

A big heart and a very big dryer

By Robin Knudson

It all started with a phone call – would Marilyn come back to Seattle to help take care of a new grandson? After living and working for many years in New York, and enjoying every minute there, Marilyn Moch first said, “No.” But then her son-in-law called again to ask, and her heart softened at the thought of being a regular part of her grandson’s life, so she agreed. Her daughter found a house for her to rent in South Seattle, but, like many rental homes, it had a funny quirk: an industrial-sized gas dryer too big to move out of the basement. Though she didn’t think much of it at first, that

dryer would be the catalyst for a new life of activism in Seattle.

In New York Marilyn had served as a Social Worker for the NY City Welfare Department for many years. When she came back to Seattle she volunteered to be the supervisor for UW Social Work students with non-traditional practicum placements. One of her students had been assigned to interview people in an encampment that a group of homeless people created along the Duwamish River. In 2008, that camp was closed down by the city and the camp moved to a site in the University District.

In September Marilyn and



Marilyn Moch and her ‘industrial sized dryer’ (Photo by Robin Knudson)

her student visited the camp and found a mound of wet sleeping bags and blankets the residents could not afford to dry.

Marilynn says “Here were a group of people overcoming the hardships of homelessness to create a community. They have rules, a security system, assigned food and cooking duties, and a tent master. They raise funds for garbage and sanitary services, and arrange for all the basics needed to create civil society. With the support of the broader community these men and women can stabilize their lives. My dryer became my contribution to that support.”

During the winter, it was ‘just’ a matter of picking up bags of wet sleeping bags and blankets, drying them and then taking them back to the camp. Then the Seattle Health Department visited the encampment and declared that during the summer months the bedding would have to be laundered as well. Marilyn still collects the wet and soiled bedding, but now she takes it to a Laundromat to wash it all before she takes it home to her big dryer. This means much more time and money. For a camp of 80-100 people, Marilyn launders three car-loads of bedding per week, and does small mending jobs when needed!

When Marilyn realized how much of her own money the laundry was consuming, she began looking for organization that might help her defray the

costs. She had help from Jason Anderson, a camp resident, who so values the work that she does that he visited the library to see what help they could find. Through their research they heard about RSVP and called to ask what we could do. Though we can’t help with the actual cost of the laundry, we can provide some mileage reimbursement for trips back and forth from the camp to the Laundromat. Marilyn said she uses the reimbursement money to help do more laundry. Any help she receives makes her feel like she’s not alone in her work and it gives her the “extra boost of energy to keep going.”

I went with Marilyn to deliver her latest load of freshly laundered, and neatly folded, bedding and asked some of the residents how they felt about her work. “Awesome,” one said, and another called her their ‘Blanket Angel’. Jason, who noticed that the blankets were nearly folded, said that Marilyn was a true blessing. “When I met her it was raining and I was getting pretty wet, and then she comes along.” He looked in wonderment as he said, “Where did she come from?” From grace, Marilyn would say, and a very large dryer.

If you have any extra quarters to donate to Marilyn’s work, or would like to know more about the encampment, now known as Nickelsville, please contact RSVP at 206-957-4779 x 116. ●

Solid Ground
RSVP (Retired & Senior Volunteer Program)
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Speaking Directly

by Robin Knudson, RSVP Coordinator

“RSVP Volunteers are Helping, Healthy, and Happy” – doesn’t the theme of our recognition event seem to sum up the benefits and pleasures of volunteering? We know from scientific study that because people give of themselves to help others, they are generally healthier and lead longer, happier lives. Our event will celebrate just that.

We start off the event with an **Exhibitor Fair** with organizations that have products and services that they want to tell you about. Some of these are Microsoft, WA Dental Foundation, AARP, ResCare Home Care, Aegis Living, and The Garden Club Retirement Co.

Then we have a great breakfast with entertainment by the **Mid-Day Melody Men**. Our **keynote speaker** is Dr. Basia Belza, the Aljoya Endowed Professor in Aging from the UW School of Nursing. Dr. Belza has done extensive research on the effects of physical activity for seniors – be prepared to be inspired!

We’ll also have our Volunteer of the year awards, and, of course, **Great Door Prizes**. Because we’re anticipating a full house, **please make a reservation through the volunteer coordinator at your volunteer site, or call me at 206-957-4779 x 116 to save your place.**

Another wonderful RSVP volunteer, Helen Geld, came up with this great logo design (to the right of this blurb). Helen is a graphic designer by trade and has some time and expertise she is graciously sharing with us. Thank you Helen! ●

RSVP Recognition Event
October 19
at Emerald Downs
racetrack in Auburn
Celebrating RSVP Volunteers

HELPING
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HEALTHY

Future EIA Articles

We would like YOU to participate in an upcoming issue of the EIA. We will be featuring services and “perks” available to seniors. Does your grocery store have a senior day? Do you go to a favorite store for special discounts? Let’s all share and learn together. Please call, write or email me with your favorite senior discounts and services: Robin Knudson, 206-957-4779 x116, robink@solid-ground.org.

