges, or taking excursions. There are many places on board to meet up with groups of friends. We will have a lot of fun!

Members, if you've been on a cruise before, write to us with some of your best cruise tips at info@friendsofll.org. We will publish some each issue to get everyone ready for the "All Aboard!"

See the article in this issue for details about the dates, itinerary, and how you can join us for relaxation, rejuvenation, and reunion on the Norwegian Breakaway. For more information about the ship, here is the link

<https://www.ncl.com/cruise-ships/norwegian-breakaway>

See you on the pool deck for the Sail Away party!

Susan



Family Artwork

by Carol Meredith, LLLLeader 1976-2006, Trappe, Maryland



My daughter and her husband, Hannah and Todd Churn, are graphic artists. When they bought a new couch, they decided to do a little redesigning.

They bought three pieces of canvas, all the same size. Picking out the colours that would work best, they spread out newspapers and gave their 4-year-old son some paint brushes. With a little supervision but no instructions, he was free to be creative.

Mum and dad then did their own artwork, coordinating with their son's theme. They framed the pictures and hung them above the couch.

It's a unique way of acquiring low-cost, customised artwork that the whole family can be proud of.



Fun with Friends Takes to the Sea!



Announcing our next Friends of LLL trip, **May 23-30, 2027**, aboard the Norwegian Cruise Lines Breakaway!

Our cruise will be a round trip from Boston and will visit Halifax, Nova Scotia (where we will meet up with Jo-Anne Elder) and the island of Bermuda.

There will be a group discount of up to 15% depending how many are signed up, and a \$100 onboard credit per stateroom.

No registration fee will be charged by Friends of LLL.

No Friends of LLL funds will be used to fund this trip for board members or in any way.

There are 10% discounts for teachers and military (veterans, active, or military spouses) who can be verified through ID.me

You may opt in or out of the Free at Sea package which includes an open bar, specialty dining package, and internet.

Your stateroom choices include:

Inside, no window

Ocean view (window, no balcony)

Balcony

To book your room, call Sam Perez and tell him you're with Susan Thomas' group:

Samuel (Sam) Perez | Personal Cruise Consultant

Direct: 954.745.4852

Text or call 24/7: 305.537-6865

samperez@ncl.com | www.ncl.com

Norwegian Cruise Line

7665 Corporate Center Drive | Miami FL 33126



You Might Like to Read...

by Carroll Beckham

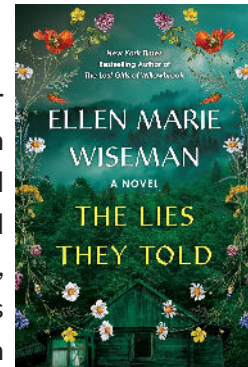
Sisters Under the Rising Sun, by Heather Morris, 2024

During WWII, two women—a musician and a nurse—survive a shipwreck near Indonesia, only to face brutal conditions in a Japanese POW camp where they forge an unbreakable bond. This is a story of sisterhood and survival inspired by a true story.



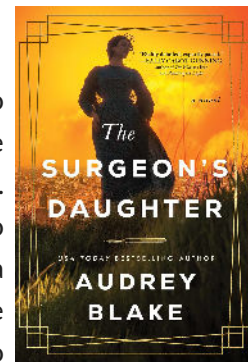
***The Lies They Told*, by Ellen Marie Wiseman, 2025**

In rural 1930s Virginia, a young immigrant mother fights for her dignity against America’s rising eugenics movement—a time when widespread support of policies of prejudice drove imprisonment and forced sterilization based on class, race, disability, education and country of origin—in this tragic and uplifting novel of social justice, survival and hope. The State of Virginia schemes to paint the residents of the Blue Ridge Mountains as ignorant, immoral, and backwards in order to evict them from their land, seize children from parents, and deal with those possessing “inferior genes.” After being labeled feeble minded, our heroine is sent to the state colony for the feeble minded and epileptics.



