

Continuum

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For many young Leaders, the connection with La Leche League is steeped in a sense of shared purpose—a joyful discovery of women with similar beliefs. Differences are diminished by the intense focus on breastfeeding and early parenting.

As LLLI Alumnae, we continue to be bound by these similar beliefs, but perhaps it is our differences which today give us cause for greater celebration.

The diversity of our interests, expertise, and experiences gives strength to our organization and opens gateways for each of us to challenge our status quo, stretch our learning, and live life more fully.

Read a good book lately?

That's the question put to the seven LLLI Founders recently. Below they share their current reading favorites—a list as delightfully diverse and unique as the Founders themselves.

Mary White: I just finished reading *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee (Harper & Row, 1960). I had read it a long time ago and of course have seen the movie. It's a wonderful story. I also enjoy mysteries—a-la Martha Grimes, Anne Perry and Edith Pargeter (a.k.a. Ellis Peters).

Marian Tompson: The book I am enthusiastically reading and cannot put down this summer is *Radical Healing: Integrating the World's Great Therapeutic Traditions to Create a New Transformative Medicine* by Rudolph Ballentine, MD, physician, psychiatrist, herbalist, Ayurvedic practitioner, homeopath, and teacher. Beautifully written and easy to read, *Radical Healing* offers a vision of medical care that comes out of Dr. Ballentine's vast experience which recognizes illness as an opportunity for growth that can go far beyond recovery.

Betty Wagner Spandikow: Romance novels are my favorite and if they have a bit of history to them I like them better. My current favorite author is Julie Garwood. She writes an interesting story without a lot of sex. I think I've read most of her books, but keep on the lookout for others. One I still have on hand is a hard cover of *The Wedding* (Pocket Book, a division of Simon & Schuster, Inc.). I saved it as I thought

it would be a good one to send to a granddaughter when she is getting married (and I do have a number of granddaughters of an age to be married!).

I read all of Susan Phillips books too and enjoy them very much. It is interesting to see how much more polished she is with these later books than with the first ones she wrote.

Mary Ann Kerwin: I particularly like biographies, history, and English novels such as those written by Jane Austen.

Many of the books I have read this year reflect selections made jointly in my book club—one that four friends and I started in 1964 when our families were young. Two of my recent favorites:

No Ordinary Time: Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt, The Home Front in World War II by Doris Kearns Goodwin (1994 Simon & Schuster) is a historical portrait of the United States during 1940 to 1945, a time period I am very interested in

because I can recall my childhood impressions and now have questions relating to the events of that era.

Angela's Ashes by Frank McCourt (1996 Simon & Schuster) is the painful childhood memoir of the author, who was born in New York but grew up in the slums of Limerick, Ireland. I was especially interested in reading this because my grandparents emigrated from Ireland.

Other books that I've enjoyed this year are *Undaunted Courage: Meriwether Lewis, Thomas Jefferson, and the Opening of the American West*

The Founders share their current reading favorites—a list as delightfully diverse & unique as the Founders themselves

What the Founders are reading... *continued*

by Stephen Ambrose ; *Tuesdays with Morrie* by Mitch Albom; *Country Days* by Alice Taylor; and *Charming Billy* by Alice McDermott.

I also try to read daily from a book my older brother gave me last Christmas, *Journeying with the Lord: Reflections for Everyday*, by Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini, the widely admired Archbishop of Milan, Italy (1987, Alba House, NY).

As you can guess, the table next to my bed is piled high! I can never really find enough time for all the books I aspire to read.