The sleeping bag ladies

Featured Site: Northshore Senior Center – Sammamish Valley Grange by Robin Knudson

Every Tuesday, from 9:30am to 1:00pm at the Sammamish Valley Grange in Woodinville, you’ll find a group of 5 to 8 women sitting around a few big tables, talking quietly and creating hand-made sleeping bags that will be distributed to homeless people. Vida Anderson, age 99, formerly active in the group, once said that “making the sleeping bags gave them something to do while they were talking.”

I came to visit this group after



Joan Brennan (L) and Helen McMahon (Photo by Robin Knudson)

talking with Joan Brennan who now keeps track of the hours they spend working on the bags. Helen McMahon, the only remaining grange member, says the group started in 1967. All of the current members met through the Northshore Senior Center, except for Helga Smith who just saw the sign on the door. Every month Joan collects the hours sheets and sends them into Northshore Senior Center because she said, “I didn’t want all of those hours go to waste.” Northshore then sends the hours on to RSVP.

The original pattern and idea for the sleeping bags came from the Amish people in Pennsylvania. The bags, formerly



Helga Smith (Photo by Robin Knudson)

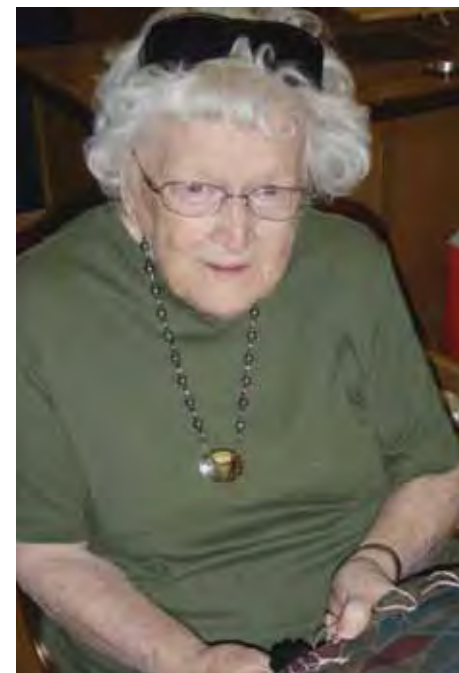
called Ugly Quilts, were first made out of old jeans. Each bag starts with 7 foot square pieces of fabric – large enough for a mother and baby as the story goes. The sleeping bags made by the Sammamish group today are definitely not ‘ugly’. They are creative and functional and beautifully made with loving care.

The bags are constructed of 3 layers – an outer layer of stiffer upholstery fabric, a middle blanket, and an inner sheet. The upholstery fabric is donated from a furniture store, some of the blankets are used pads from a moving company and used blankets from a massage business. The sheets are donated too – some coming from the famous Northshore Senior Center rummage sale called the Ransacked Attic. The

ties for the bags are used men’s neckties. Everything is donated, including the old Kenmore sewing machine, and nothing goes to waste. “It all just comes together” Joan said. “It seems that when we start to run out of something, we get just the right donation.” Occasionally Helen will put an ad in the Woodinville Weekly if they really running low on something.

Sleeping bags produced by the group have been donated to

Continued on page 3



Liz Kantola (Photo by Robin Knudson)



Wit & Wisdom

by author Henry Wiener

The glue that binds

There are so many ways we humans have of getting comfortably close with each other. While the glue that binds has many different forms, the result is often unifying and has resulted in unforgettable bonding.

What caught my eye not long ago was a story about the Book Club, a small group of African-American women who bonded deeply through a common interest in books by African American women authors.

The activity started with nine women and grew to 17. They have taken turns meeting in each other's homes on the last Sunday of every month for the last 20 years. The members of this group developed a tradition of starting with a social hour, followed by the book discussion. Often the story brought forth personal incidents in their lives which they shared and moved a few to write about. The experience was often framed with a trip to the locale where the action in the book they were reading took place.

It reminded me of the times I was part of a group dealing with certain issues or events which

became a bonding experience. Once I led a class on current events at a Senior Center. The members had been together for some time when their former leader left. They had become very close and often had contacts with each other outside of the class. After each session they enjoyed having lunch together. Often I was invited to join them, which was always a warm experience.

During the time I was a therapist at Group Health Cooperative I sat in with a few groups dealing with health issues they or someone close to them were facing. The interest and support evidenced at those times eddied out to all present and played a basic role in helping members face troubling medical problems.