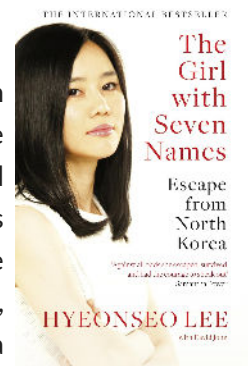
***The Surgeon's Daughter*, by Audrey Blake, 2022**

In 19th century Bologna, a female medical student and doctor ally to develop groundbreaking Cesarean section techniques, facing intense opposition from male colleagues while fighting to save women’s lives. This historical fiction novel is about the women in medicine who changed the world forever. The heroine is the only female student in a prestigious medical school in Bologna at a time when women are expected to remain at home and raise children. Her ambition to become a licensed surgeon offends the men around her.



***The Girl with Seven Names*, by Hyeonseo Lee, 2016**

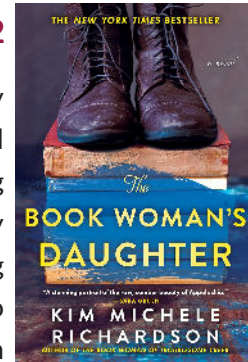
This is the amazing autobiography of one woman’s escape from North Korea. Lee leaves North Korea shortly before her 18th birthday. She doesn’t intend to defect. She has received a lifetime of propaganda and truly believes her country is the best in the world. She is simply curious and wanted to see China. Once there she is exposed to things she never dreamed of. She flees an arranged marriage and a sex trafficker, escapes a police deportation interrogation, is taken hostage by a Chinese gang, loses all her possessions and savings, while simultaneously becoming educated and upwardly-mobile in a system foreign to her. After



several years in China, Lee arrives in South Korea and claims asylum. By the time Lee returns to China to help her mother and brother defect, she is a certified tax accountant. Later, she marries an American and now advocates for North Korean defectors, speaking against the regime.

***The Book Woman's Daughter*, by Kim Michele Richardson, 2022**

This is a sequel to *The Book Woman of Troublesome Creek*, but the story stands alone. Honey Lovett is the daughter of the famed blue-skinned Troublesome Creek packhorse librarian. Her family has been hiding from the law all her life. When her parents are imprisoned, Honey picks up her mother's packhorse library route and begins delivering books to the remote hollows of Appalachia in Kentucky. Honey has to fight for her place and along the way she learns that the strong women who run the hills and hollers can make all the difference in the world. The power of books and sisterhood prevail in the harshest circumstances.



***The Midwife's Promise*, by Eliza Graham, 2023**

A midwife in Nazi-occupied France risks everything to protect her family, but when evil takes everything from her, she must confront the true cost of her promises. This book is a testament to the power of maternal love and the sacrifices mothers make for the sake of their children. On her 90th birthday, Sophie has decided it is time to tell her son the secret she's been keeping since his birth. Sophie then recounts her life as a midwife, and the children whose lives she changed. Those she protected were not only those she brought into the world, but the children she helped cross the border from Nazis. The mother and child relationship is showcased in many forms in this novel.



♥ **Thank You to Our Donors!** ♥

Friends of La Leche League programs, activities, and Mini-Grants are largely funded by memberships and donations. We gratefully acknowledge those who have contributed to our organization. If your name has been omitted, misspelled or listed incorrectly, please accept our sincerest apology and inform us by contacting Treasurer Penny Piercy at Treasurer@FriendsofLLL.org.

[Donate](#)

Unrestricted Donations from April 2025 to Present:

Judie Ellison
Joan Blackmore
Mary Gisch
Judith Gubala
Rush Copley Medical Center
Mary Jeanne Hickey
Marguerite Gravlee
Janice Pickett
Agnes Leistico
Jacque Gates
Janet Jendron

Restricted Donations for 2025 Mini-Grants Program:

Carroll Beckham
Judie Ellison
Rebecca Keepers

In-Kind Donations from April 2025 to Present:

Penny Piercy
Anne Hutton

Keep Your Membership Active!

This is your membership information:

Penny Piercy, membership expiration date 03/24/2027.

To renew your membership online, sign in [HERE](#) with your email address as the "Username or email" and your password. (If you don't remember your password, click the button to reset it.)

We Remember: A Friends of La Leche League Tradition

**"So as we live, they too shall live, for they are now a part of us,
as we remember them."**

"We Remember" is a tradition started by the Friends of La Leche League in 2001, paying tribute to Leaders who have died. Part of our mission as Friends of LLL is to keep connections strong as we remember and appreciate those who have died.