Mary Ann Cahill: I'm not reading as much as I'd like—there just aren't enough hours in the day. Mainly I read periodicals, though I recently finished *With God in Russia* (1997, Ignatius Press) by Walter Ciszek, who grew up "tough" in a Polish neighborhood in the US, became a priest in the Eastern Rite, went to Russia under an assumed name in order to serve the Polish/Russian people living under Communism. He was accused of being a spy, imprisoned and forced into slave labor building the huge Russian industrial centers in Siberia. All told, he was kept in Russia 23 years. This story is told straightforward and without animosity. The effect is an incredible example of courage and faith in God overcoming totalitarianism. I grew up during WWII and remember the Cold War vividly. This was a look behind the scenes. It made me realize again how fortunate we are in this country

Edwina Froehlich: I can never pass up a bookstore; consequently I am often into three or four books at a time. Currently I have two that I purchased and three from the library—all calling to me.

Uncovering Clinton by Michael Isikoff (1999, Crown Pub.) was on the less-than-half-price shelf which is always an eye catcher for me. I recognized the author as an experienced and credible reporter of the political scene and thought his version of the happenings would be interesting—and it is.

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Between Death & Life by Dolores Cannon—she is a past life regressionist and the possibilities of reincarnation hold a fascination for me.

Lady Be Good by Susan Phillips, who is a retired Leader I remember from when she was active in Ohio LLL. This is one of many she has written. When I am in the mood for a pleasant romantic novel with a happy ending I have this to refer to. Besides, paperbacks are small, light, and easy to read in bed.

Silver Wedding is by Maeve Binchy, who writes delightful stories about life in modern Ireland. She is a real people lover and a fascinating storyteller. In my mind I actually live with the characters in her story. It is always hard for me to tear myself away and get to my chores when I am in the midst of one of Binchy's tales.

Everyday Blessings by Myla and Jon Kabat-Zinn is about parenting and though that is no longer my main focus in life, I had noticed the book in LLLI's catalogue and made a note to get it. My procrastination in the matter came to an abrupt halt when I discovered that I was to have the privilege of introducing these authors at the LLLI Conference in July. I am only part way through the book at this point but I surely wish I had had it 40 years ago! I am now truly eager to meet the authors in person.

Viola Lennon: One of the best books I have read in ages is *Memoirs of a Geisha* by Arthur Golden (1997, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., NY). The style of the writing fascinates me. It has a lilting quality as if written in Japanese and translated. Not so—this is a first novel by Golden, who is an American.

Early in the story, two young girls are sold into slavery after the death of their mother. One is assigned to a house of prostitution, the other has two choices: she can become a maid for the rest of her life, or she can train to be a geisha. A geisha is an entertainer—sometimes more. She must be educated, learn to dance, play a special instrument, and register in her town.

Watching Sayuri study, you see a whole different culture with its own value system. Honesty is admired, hard work is appreciated, and loyalty to one's supporters is paramount. We view her struggles not only to become a very important geisha, but also to find happiness and contentment. I will never see the word kimono without remembering Sayuri and her story.

Keeping the LLL connection

Last year, the LLLI Alumnae Association initiated the Retired Leader Update Form as one method of reconnecting—and staying connected—with retired Leaders. Over 10,000 were sent in the initial mailing. Since then, the form has been sent out regularly to all retiring Leaders. Currently, over 800 responses have been entered into the Alumnae database. The following information is taken from these and other communications.

Martha Williams (Mississippi) teaches child development and family living and runs a support group for teen mothers at a local high school. She is listed in the Who's Who of American Teachers.

Linda Hunt (Iowa) was admitted to Drake University Law School last fall.

Patricia Crockett (North Carolina) is a ministerial student, taking courses for ordination to the ministry in the Wesley Church.

Pat Piscitelli (Iowa) is a school prevention specialist who presents violence and substance resistance programs to k - 8th grade students. She also writes "Family Focus," a monthly newspaper column.

Patricia Cross (California) finished graduate school this past year. Her thesis was on adolescent grief.

Ruth Ann Zeiset (Pennsylvania) works with the elderly, organizing care plan conferences with the staff who care for them, along with family members. She writes, "The similarity to mothers attending LLL meetings because they wanted to do what was best for their babies is remarkable."