As someone close to me has Alzheimer's, I have attended a support group for relatives and friends of those contending with a dementia; each individual is grappling with the impact of this mentally debilitating problem. The resultant bonding reveals itself in many positive ways – sharing helpful experiences with each other and supportive contacts after a particularly

30 and are well on their way to matching last year's total.

Each of the ladies in the group seems to have her own specialty: Joan Brennan and Lynn Murphy do the cutting and piecing of the material on the stage of the grange hall where they have taped off the right dimensions. Liz Kantola blanket stitches the edges using a very stiff needle and a pair of pliers. Helga Smith makes ties to hold things together.

Helen, at 92 now the oldest active member of the group, is the keeper of the history, and though she no longer works on the bags, her job is to make lunch!

Joan also says that the group is a veritable United Nations: she is Irish, Liz is Finnish, Helen is Danish, and Helga is Norwegian. It appears that their different

painful session.

The binding result of such group experiences was evinced in many ways when I worked at community centers. One of my favorites was a senior group that named itself the "True Friends." Their contact with members of all ages, especially the nursery little ones, was warm and always a delight to witness.

Bonding takes place in any setting where people get together on issues they have in common. Such a close togetherness evolved in the dedicated group of women at one of the centers who saw their mission developing at an annual auction that would help with the center's budgetary needs. The process of recruiting merchandise, holding the auction and handling all the aspects that made it a successful happening, was the glue that bound every participant to each other.

But the one I remember most fondly was early in my career when I was assigned to help bind a community together after WWII. In that neighborhood most people were still strangers and busy reorganizing their lives. Finding a core group of talented inhabitants, we decided to develop a vaudeville show with the theme, "Getting to Know You." Its success was the adhesive that changed the face of that community forever. ●

Henry Wiener is author of the book 'Wit and Wisdom.'



Sleeping bags waiting for pick-up, (Photo by Robin Knudson)

backgrounds give them even more to talk about. ●

Helen McMahan, who has lived in Woodinville since 1923, has created and published the Greater Woodinville Coloring Book with charming original drawings and lots of Woodinville History. It is available for \$5.00. Contact RSVP for ordering information.

RSVP



The Retired & Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) is a nonprofit National Senior Corps program sponsored locally by Solid Ground. RSVP encourages and supports volunteerism in King County for people 55 and older.



Solid Ground is dedicated to achieving a just and caring community free from poverty, prejudice and neglect. Our 30 programs give nearly 33,000 families a year the services, resources and support they need to overcome homelessness, hunger, domestic violence and other poverty-related traumas.

EIA

Experience in Action! (EIA) is published quarterly by King County RSVP and distributed to 4,000 RSVP volunteers and friends. EIA is dedicated to providing news and information to RSVP volunteers. Articles express writers' opinions which are not necessarily the views of RSVP or EIA. We reserve the right to refuse any material deemed unsuitable. Articles may be edited in accordance with technical and editorial policy guidelines.

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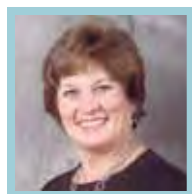
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Lynn Murphy (Photo by Robin Knudson)



Aging with Wisdom

by Carol Scott-Kassner

Responding to the troubles of the world

As I meditated on what direction to take with this article, an old spiritual came to my mind.

*Soon I'll be finished with the troubles
of the world,
troubles of the world, troubles of the
world.*

*Soon I'll be finished with the troubles
of the world,*

I'm going to live with God.

When you listen to that song being sung in a whispered low register, you can hear the agony and pain of the people singing it and their hope for a brighter future – somewhere away from the challenges of living in this world.

Listening to such songs, reading the newspaper, or viewing the nightly news often pulls at our heart and at our longing to be a

healing force in the world. There is so much need and we often feel helpless to meet the immensity of that need. It is important to acknowledge this helplessness and our personal inability to do everything we might want to do. And, at the same time, it is equally important to do something.

We are often inspired by the words of sociologist, Margaret Mead, who said, "A small group of thoughtful people could change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." And we are equally inspired by the words of Gandhi who said, "Be the change you want to see in the world." Yet, sometimes we just feel overwhelmed.

I've adopted the practice of a group of nuns I read about

who "pray the news" every day. As I make my way through the newspaper every morning, I silently pray for healing and presence or joy and celebration in response to whatever prayer the stories evoke. And, I often respond to calls for donation of money to help in places where I'm not likely to be able to go, such as Haiti. But, here at home, I sometimes find myself struggling to know where to best expend my volunteer efforts. Such struggles call for the use of the ancient spiritual practice of discernment.