Leaders' names posted on the [Friends of LLL We Remember page](#). We also have a special event at each Friends of LLL trip. If you know of a deceased Leader whose name is missing from this list, please **send us the information** [here](#) or email the Leader details to us at WeRemember@friendsoflll.org. If possible, please include an obituary link.

These are the names of Leaders we have been informed of since January 2025. Names in blue are linked to their obituaries or additional information.

[Susan “Sue” Ahrens](#) ~ Ohio, United States
[Margaret Bennet-Adler](#) ~ Canada
[Rosetta Bartels](#) ~ Kansas, United States
[Lois Charles](#) ~ Quebec and Eastern Ontario, Canada
[Connie Chiavario](#) ~ Illinois, United States
[Mardelle “Mardi” Dean](#) ~ Virginia, United States
[Deborah “Deb” Fraites](#) ~ Connecticut, United States
[Anne Grider](#) ~ Georgia, United States
[Shannon Heindel](#) ~ Pennsylvania, United States
[Christine Jones](#) ~ New Jersey, United States
[Catherine “Cathy” Kivisild](#) ~ New York, United States
[Nora Lee Luttrell](#) ~ Michigan, United States
[Mary Ann Martin](#) ~ Michigan, United States
[Jennifer Matthews](#) ~ Connecticut, United States
[Elizabeth McCarthy](#) ~ Ireland
[Joan Carolyn Meyer](#) ~ Arizona, United States
Sue Mundell ~ Texas, United States
[Lavada Charlene Munoz](#) ~ Massachusetts, United States
[Celeste “CeCe” Murphy](#) ~ Georgia, United States
[Marie Nielsen](#) ~ New Jersey, United States
[Brenda Penn](#) ~ New Zealand
[Vicki Ryan](#) ~ New Zealand
[Martha Sears](#) ~ California, United States
[Margaret Mary Singleton](#) ~ Massachusetts, United States
[Naomi Stadlen](#) ~ Great Britain
[Nancy Szymanski](#) ~ Illinois, United States
[Kimberly Wells](#) ~ North Carolina, United States
[Mary Michael “Mickey” Winn](#) ~ Oklahoma, United States

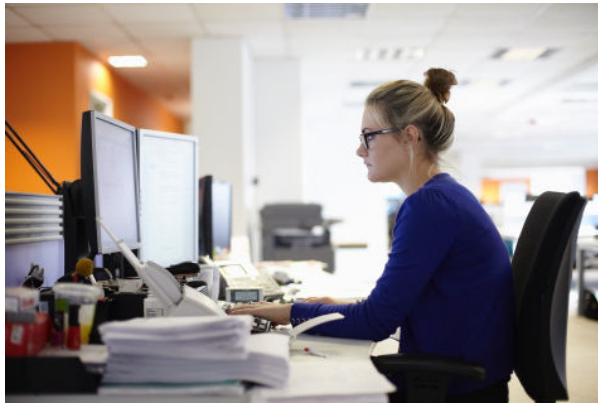
🌻 . . . *At the blueness of the skies and in the warmth of summer;*
we remember them . . . 🌻

Website Volunteer Opportunity

Friends—we are looking for someone who can help update our website. We use WordPress and it is a fairly straightforward platform. We have people who can teach you how to do it and help you along the way.

You do have to have access to a computer and be able to type. You do not have to be an excellent (or fast) typist.

If you are that person, please contact us at info@friendsoflll.org



Leaders Love Pins!

Friends of LLL is glad to provide Leader Recognition pins, which honor new Leaders and highlight years of service to La Leche League. Individuals and LLL Groups in the United States can purchase Leader recognition pins via our [website store](#) to be shipped; for international orders (with special shipping rates), please contact pins@friendsoflll.org. As we welcome summer and reflect on the importance of our LLL service, please consider giving a gift that celebrates Leaders' contributions.



Tributes Honor Those Who Inspire Us

We are honored to list the following current tributes to Leaders and friends of La Leche League. If you wish to honor someone who has inspired you, please use these [instructions](#)

[and form](#) to submit your Tribute.

