

## **March 9<sup>th</sup> Chapter Meeting Features HbL Pharma Consulting**

Statistics show that over 50% of older adults do not take medications the way they are prescribed, while 15% of hospitalizations in the oldest among us are related to improper medication use. A growing problem among all age groups is the interaction of multiple medications.

Our speaker on March 9<sup>th</sup> is *Dr. Hedva Barenholtz Levy*, the director of *HbL PharmaConsulting*, a service that provides comprehensive medication reviews. This unique service promotes safe and effective use of prescription and nonprescription medications. Individualized consultations are provided by Dr. Levy, a consulting senior care pharmacist. Her consultations focus on drug interactions, side effects, dosing, and drug selection. Dr. Levy educates clients about lifestyle recommendations to improve drug effectiveness, strategies for managing complex drug regimens, and ways to work with their physicians to improve overall health.

Drug interactions are one of the most common concerns patients have about their medications. Thousands of interactions are possible among drugs, including both prescription and nonprescription products. But which interactions are most important and why? How can you prevent an interaction? Dr. Levy's talk will address common interactions, dangerous interactions, interactions with herbals and nonprescription products, and important tips for preventing a serious adverse event due to a drug interaction.

The meeting on March 9<sup>th</sup> will again be from 2 to 4 p.m., at the Ladue Chapel, 9450 Clayton Road . Parking on the west side.

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## **OWL National News**

OWL's national staff, along with other national associations, successfully advocated against the passage of the Conrad-Gregg amendment in Congress, which was defeated at the end of January. The commission would have been charged with reducing the national debt by targeting cuts or caps in funding, leaving open the possibility that Social Security might be on the cutting block. Subsequently, in his State of the Union address, the president revived the idea of a debt commission and seemed to rule out cuts to Social Security. The national office will follow this closely and keep members up-to-date.

OWL Executive Director Ashley Carson and others met with top White House staff January 25 to talk about seniors and job creation. Carson stressed the importance of Social Security, referring to the large number of individuals who are taking their benefits early to cope with loss of jobs.

Read national OWL's news online at [www.owl-national.org](http://www.owl-national.org)

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**Gateway Chapter's Divorce Support Group** for women who have been in long-term marriages now meets on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of each month from 4 to 6 p.m. Information at 878-8230.

**The South Central Pension Rights Project**, formerly the Midwest Pension Rights Project, can be reached at 800-443-2528. Professional counseling and assistance obtaining information and benefits are free of charge, regardless of age or gender.

**Celebrating Women: Reinventing Ourselves After 50** is a free event at UMSL on Saturday, April 10<sup>th</sup>. See [www.umsce.org](http://www.umsce.org).

## Save the Date:

### Women's Health Seminar May 8<sup>th</sup>

In collaboration with St. John's Mercy Hospital, AAUW (American Association of University Women, west county chapter) and several other organizations, Gateway OWL is leading the planning for a very special health seminar for women. Saturday May 8<sup>th</sup> will be a day of health information, fun and learning at St. John's Mercy's David Pratt Cancer Center, a wonderful site with a lot of breakout space. Do reserve the day on your calendar. It will be a partial day seminar that includes lunch. Tell all your friends and plan to come together to celebrate women.

Although planning is still in progress, some of the topics for the breakouts are:

Guided Imagery	Massage – Stress Relief
Stroke Prevention	Blooming in the Second
Mind/Body Nutrition	What's that Spot?
Tai Chi	Meditation
Yoga	

We hope to see many of you there. More information will follow in the next newsletter.

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## Important Legislative Issues

*Barbara McQuitty*

More critical issues are under consideration for major changes than at any recent time. They will affect all of us, as well as our family and friends. They bear watching as well as action on our part. Some are on the national stage and others are here in Missouri.

Federal health care reform The election of a new Republican Massachusetts senator seems to have health care reform stalled. It can still happen, but the impetus has slowed enormously. If the Senate bill is passed in the House without amendment, it can go forward without another Senate vote; however, this does not look as if it is likely to happen. Efforts to scale the reform down to make it more palatable to both parties is more likely. Starting over, and creating a new stripped-down, bare bones bill would mean losing all of the valuable change that is needed.