Discernment has been called, "hearing with the heart." It has also been called, "Listening to the music of the Spirit."¹ It is a process that takes time, quiet, and reflection. Enter the process in silence and ask the question, "Where might my abilities and gifts best meet the needs of the world?" You might name to yourself several of the choices that you have. Sit with each of the possible choices for volunteering. Imagine yourself in each of the settings. Imagine how doing each of these would impact your life and the life of those with whom

you live. Notice how your body and your spirit are responding to these various possibilities. Pay attention to your intuition. Trust that it will be your guide to a best fit for you. Then, try out your choice to see if your discernment process worked. Remember, we must be free not to do everything as we work to find both meaning and balance in our lives.

May you be blessed in your process of discernment in the use of your energies and gifts. May you find a place to volunteer that is meaningful to you and to others. May you find balance in your life so that you have time for yourself as well as your volunteer activities. May you in turn, be blessed by the gifts that you offer. ●

¹Blythe, Teresa A. (2006) 50 Ways to Pray: Practices from Many Traditions and Times, Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, p. 72.

Carol Scott-Kassner is co-founder with Pat Lewis of 'Aging with Wisdom.' Pat and Carol are available to do workshops on various aspects of the spiritual journey of aging. They can be contacted at: www.agingwithwisdom.com or agingwithwisdom@msn.com.

Teaching English literacy

Featured Site: Literacy Source by Anita Warmflash

In the last issue of "Experience In Action" I wrote about relocating to Seattle six years ago from the East coast. I tried to impart the feel of adventure as I went about resettling and creating a new life. By now, I am more settled, have new ties, and a deeper involvement in the activities that interest me. However, I am still making discoveries both about myself and Seattle.

This spring I spoke to the staff at RSVP about wanting a volunteer experience for the summer months. As usual, they put on their thinking caps and soon had several new opportunities for me to consider which brings me to Literacy Source.

I had never heard of Literacy Source, located in the Fremont District, and I've found other Seattlites to whom this wonderful agency and its important work is unknown. So let me tell you about them and perhaps you can let others know about the important work they are doing with a small staff and many volunteers.

In a nutshell, they provide instruction in English literacy to adults, either new immigrants or American born. In the case of the American born, they may need to improve their English language skills in order to obtain employment or to qualify for a delayed high school diploma and the possibility of going on to college level studies. The agency has been providing these services since 1986, under the leadership of their Executive Director, Anne Helms, and a Board of Directors, who have continued to expand and

innovate programs to meet the needs of their clients.

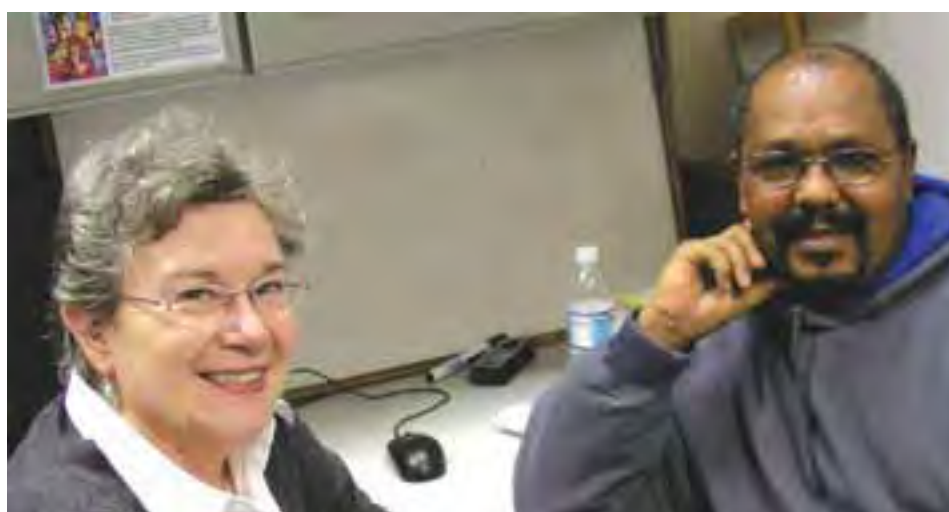
The services of the agency are provided free of any charge with no time limit for the achievement of goals. The program starts with an assessment phase which includes interviews and testing to determine the client's current level of English literacy and to plan

a program of study to achieve the goal of literacy. Typically, the clients will attend a once a week class with their peers and also work with a tutor, one on one, twice a week. Reassessments take place regularly in order to determine the progress made, the success of the instructional methodology, or need for change.

While the paid staff is small, the volunteer corps is a large and committed group of persons of all ages who serve as tutors, backed up by the staff serving as advisors. Formal training exists

in the form of a training workshop, ongoing guidance from the staff, and a full library of instructional materials. Newby Herrod, ex-officio board member says "There really is a strong culture here of serving the students and there's a lot of enthusiasm here because it is volunteer-based. The staff is great and very professional, but the real energy and uniqueness of this organization comes from its volunteer base."