Tributes June 2025 – December 2026

Honoring **Barbara Wilson-Clay**, San Miguel de Allende, Guanajuato Mexico

"Barbara, a longtime Leader, educator, IBCLC, acclaimed author and speaker, has been a loving mentor to innumerable mothers, families, and Leaders. She continues to inspire a new generation of Leaders and other breastfeeding helpers to be the change we want to see in the world."

From **Anna Swisher**, Jarrell, Texas USA

May 31 2026 – May 31 2027

Honoring **Marian Tompson**, Evanston, Illinois USA

"Marian cannot be honored too many times. She is an amazing woman. We all owe her so much."

From **Rebecca Magalhaes**, Neponset, Illinois USA

December 29 2025 – December 29 2026

Honoring **Mary J. Hoskin**, Tolland, Connecticut USA

"I enjoyed Mary's enthusiastic and friendly approach to Leadership."

From **Judith Gubala**, Rocky Hill, Connecticut USA

December 5 2025 – December 5 2026

In memory of **Dr. Ruth Lawrence**, Rochester, New York, USA

"In memory of Dr. Ruth Lawrence, a pioneer in the lactation world."

From **Carroll Beckham**, Beaufort, North Carolina USA

October 14 2025 – October 14 2026

In memory of **Rosetta Bartels**, Kansas, USA

"Rosetta was an active Kansas LLL Leader of 50 years and LLL Communication Skills Instructor/Trainer of 35 years. For me she was a legend, nurturing her family and sharing her talents far and wide. She will be deeply missed."

One of Rosetta's favorite quotes:

'Dialogue requires that we be willing to suspend memory, desire, and assumptions. And exist, if only for a moment, for the other person.' – William Isaacs."

From **Rebecca Keepers**, Yukon, Oklahoma USA

July 7 2025 – July 7 2026

In memory of **Connie Chiavario**, Sandwich, Illinois USA

"Connie (8/8/58 – 6/7/25), a tireless advocate for mothers and babies, served as a La Leche Leader for nearly 40 years. In 2000, she earned her certification as an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant and began her professional career at Rush Copley Medical Center for the next 23 years. Her deep passion for holistic care, for mothers and babies, left a lasting impact on countless families. Connie's legacy will live on through her friends and family, and she will be dearly missed."

April Chat Recap: Parenting or Grandparenting a Child with a Disability: What is the Real Deal? with Louise Cox and Chris Newton

by Jo-Anne Elder

Our Friends of La Leche League online Chat topic on April 13, 2026, was “Parenting or grandparenting a child with a disability: what is the real deal?” It was led by Louise Cox and Chris Newton, two members of FoLLL and mothers who have birthed, breastfed, and raised children with different abilities and acquired a great deal of knowledge and wisdom about the subject.

Twelve members joined Louise and Chris for a candid and honest, heart-level conversation about what it’s really like to parent or grandparent a child with a disability. They shared stories, challenges, and the deep joys that shape this journey. As we know from La Leche League, talking together about real experiences and receiving practical wisdom gives us hope, builds community, and supports everyone taking part. The discussion leaders talked about what they have learned in LLL that gives them strength and guidance. Participants heard about the perceptions of those who have changed their lives when their children arrived with unique gifts and obstacles to overcome. For the caregivers on the call, this was an opportunity to talk about the real deal—what helps what hurts, and what keeps everyone going.

And here is a link to a free book, *Love Stories: 21 for 21*, by Beverly Beckham. She is the author Louise mentioned, whose granddaughter Lucy was born with Down syndrome. This book includes the essay about Wee Steps.

<https://www.beverlybeckham.com/books-1>

May Chat Recap: Mother's Day

by Jo-Anne Elder



La Leche League Founding Mother Marian Thompson and her five daughters.

May is an important month for us. For the second year, we celebrated Mother's Day with a slideshow and conversation about mothering. Last year, we talked about our mothers and grandmothers, and this year we focused on our children and grandchildren. A small group gathered to look at the photos and share their children's stories. We noticed that some of us had grandchildren (even more than children) about the same age. Some members are actively involved in their grands' lives, babysitting and even taking them on international trips; others have to deal with long distances and busy families.