Andrea Hill (New York) is owner/artistic director of Ballet Theatre of Centra PA. She has taught ballet to hundred of students since 1992, some now in professional schools and college scholarship programs. She is also a choreographer of numerous works, including Stravinsky's *Firebird* for the Central PA Festival of the Arts.

Maureen Durning (Ohio) is a program manager for Parents as Teachers, an international program of parent education and support based on the belief that parents are their children's first and most important teachers.

Angela Wittenburg (Tennessee) is writing elementary Bible study curriculum for international interdenominational Bible study.

Julie Trapp (Maryland) is a runner who has completed three marathons. She races two to three times per month. "After fifty," she reports, "the trophies came more regularly."

Gloria Billings (Iowa) is a director of social services, supervising eight hospice social workers. She is also director of the North Iowa AIDS project, which provides services in 12 counties.

Charlotte McPherson (Virginia) has won numerous awards in photography in the past few years. She also directs a handbell choir.

Adele Foster (Louisiana) is working for the Steven Spielberg Shoah Foundation, interviewing Holocaust survivors.

Wendy Reininger (Oregon) is a life coach and psychotherapist, working with individuals and couples. She also teaches classes in self-esteem, conscious relationship, and manifestation.

Susan Sydla (Virginia) is a kindergarten/first grade teacher. She has been working on math curriculum in her county and state, finding it especially rewarding to encourage young girls in this area.

Linda Conlin (Nevada) developed a river monitoring program called "River Wranglers." It is comprised of local school students and interested community members dedicated to exploring, protecting, and celebrating the Carson River which flows through their high desert community.

Frieda Anderson (Illinois) is an art quilter with quilts exhibited nationally.

Karen Brown (South Carolina) teaches fifth grade math, science, and social studies.

Agnes Leistico (California) is currently Bereavement Care Director for a local mortuary—using almost all the skills she honed in LLL work in a job that she loves and finds very rewarding. She works with families in grief for at least a year after the funeral. She also does a lot of community speaking and leads a Grief Recovery Outreach Program.

Sue Forrester (Texas) is a pediatric nurse practitioner working in primary care pediatrics. She has also been actively working on legislative concerns for health matters and advanced practice nurses.

Marie Foxton (Washington) owns Lakewood Natural Foods, a 21,000 square foot natural foods grocery. She credits her interest and devotion to nursing, natural childbirth, and natural foods to LLLI.

The dark years

My only son is now 26, a graduate of a local junior college where he now works. He is handsome and confident and makes a lot of money. I am on my second marriage to a wonderful man—but life was not always this good.

In one year, I flunked out of graduate school, lost a teaching position, got a divorce after 18 years of marriage, and moved to Texas. Three years later, I filed bankruptcy. My healthy LLL-raised son dropped out of school at age 16, vowing not to live a sheltered life. He started smoking, drinking, doing drugs.

During these years, I was not active in LLL, but I followed the principles that I had learned during my years as a Leader. “Older” parents were my support group. They shared their stories with me. One had a 27-year-old living under bridges. Another spent her son’s 21st birthday with him in prison. Another’s daughter was living in a shelter with her baby after an abusive relationship. Some had eventually put themselves through college; some were active in church, had families. The turning point catalysts varied widely (and some never came).

Honesty was very important to me and I shared this with my son. I listened till my hair turned white—literally—but I did not punish. He told me about the night they egged houses, how speed, marijuana, cocaine and acid made him feel. When he lost his favorite leather jacket, I helped him buy another. I lent him my car and prayed it would be home by daylight for me to get to work.

My heart followed the path of “tender love.” Tough love was not my style. But please don’t think I did everything right. I did listen to my son and to my heart and tuned all other advice out. In retrospect, that was the right decision for us.