Funding for Literacy Source comes from federal and city government grants, United Way of King County, foundations, and individual donations. Services are provided to an ethnically diverse



Tutor Linda Paros and student Gebrazgi Testai Nega
(Photo courtesy of Literacy Source)

Sojourner Place, a haven for women in transition

by Nora Tabler

Imagine having more than a bad day. Imagine having a bad week, a bad month, a bad year even. At Sojourner Place, single or pregnant women who are trying to overcome homelessness, substance abuse, jail time, domestic violence or financial crisis are given the help they need. Sister KC Young, who prefers to be called KC, is the Director of Sojourner Place, a large home and former convent in Seattle's University district that welcomes up to 11 women in transition. KC has been a Sinsinawa Dominican Sister for the past 45 years with 30 of those years devoted to helping women and children in need.

Ranika, a new Sojourner Place resident, is a 23-year-old African American woman with a four-year-old son and newborn baby. After a rocky adolescent home life, Ranika had finally accomplished being clean and sober for two years. Unfortunately, she made a decision to cash a bad check for her boyfriend which resulted in her being sent to Monroe prison for five months. Once out of jail, her family practiced "tough love" which left her on her own.

Ranika found Sojourner Place through a collaboration with People of Color against AIDS Network (POCAAN). After she was settled she began taking classes at Highline Community College and is now maintaining a 4.0 in her business courses. She will finish her degree this summer and plans on going into business with her grandmother. Her ultimate goal is to become a CPA and regain custody of her four year old son, who is being taken care of by her aunt. For KC, this young woman is a "success story in the making" and she hopes to see Ranika continue to succeed with her new goals.

When I asked KC what motivated her in her work, she simply stated that, "God has a preferential option for the poor." In other words, God has a soft heart for the poor. KC is that "soft heart" – with a firm backbone! She works daily to provide shelter, food, life skills classes, advocacy, safety, referrals, and social service care management to the women living in Sojourner Place. She



KC Young, Director of Sojourner Place
(Photo credit: Nora Tabler)

encourages the women in her care to learn life skills through self-discovery, which also helps grow their self-esteem.

Sojourner Place was started by the Sisters of Providence in 1987 to help meet a housing need for over 600 homeless women in Seattle each night. Women who are accepted at Sojourner need to be highly motivated to make changes in their lives, to break the destructive cycle of poverty. They also need to be clean and sober for at least 90 days and be either working or in school. Tenants pay a \$365/month programming fee that covers room and board and all programs. The women must attend weekly life-skills classes and goal-oriented counseling sessions. They must also meet weekly with a "care manager." Since many of these residents have "no reason to trust anyone," according to KC, one of the first challenges for the care manager is to help them build trust with others. And yes, there is always a waiting list.

KC called RSVP in King County to help her find volunteers after having a good experience with RSVP Spokane and in Oakland, CA. How do volunteers fit into the Sojourner Place environment? KC described one very dedicated volunteer who does everything from making Costco runs, to conducting phone intake interviews and attending Food Lifeline workshops so she can help residents with food bank and food stamp resources. Currently volunteers

are needed to lead Tuesday evening classes addressing topics as diverse as budgeting, saving, repairing credit histories, Dress for Success, health and nutrition, life skills, self-esteem and personal therapy. Volunteers are also needed to drop by much needed in-kind donations of clothes, movie passes, bus tickets, tickets to sporting or music events or to drive residents for outings to the park, beach and farmers market – all offers of help are appreciated!

If you'd like more information about volunteering, or donating to Sojourner Place, call Jennifer Gahagan, RSVP Program Coordinator @ 206-957-4779 x 122. ●

Literacy Source *continued from page 4*

clientele, a veritable United Nations in miniature, without discrimination as to gender, race, religion, or lifestyle.

The original mandate of the agency, to assist persons to acquire English literacy in order to help them achieve greater self-sufficiency through employment,

continues to find expression in the expansion of programs. The programs include workshops in computer training, partnering with some industries to provide their work force with onsite training in English or customer service, and similar services to those transitioning out of the King County Correctional Facility.

After I attended an orientation session for prospective volunteers and observed a class of students working in English as their second language, I knew that I had found an activity which inspires me and to which I could pledge a continuing service. Perhaps it has something to do with the fact that my parents were immigrants too and had to face the same problems which present-day immigrants face, but without the benefit of assistance.



Tutor Pat Hight and student Jamnong Kurlon
(Photo courtesy of Literacy Source)

Another source of inspiration for me is the opportunity to learn about other cultures through work with these students and the challenge of creating a means of instruction that may empower them to achieve a better life for themselves and their children.

Here are what some students have to say about the program:

"I learned more in six months in my computer class than I have in two years working on my own. I use computers to write letters, work on my resume, keep in touch with my family...I'm learning to feel a lot more comfortable with computers."
Kubrom Mibirga and Asgedet Habte – April 2010.