Here is a link to the Mother's Day 2026 slideshow for all our members to see:

[Mother's Day 2026](#)

Please note that this is a work in progress and I am looking forward to getting more photos. Email me at joanne.elder.nb@gmail.com with "Mother's Day" in the subject line and your photos as jpeg attachments. I'm looking for "then and now" photos of you and your children.

We are always looking for suggestions for Chat topics and facilitators. Would you like to lead a discussion about something important to you? Contact me and we'll find a time that works for you: joanne.elder.nb@gmail.com

Laughing Gas

by Nancy Sherwood



All five Sherwood children at the zoo.

I had dental work recently and opted to have laughing gas (nitrous oxide). It helps me relax. I was in the dentist's chair for about three hours—a lot longer than expected. It was not the most pleasant experience, but for the most part it was bearable.

While I was in the chair, under the influence, I was in a bit of a fantasy / dream state. I thought about the kids. All five of them. And I thought about what gifts I received from each of them. Something I have never pondered before. I want to tell each of them what their gift was.

From Courtney I received fear and wonder. She is the one who made me a mother! She was sick right after she was born and I was not able to hold her for the first three days of her life. My milk came in really fast after she was born, so I was able to feed her my breastmilk. The pump was a glass cylinder with a red rubber bulb on the end. It looked like a

bicycle horn.

The first time I held Courtney, she was three days old. The nurse handed her to me and Courtney just stared at me. It felt like she was saying, "Well, where have you been?" And she looked so much like Nick, I was amazed. I honestly felt like there were rainbows and fireworks, I fell so deeply in love.

Morgan was soft and sweet and made sweet humming sounds. I held him and sniffed his head with that heavenly newborn baby scent. When he was born, the doctor said, "This baby is so healthy, he's boring!" Morgan, as a newborn, gave me peace. He was so beautiful. In spite of how his hospital picture looks.

Darcy is next. Baby number 3. Born north of the Arctic Circle, in Tromsø, Norway. I think I got to hold him and nurse him earlier after his birth than the others. He taught me that I didn't know as much about parenting as I had thought. Sweet. Smiling all the time. And mischievous. A climber. Every day when Nick came home from work, he would ask, "What has Darcy done this time?" Darcy was always up to something. But as a newborn he was just sweet. Snugly.

Austin—my biggest and best birth. It's funny; the kids and I came home from Norway ahead of Nick so we could visit relatives. Then Nick got home and bada bing! I was pregnant with Austin. Whenever I was asked how far along I was, I would say, "Well, let's see, when did Nick get home...."

Austin was the absolute easiest baby. He would nurse and sleep. My friends all said that if he was my first baby they would be worried about the long stretches of sleep. But he grew and gained great, so I didn't worry at all. Austin was my only natural, unmedicated, vaginal birth. I used so much emotional and physical strength to give birth to him. Austin taught me that I am strong and capable.

Chance. My preemie. That's how I will think of him all of my life. He's 35 years old right now, but I still feel the vulnerability I felt when he was first born.

Chance was born in Hong Kong in December 1990. I was the only mother in the hospital breastfeeding. And I was insistent that he only get my breastmilk. Being my fifth baby, I thought that I could take great care and have him grow and get strong and healthy. And I did know that a mother's own milk is best for a preemie.

I ended up going back to the States with Austin and Chance, when Chance was 3 months old so I could get him the care I knew he needed. Austin, Chance, and I made the long trip from China to Virginia, leaving Nick, Courtney, Morgan, and Darcy behind in Guangzhou.

I learned from Chance that I don't know everything about breastfeeding. He taught me to understand the feelings of vulnerability and failure a new mother can feel. What I learned from Chance is what prompted me to become an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC). I helped many many mother and baby couples using what I learned in

my mothering of Chance. And he is now a home-owning adult. A college graduate. Smart, competent and capable man. And just a cool guy!



The five grown Sherwood children on Chance's porch.

Friends of La Leche League Mission Statement

The mission of the Friends of La Leche League is to support La Leche League as a resource and inspiration for future generations, encourage lifelong connections with the LLL community, and share the insights and wisdom that began with the breastfeeding relationship.

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You are receiving this newsletter as a benefit of your membership. Thank you for your support of Friends of La Leche League.

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