Adam’s turning point came at age twenty (after four dark years). I’d met

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my current husband; I had a life. He had to get one of his own. Adam’s dad agreed to help me send him to college. Adam got angry and refused to go. It was a Saturday afternoon. I used every persuasive argument I knew. I told him he was turning down a million dollar lottery ticket. I cried. He still refused. Sunday morning after tending bar all

night, he was sitting in front of the fireplace reading a book. He got that silly little grin on his face he’d get off and on since a toddler and said, “Okay, I’ll go to school if you will treat me like a kindergarten student and tell me where to go and what to do.” This was July; by the end of August, he had a GED and I walked him to his first day of class.

“The rest of the story,” as Paul Harvey would say, is in my opening paragraph. While I’m not currently active in LLL, I’m so grateful to the Founders for enriching my life. In a few years, I hope to be able to afford to attend LLL conferences. I pore over brochures. I buy LLL books as gifts. LLL is still as needed in our society as it was 30 years ago. Thanks to all who have shared their lives and stories with me and have shaped my life.

*Sharrell Joy Whitmire, RN, BSN
Texas*

Borders offers a unique outreach opportunity

Imagine a group of expectant mothers gathered around an LLL Leader—listening, questioning, sharing. While it might sound like a typical LLL meeting, the setting isn’t in a home or hospital conference room, but in a Borders bookstore. That is the enticing vision that Borders, a nationwide chain of bookstores, recently proposed to LLLI.

Borders Inc. would like to have an LLL presence in their stores (close to 350) across the United States. They are interested in having Leaders facilitate seminars, lectures and/or question and answer sessions for expectant mothers. In addition, the local stores where Leaders speak will receive special shipments of LLLI titles which will be

featured and promoted in conjunction with the speaking event(s).

This opportunity could generate new memberships for local Groups and allow Leaders to reach a wider audience of women, spreading the word about the benefits of breastfeeding and the services of LLLI.

Leaders who have a Borders in their community and are interested in this outreach opportunity are encouraged to contact their Area’s ACL as soon as possible. The LLLI/Borders connection is still in the planning stages, so your ideas on making this a beneficial partnership are also welcome. Please share them with your ACL, who will pass them on to LLLI.

Life after LLL: Judy Roepke, nutritionist

If you've ever attended a session on nutrition at an LLLI conference, chances are high that you've had the pleasure of encountering Judy Roepke, RD, PhD. Judy is a professor of family and consumer sciences in nutrition as well as Dean for Continuing Education and Public Service at Ball State University in Indiana. For several years, Judy has been a member of LLL's Health Advisory Council and she is a frequent speaker at state and international conferences. Judy is also a member of The International Board of Lactation Consultant Examiners (IBLCE) and chair this year of the Examination Committee. Earlier this year, she participated in an online interview for CONTINUUM.

What sparked your interest in nutrition? Did you bring this love to your leadership, or did it evolve from being a mother and/or an LLL Leader?

I actually started college with the intention of becoming a fashion buyer. However, I loved science, including chemistry, and realized that the business world did not address some of my values. Dietetics became very appealing when I realized that I could be helping people. I'm not a foods person, so I gravitated to the nutrition science and clinical side of dietetics.

My involvement in LLLI started in Texas, where I was working as a public health nutritionist. When my daughter was born, I was determined to breastfeed her. She was born five weeks early and needed to feed more often than I was advised. I discovered that if I let her feed whenever she wanted, it worked well. My husband was in grad school at the time and I went back to work when she was eight weeks old. Since I didn't know about pumping, I started formula...Needless to say, I soon was not breastfeeding. Fortunately, I was not bewildered, but pleased she had more than eight weeks of nursing.

About six months later, the nurses in our office decided to have a debate on bottle versus breast and came to me for information. A colleague of mine at the State Board of Health had just heard about La Leche League, so I contacted LLLI—this was in 1963—and was sent some information, including the *WOMANLY ART OF BREASTFEEDING*.

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When I read the material, I thought, (I hope you can hear the indignation in my voice) “Who is this telling nurses, and doctors, and dietitians about breastfeeding!” Then I realized I knew nothing. So I read, I shared the information with nurses, and loaned the *WOMANLY ART* to a friend who had terrible engorgement.