Failure to reform health care will mean that 463,000 Missourians now without health insurance will remain uninsured. It means that tens of thousands of Missouri seniors on Medicare Part D will still fall into the "donut hole" each year. It also means that spiraling insurance costs will continue for employers and employees. We need to take action and let our Representatives and Senators know that we want their cooperation to help pass health care reform. It won't happen without our voices!

Some of the critical issues for OWL members are:

- Help for seniors and persons with disabilities who need long-term care to live independently at home
- Improved preventive and chronic care
- Better prescription drug coverage
- Protection against elder abuse and neglect

Missouri's Mega Sales Tax A proposed amendment to the Missouri Constitution, [SJR 29 & 37](#), would eliminate personal and corporate income taxes and replace them with a mega sales tax. This would relieve businesses in our state of any obligation to help pay the cost of the government services and infrastructure which make it possible for them to reap a profit here.

*Legislative Issues continued from p. 2*

Repealing the state personal income tax and substituting a mega sales tax to replace the **nine billion dollars** the income tax provides for vital state services, HJR 56 would impose the biggest sales tax increase ever on all consumer goods and services purchased. This amendment needs your attention and contact with your Missouri Representative and Senator as well. Let them know that this amendment would seriously impact the income of all Missouri citizens and be especially difficult on the households of the seniors.

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### **Announcing New Board Members**

Two members have been appointed by Gateway OWL president Maryann Sexton to fill vacancies on the Board:

**Ernie Edelmann** is a former Woman of Worth and served as co-chair of the WOW dinner in 2009. She is a licensed professional counsel with a long history of working with women, particularly women who are victims of domestic violence.

**Valerie Rovira** comes to the Board representing the Divorce Support Group, where she has been a peer leader since 2005. Valerie does bookkeeping and consulting work part-time and is an artist who has exhibited, "but not recently".

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### **Women's Financial Education Series**

*by Kathleen Kinderfather*

What an interesting evening! It was October 29<sup>th</sup>, 2009 and it had been raining for weeks and was still raining on that Thursday evening but the room was full of students, all on time, the video cart plugged in, the snack food ready and all of the material for the last class of the 2009 Women's Financial Education Series was set to begin!

Thus began the last of five sessions. Not a minute of the 6 to 8:30pm time frame was wasted. Investing for retirement, mutual funds, stocks and bonds, IRA's and 401(k)s were the issues for the evening. Two very experienced and credentialed ladies shared the presentation time. They used overhead projections and took many questions. Often the questions were answered with an expanded reference from a former lesson.

It was superior class. The wrap-up part of the evening had the assignments collected as all the lessons had homework and copies of the results of those lessons were shared. Each student earned a ticket for a final drawing when each of the activity sheets for all the lessons were handed in. I loved the energy that was in the room that evening. I had known about the series for years but now I can share in the recruiting for the next series.

**Watch for the announcement of the next Women's Financial Education Series, co-sponsored by UMSL and OWL..**

#### **New Members**

A big warm welcome to these women who have recently joined the Gateway Chapter:

Edith Betz, Joan Dames, Angie Moore and Barbara Stemmler.

### **Celebrating Women: Reinventing Ourselves After 50**

Once again, OWL will have a presence at this UMSL event taking place Saturday, April 10 from 9 am. to 4 p.m. in the J.C. Penney Conference Center. The Gateway chapter will be among the community resources for women over 50, which offers our members an opportunity to volunteer, spreading the word about OWL. Call Barb McQuitty at 725-5862.

Our long-time member and Advocacy Chair **Myrna Fichtenbaum** has moved with her husband to Princeton, NJ, to be with family. Myrna was always on top of current issues, kept us informed and enthused, and arranged for some excellent presentations on issues of concern to midlife and older women, especially on the topic of health care reform.

Member and volunteer **Nancy Hart** died recently at age 85. She contributed generously of her time to OWL.

Two-time honorary co-chair of WOW, **Barbara Washington**, made news recently by being recognized by the *Ladue News* as one of the "Ten Most Dynamic People" in St. Louis. She was honored for her decades of work for the Mathews-Dickey Boys' & Girls' Club.