"I have changed from before. I've learned many words. I know how to read a little. I'm so happy to come to this class. It makes a big difference in my life. Before



Student Daniel Lopez and tutor Susan Fitzgerald.
(Photo courtesy of Literacy Source)

I couldn't read and I couldn't write. Now I can write and I can understand because of my teacher. If I become a citizen, I will be so thankful. I say thank you, thank you, thank you!"
Allison Larkin (February 2010).

And, thus another Seattle adventure! ●



The Garden Lady

by Linda Urbaniak

The shady side of your garden

A common mistake made by beginning or less-than-experienced gardeners is forgetting to take into consideration the amount of sunlight a plant will receive. Plants that need sun will not flower or prosper in shade, and plants that need shade will wither and scorch in sun. Most plants that are available in nurseries do well in sun so it is the shaded garden that is the most difficult to master.

Sometimes gardeners feel that the only way to plant a shade garden is with foliage plants. While that is not only feasible but also fairly easy, many times there is a desire for flowers, too. And there are many flowering plants that do wonderfully in shade.

For a low growing plant with striking variegated leaves and pink or white flowers, Cyclamen coum (they bloom from late summer through fall) or C.



Astilbe (Photo by Robin Knudson)



Hostas in the shade

(Photo by Robin Knudson)

hederifolium (blooming in late fall, early winter) are sure to be commented upon. Emerging in early spring the mouse plant, Arisarum proboscideum, has shiny mid-green leaves and little flowers in brownish-gray with tiny "tails" that look just like the hind end of little mice. It was one of 2008's Great Plant Picks and will delight anyone who observes it. Anemone blanda will reward you with white, pink or blue flowers in spring. Another great groundcover is Linnaea borealis, the twinflower, with two tiny trumpets carried above small, dark green leaves.

Mid-height flowers include Astilbe in shades of white, pink, red, lavender and salmon. They grow with ferny foliage, some emerging with bronzy shades, and mid-summer blossoms. Dodecatheon has flowers in

pink or white with large apple green leaves. Bleeding Heart's flowers look just like dangling hearts in shades of white or pink. It grows on tall arching stems, and there is even a cultivar that has golden leaves. Hostas, while usually grown for their intriguing leaf variations can provide flowers in white through dark lavender and the species *H. plantaginea* has white scented flowers. Uvularia emerges in early spring to bring bright to pale yellow bells depending on the species.

Tall plants that grow well in our area include the jack-in-the-pulpits. The genera *Arisaema* include some that grow as tall as four feet, and all have fantastic flowers that look as if a mad scientist designed them. A plant that is under-used in shaded gardens is Foxglove. The white or pink spires of *Digitalis purpurea* are short lived, rarely living more than two years, but provide weeks of colorful display. Oriental, Asiatic and Trumpet lilies will grow well in part shade, but they do need a couple of hours of sun to do their best. In shades of white, pink, red, yellow and orange, they are a wonderful, scented, addition to any garden.

Not all vines do well in shade but there are a couple that do very well. One is the native honeysuckle, *Lonicera celosia*, with bright orange flowers. It may be hard to find; look at Native Plant Society



Bleeding Heart

(Photo by Robin Knudson)

plant sales. Many species and cultivars of *Clematis* will do very well in partial shade but they need some sun for best flowering. *Akebia quintata* grows with dainty, evergreen leaves (quintata refers to the five leaves on each stalk) and softly scented clusters of white or purplish flowers even in full shade. It occasionally produces strange sausage-like, sweet, edible fruit.

So, when you are thinking of enlivening that shady part of your garden, you can have many exciting flowers as well as the interesting textures of foliage plants. Not easily found in every nursery, they are worth the quest for the beauty they will provide. ●

Reprinted from the Mercer Island Reporter.

Linda Urbaniak is a docent at the Bellevue Botanic Garden and an RSVP Ambassador. She will gladly take your gardening questions at lindagardenlady@speakeasy.net.

Healthy Aging Partnership (HAP) announces community grants

by Robin Knudson

HAP has announced that they will provide grants of up to \$5,000 for their Aging at Home Initiative. These grants will allow teams of community members to implement projects to help older adults live longer, healthier lives while remaining in their homes and communities.

To be eligible, project teams must include a minimum of four members with at least two members being 55 years of age or older, and one agency to serve as the fiscal sponsor. (*RSVP is eligible for fiscal partnerships*).

Applications will be accepted through 12:00 noon on November 1, 2010, and all

applicants will be notified of funding decisions by November 19, 2010.

HAP will consider projects in one of these four areas: Health Promotion and HealthyLiving, Emergency Preparedness, Culture and Lifelong Learning, and Civic Engagement and Volunteerism.