When we moved to Indiana, I was pregnant again and immediately sought out La Leche League. Of course, I thought all my wisdom about nutrition should be of great value. I discovered that it was helpful to some, but not to others. In 1967 I became a Leader and was active until 1974, when we moved across the state for school.

What prompted your return to grad school? I worked on my Masters degree one class at a time when my children were very young. It took me over five years (including a year off when my son was born), but it was great fun. When my master's thesis professor pushed me to continue for my Ph.D., I pooh-poohed the idea because I needed time to parent little ones. However, the seed was planted. I enjoyed teaching and realized that if I wanted to do this the rest of my life, I would have to go on with my education. The opportunity came when my husband took a year's sabbatical, which included study at Purdue. We lived near the campus and were able to juggle our class schedules so one of us was home for the kids after school.

Has LLL had any influence or impact on your work? I have become passionate about the importance of human milk in the developmental feeding of infants—for the physical and emotional nourishment and for the immunological protection of the infant. Lactation/breastfeeding has been a focus of my research, teaching, and community and professional service.

What do you see as the nutrition issues for the coming decade? I am worried that good, everyday nutrition is not given enough attention. People are always looking for something magic—they get hung up on fads, take excessive amounts of vitamins and minerals, make poor fast food choices, focus on quick fixes. Yet good food, well enjoyed in variety; exercise; rest; good health care; and being with the people you love can make such an enriching life. No one needs tricks—just those simple things.

Board agenda addresses a wide range of topics

The La Leche League International Board of Directors meets together just two or three times each year. However, they do a tremendous amount of work between sessions in committees and through on-line discussions. Some of the current topics they are addressing include:

- ❖ An understanding of the meaning of the word “volunteer” in a variety of cultures. LLL has been built on volunteer power, but what does “volunteer” really mean?
- ❖ Update of the agreement between LLLI and its Affiliates. (Affiliates are autonomous LLL entities who have a specific legal relationship to LLLI.)
- ❖ Building a common understanding of the role of a Leader. What do leaders do and how do they do it? Are there variations in the role based on culture, location or custom?
- ❖ Development of a grievance procedure for Leaders. What happens when the usual administrative structures that exist in LLL cannot resolve an issue of conflict?
- ❖ Discussion of issues which touch upon some aspect of the WHO Code of Marketing of Breast Milk Substitutes.
- ❖ Assessing where LLL will be in five years. Beyond traditional planning, where will an organization like ours fit into the fabric of society in the future?

If any of these topics sound interesting to you, contact a Board member listed on this page, who will refer you to the committee chair for each topic.

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The LLLI bookshelf: new publications enrich, inspire

Several new selections—along with revisions of some old favorites—have been added to the LLLI catalogue.

Your Amazing Newborn, by Marshall Klaus and Phyllis Klaus, is a revised edition containing new research on mother-infant bonding as well as infant behavior and development. [Hardcover, 113 pages. No.3095, \$20.00]

Mothering Multiples: Breastfeeding and Caring for Twins or More! (Revised Edition) by Karen Gromada. A LLL best-seller for 15 years, this new edition includes updated information based on current research as well as the experience of parents of multiples. [Softcover, 380 pages. No.267a, \$14.95]

The Five Love Languages of Children, by Gary Chapman and Ross Campbell, proposes that all people have a certain way of expressing and receiving love. These languages—quality time, words of affirmation, gifts, acts of service, and physical touch—each have different characteristics, however, by using them parents can develop a better understanding of their children. [Softcover, 224 pages. No. 3592, \$11.99]

Alumnae Association seeks part-time staff

A part-time (one day per week) staff person is needed to work with the LLLI Alumnae Association at LLLI headquarters in Schaumburg IL. A retired Leader would be an ideal candidate, preferably with computer experience, particularly working with a database. Contact Pam Oselka, Coordinator, LLLI Alumnae Association (see p. 8).