### January – February 2010 Tributes & Gifts

#### Tributes:

In Honor of **Shirley Novitskie's** 88<sup>th</sup> birthday  
Kathryn Pool

In Honor of **Christine Buck Mason's**  
WOW Lifetime Achievement Award  
Sam & Jeanette Koplak Foundation

In Memory of **Mary Kimbrough**  
Barbara Pierce

#### Gifts to OWL:

Anna Livesay – Matching Gift  
Mary Clark Kirchner  
Sue Davidson  
Barbara M. Clark  
Norma Leuthauser

#### **Letter from the President**

A new year- - and we are busy! As you will see elsewhere in this newsletter we are planning and participating in many events. Happily, we are attracting new members. It's a good beginning for 2010.

In the past we have encouraged our members to become involved but have not been specific about OWL's volunteer opportunities. Here's how you can help us continue to be an organization whose mission is to enhance women's lives through advocacy, education and special programs.

#### **Advocacy** – Meet regularly with the committee

Network with other advocacy groups

Keep OWL members informed about important issues **Note: We are actively seeking someone to**

**assume the chairmanship of the Advocacy Committee.** Myrna Fichtenbaum, our tireless advocate, has moved out of the St. Louis area.

#### **Hospitality** – Greeter at general membership meetings

Snacks for meetings

Assist at special events, i.e. Health Seminar on May 8, 2010 and

Women Reinventing Ourselves after 50" at UMSL

#### **Membership** – Do outreach for new members

Follow up with new members

#### **Program** - Suggest program ideas

Contact possible speakers

Inform other organizations about upcoming OWL programs

OWL is an exciting organization and will become more so because of your involvement. With your busy schedules, it's nice to know that these are not very time consuming commitments but important to our chapter. Please contact Barb McQuitty at 314-725-5862 or any board member to let us know how you wish to help.

*Maryann Sexton*

## *Meet Bea Renna*

*(Third in a series of interviews with long-time OWL members)*

Most OWL members have never known our chapter without Bea Renna. Her leadership over the past 20+ years as president, board member, and on the membership, advocacy, health, and Women of Worth committees has consistently helped to keep her fellow OWLs on track. We asked Bea recently about some of her favorite OWL memories.

### **When did you join OWL?**

When my good friend Gloria Weber was president and asked me to join. We worked together for the Variety Club telethon since the sixties. I followed her as OWL president from 1991 through 1993.

### **What are some of your favorite memories?**

Oh---working on the WOW committees, meeting so many outstanding women, forming wonderful friendships. I enjoyed scheduling the OWL Historical Skits and I'd love to see the skits active again. We appeared before many women's, church, and workplace groups – and helped spread the name of OWL.

### **Where are your organizational strengths?**

Mainly in the fund raising area, which I am still doing for the Variety Club. I don't mind working with all the details and telephoning people. I like networking and meeting groups of people with similar interests.

### **Do you see any differences between the early and current OWL organization?**

Well, members were much more involved in traveling to Jefferson City on behalf of women's issues. Having lived through the 70s and 80s, we were more into protesting and making ourselves heard. Of course, now there are more organizations doing this, and we use the internet to stay involved. Our programs were a bit more social when we served pot-luck dinners!

### **You also worked in the cosmetology field for many years, and I know you've won numerous awards. Tell us about that.**

In fact, this year marks my 50<sup>th</sup> year as a cosmetologist. I enjoyed making up people for the theater, television, and for many fashion shows. Over the years, I worked for three different companies, demonstrating the latest in beauty products and skin care, and doing consulting work. I've been with *Oriflame* for 25 years.

### **I understand that you and your husband, Dick, will be celebrating your 64<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary later this year. How will you be celebrating?**

We will be doing a lot of traveling. We will be visiting Florida this year with Gloria Weber and her husband. Also, we have an extensive family --- including six grandchildren, five great grandchildren and their parents-- located from coast to coast in California, New York, North Carolina, and Minnesota, and we're very proud of all of them. Most have Ph.D.'s and four are in education. Most family members play instruments, act or write music, so we have a good time when we get together. Our son, Paul, lives in St. Louis and is a graphic artist who designs the Women of Worth invitation for us every year.

Thanks, Bea, for sharing your thoughts with us. Hope you and your family have a great year.

By Marge Polcyn

**Chapter Meeting**  
**March 9<sup>th</sup> , page one**  
**Women's Health Seminar**  
**Page 2**