To learn more please attend the HAP Aging at Home Workshop on Wednesday, September 15 at The Brig (Community Center) at Magnuson Park. There will be speakers from each of the four subject areas, a burrito bar lunch and breakout sessions for asking questions. Free of charge; contact RSVP for more details. ●

WHAT IS AN RSVP AMBASSADOR?

An RSVP Ambassador is an RSVP Volunteer who is willing to help us spread the word about the benefits of volunteering. Because of our small staff, we have assembled a wonderful group of volunteers who help us share the mission of RSVP with other seniors. If you would be willing to represent RSVP at events around King County, we would like to talk to you.

We do not ask for a specific time commitment, only that you occasionally share your enthusiasm for volunteering and help us encourage others by relating your own experiences and telling about RSVP. We provide a fun, interactive training and give you the opportunity to meet another group of active, enthusiastic people.

To sign up or ask more questions: Contact Robin Knudson, 206-957-4779 x116 or robink@solid-ground.org.

Pounds and your portfolio

by Jim Evans, Senior Health & Fitness

DEAR JIM: My wife and I just returned from a meeting with our financial adviser, and we were surprised when he suggested that we should lose weight, exercise more, and take better care of ourselves. At first we were offended and thought, perhaps, he was overstepping his bounds, but after he explained himself, it began to make sense. We hadn't thought of it before, but the cost of our life insurance, health insurance, and even our long-term care insurance is affected by our health – all of which are major factors in our retirement planning. And, if we don't take care of ourselves, we might not live long enough to enjoy our retirement anyway.

Are other financial advisers offering the same kind of advice or is ours just ahead of the curve?

~ ENLIGHTENED IN ESCONDIDO

DEAR ENLIGHTENED: Your adviser is definitely ahead of the curve – not necessarily because he is smarter than the rest but because he had the courage to bring up the subject of your lifestyle in the first place. I'm sure you can understand why some advisers might be reluctant to talk about such a personal issue for fear of losing a client. After all, it can be a sensitive subject to many clients who are expecting only to discuss the usual "black and white" facts and figures of retirement planning and are suddenly thrust into reconciling their lifestyle with their long-term retirement goals.

But, it makes sense doesn't it? Fortunately, it is happening with more frequency. "In my experience, it happens more often than not anymore," says San Diego's Michael Howland, a Certified Public Accountant in private practice since 1991.

"I usually start out discussing, in general, how long my clients plan on living and how they plan on getting there," says Howland. "I don't start out discussing 'lifestyle changes' per se, but we talk about such things as:

- How long do they expect to live?
- How do they foresee their lifestyle after retirement?
- How long do they expect to work?
- How have they planned their later years?
- How do they expect to support their future lifestyle?
- How much do they project their future lifestyle might cost?

"But, then I start getting more specific," he continues:

- Do they intend to live fast, die young, or plan life as a marathon?
- Do we calculate in assisted living, long-term care, children support?

"I've never thought of it as personal," explains Howland. "It has always been simply a question of how long they expect their machine – in this case, their body – to keep working. If they find it uncomfortable, sometimes I back off, sometimes I don't. With some I might approach them about it the following year. With couples, I usually find one partner grateful for the discussion and one apprehensive. I have never had anyone become angry or indignant, but I probably wouldn't push that hard unless I know them well."

"Basically, it's a risk/reward decision," says Howland. "If they have an unhealthy lifestyle and expect to live a long life and haven't planned on long-term care, we need to talk."

In short, your health should be an integral part of your financial planning for retirement, and to ignore it is foolish and unrealistic. While unexpected illnesses and tragedies can happen to anyone – even those with a healthy lifestyle – most of the reasons we die in this country are preventable (e.g. heart disease, smoking, etc.). Your weight, your cholesterol, your blood pressure, your body mass index (BMI), your resting heart rate – all of these things and more should be factors in your planning.

Your financial adviser is "right on the money" on this one – literally. ●



Senior on the Street

by Anita Warmflash

What is your biggest daily challenge?

"Driving at night because of the glare of the headlights."

~Vicky Downs



"Neighborhood hills make food shopping a challenge."

~Helen Goehring



"I'm frustrated that work on my autobiography is taking so long."

~Rudy Hilinga



"Two hour daily walks, focusing on balance."

~Bill Trimmingham



"Having sufficient energy for daily tasks like cooking."

~Miriam Berry



Volunteer & Community Opportunities through RSVP

The following are just a few of the volunteer and community opportunities RSVP has to offer. To talk to a real person about opportunities that are just right for you, call Jennifer Gahagan at 206-957-4779 x122 – or visit our website at www.solid-ground.org/GetInvolved/Volunteer/RSVP for regional volunteer opportunity listings.