How Weaning Happens by LLL Leader Diane Bengson, includes the personal experiences of mothers who have weaned in a variety of ways. [Softcover, 156 pages. No.256, \$10.95]

Early Fatherhood Development, by Jeff Yoder, brings a good deal of humor to the role of father. With tongue firmly in cheek, the author offers advice on becoming a father, childbirth, breastfeeding, the courage to change (diapers, that is), the family bed, and more. [Softcover, 84 pages. No.3122, \$8.95]

The Baby Bond: How to Raise an Emotionally Healthy Child, by Dianna Hine, is an easy-to-read book filled with information on how to use loving guidance and attachment parenting to foster healthy children and relationships. [Softcover, 229 pages. No.3092, \$14.95]

Ourselves as Mothers: The Universal Experience of Motherhood, by Sheila Kitzinger, discusses the challenges faced by women as mothers in cultures around the world. [Softcover, 270 pages. No.3612, \$14.00]

Parenting from the Heart, edited by Carolyn Dash Mailer, shares articles that have appeared over the years in “Parenting from the Heart,” the magazine put out by the owners of the well known nursing clothing catalogue, Motherwear. Written by mothers, these short, inspirational essays cover such topics as breastfeeding, sleeping, and coping with the challenges of parenting. The book lends support to a nurturing attachment philosophy of parenting, treats breastfeeding as the norm, and encourages mothers to follow their own hearts. [Softcover, 235 pages, No.3322, \$14.95]

The A.D.D. Book: New Understandings, New Approaches to Parenting Your Child, by William Sears and Lynda Thompson, is an excellent guide for parents whose children have been diagnosed as having Attention Deficit Disorder. [Softcover, 300 pages. No.3046, \$17.95]

Everyday Blessings: The Inner Work of Mindful Parenting, by Myla and Jon Kabat-Zinn, who are parents of three grown children. The book takes a different approach by focusing on the thoughts and feelings, rather than techniques, associated with parenting children of all ages. [Softcover, 394 pages. No.3473, \$14.95]

Join the Alumnae!

YES, I want to keep in touch and support LLLI. My Alumnae membership category is checked below. Enclosed is:

- \$6 for CONTINUUM (I am currently an LLL Leader or member)
- \$19 for an LLLI Alumnae Membership (includes CONTINUUM)
- \$36 for CONTINUUM and an LLLI Individual Membership
- \$50 for a 3-year LLLI Alumnae Membership (includes CONTINUUM)
- \$75 for a 5-year LLLI Alumnae Membership (includes CONTINUUM)

Name: _____
 Address: _____
 State/Province: _____
 Zip/Postal Code: _____
 Country: _____
 Current LLL status: _____

Send to: LLLI International, P.O. Box 4079 Schaumburg IL 60168-4079 USA

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New computing system will bring greater efficiency to LLLI

A new computer software system will be in place at LLLI headquarters this summer, thanks to the generous donations of alumnae members and others who contributed to the LLLI Capital Fund for Technology.

While the wait has been long, the payoff will be great. The new system will bring a number of benefits to staff, administrators, Leaders, and members, including:

- ❖ customer service improvements
- ❖ better data collection and dissemination
- ❖ improved tracking capabilities
- ❖ greater reporting capabilities, and
- ❖ the ability to analyze programs and products

New York West added to Areas with Alumnae Representatives

The new Area Alumnae Representative for New York West is **Alice Martino**. She can be reached at:

4574 Stoneledge Lane, Manlius, NY 13104
315-682-9439 (h) · 315-474-8236 (w)
e-mail: amar051441@aol.com

NY West will be observing its 20th anniversary in the year 2000. If you're an alum from this Area, plan on attending their celebratory gathering next spring. They are also looking for historical pieces from that box in the attic or basement to reprint in their ALL, *Harvest*. Items or recollections can be sent to Alice.