Volunteering

Elder Friends: Help relieve isolation among homebound elders through friendly visits. ElderFriends seeks people in the community who can visit twice monthly and keep in close contact with an elder friend through letters and phone calls. We especially need volunteers to visit with elders living in the Bellevue/Eastside and South King County areas. Training and ongoing education/support for volunteers provided.

Friends of the Cedar River Watershed: Interested in fish? Good with people? Sign up to be a volunteer naturalist on the Cedar River this fall. Naturalists will receive training from fish, interpretative and watershed experts, and in return spend three weekend days making riverside presentations to the public about the Cedar River and its spawning salmon. Training is scheduled for three weekday evenings: Sept. 16, 23 & 30.

American Cancer Society: New partner site! Volunteers are needed to provide information and resources to cancer patients and their families in the Cancer resource centers at Valley Medical in Renton and the Highline Cancer Center in Burien. Volunteer drivers are also needed to take cancer patients to medical appointments.

Community Voice Mail: New partner site! Located near Belltown, volunteers serve in the national headquarters of the CVM program providing critical administrative support to the affiliate programs across the country. CVM provides communication technology to connect people living in poverty and homeless people to information and resources. Volunteer duties include cataloguing daily broadcast voicemail and email messages and blog postings from across the country, data entry, production of usage reports, researching community resources around the country, and general clerical assignments.

WACAP: New partner site! Located in Renton, volunteers serve in the national headquarters of the World Association of Children & Parents. WACAP assists in international adoption and US foster kids' adoption, finds families for hard-to-place children, and provides support to children who live in international orphanages. There are many volunteer jobs available including adoption clerical support, outreach, website updating, writers, a facility "handy man," event helpers and more.

Washington Reading Corps (WRC): WRC is partnering with the City of Seattle's Early Learning Initiative with the goal of using volunteer service to help increase the number of 3rd graders reading at grade level. Volunteer jobs include reading stories to young children once per week or working in 2nd & 3rd grade classrooms twice weekly. Training will be provided.

Evergreen Hospice and Palliative Care: Volunteers work in their own communities to visit hospice and palliative care patients who live near them. Volunteers can provide companionship, respite for the primary caregiver, light household help, run errands, and just be a friendly visitor and additional support. Volunteers are provided a free, comprehensive training so they feel confident in their services to hospice and palliative care patients.

RSVP: We are looking for an experienced photographer for our Recognition Event October 19 at Emerald Downs.

In Our Community

Senior Day in Bothell: Sponsored by the Greater Bothell Chamber of Commerce. Tuesday, September 14th. Fun, prizes, entertainment, and more!

WA State Senior Citizens Lobby Fall Conference: Wednesday, October 13 at the Doubletree Inn in SeaTac. Call 360-754-0807 or visit www.waseniorlobby.org.

American Lung Association Landlord Dispute help: The Landlord/Tenant Outreach program helps landlords and tenants with dispute resolution. Free in-home assessments and consultations are available. Call 206-441-5100 for more information.

Overlake Hospital Medical Center: Walk for Life: A free, ongoing program to exercise safely and effectively.

- Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, 8:00 - 9:30 am.
- Bellevue Square Mall, enter at Skybridge 4.
- Call 425-688-5800.

Southeast Seattle Senior Center: Sound Steps Walking Groups:

- Tuesdays, 10:15 am, Seward Park
- Fridays, 8:45 am South Center Mall
- Call 206-722-0317

Friends of the Cedar River Watershed: Wild & Scenic Film Festival, Thursday and Friday, September 23 & 24, 2010. **Thursday, September 23rd, 7-9pm** at Patagonia, 2100 1st Ave, Seattle. *Films Include:* A Simple Question: A Story of STRAW; Get Up, Stand Up; Way Point Namibia; and the Watershed Report **Friday, September 24th, 6:30-8:30pm** at Northwest Film Forum, 1515 12th Ave, Seattle. *Films Include:* Ascending Giants, Flathead Wild, Nature Propelled, and the Watershed Report.

- **Tickets:** \$8 in advance and \$10 at the door
- **Wild and Scenic Membership Package:** \$25 includes 1 ticket, 1 year FCRW membership (a \$35 value) and 1 Watershed Report DVD
- **Contact:** rebecca@cedarriver.org for more information

ElderHealth Northwest Benefit Breakfast: Wednesday, September 22, 7:30am at the Sheraton Hotel in Seattle (1400 6th Ave.). Featured speaker is Dr. Chris Fordyce, an internationally known speaker and expert on healthy aging and preventative care for older adults. She is now the Director of Group Health's Healthy Aging Project.

- Please call to help me find a volunteer opportunity suited just for me.
- Please send information about RSVP.
- Please note my new address.

Name: _____
 Phone: _____ Email: _____
 Address: _____

Please mail this form to: RSVP, 464 12th Avenue, Seattle, WA 98112