

## Inside

From the Director

Board Corner  
by Nancy Hooyman

Tribute Giving:  
Generosity Plus Gratitude  
by Bob Anderson

Somesuch Players  
Hit the Big Time  
by Janet Tufts

For My Children:  
Obituary Facts  
by Michael Kischner

Need to be Cared For  
by Denise Klein

Fiber Arts @ WH: Our Gifts  
Beget Others' Gifts  
by Jane Cotler

Art and Community:  
Micki Lippe Joins Wider  
Horizons  
by Michael Kischner

Coming Back to Life  
by Charles Heaney

Member-Organized  
Activities  
by Denise Klein

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# Newsletter

## May 2022

### From the Director: Denise Klein

Our community visibility took a great leap forward this month. To begin with, during the past year we've been increasingly asked by other organizations (Kaiser, The Seattle Public Library, The YMCA, the University of Washington Retirees Association) to lead or participate in panels about the village concept. These are great opportunities to strengthen our relationships with other local villages in addition to being a good way to get the word out to residents of our community about the benefits of joining a village.

While this kind of marketing is not the chief way we get new members (that would be word of mouth from satisfied members to their friends), it adds to awareness and brings other positive benefits. Chief among these are the exchange of knowledge and resources between and among the local villages. For example, the PNA Village is a program of the Greenwood Senior Center (both are operated by the Phinney Neighborhood Association). On several occasions, a highly-experienced social worker there has helped me and other members solve thorny problems.



Perhaps the most significant achievement of the past quarter, though, was the electronic publication of our *Housing Options Handbook*. This 60-page book was prepared entirely by *Wider Horizons* members under the leadership of **Denise Lishner**. We were fortunate to have volunteers who edited the **Handbook** and are preparing it for "print-on-demand." In addition, we will shortly have 500 print copies to distribute to members, donors, and others.

We sent the **Handbook** out to thousands of people throughout the country who are members of other villages, as well as distributing it locally to our sister villages and aging organizations and programs throughout Washington state. Everyone who has commented was impressed, and, though that's not our chief objective, it's nice and enhances our reputation.

## Board Corner by Nancy Hooyman



As Board President, I am enthusiastic and optimistic about the capacity of Wider Horizons as a member-engaged organization. *Wider Horizons* is growing in maturity and sustainability.

Our sustainability is due largely to our incredible Fundraising Committee and donor stewardship by **Denise Klein** and **Bob Anderson**. The hiring of a contract social worker, Janet Salsbury, and the creation of a Life Plan Project, are tangible indicators of our fund-raising capacity. Most important, they provide new opportunities for our members to age in place. *Wider Horizons* success is due to each of you—your engagement, creativity, caring interdependence with each other, and willingness to serve on committees and implement ideas for inclusive activities. I greatly appreciate your leadership on committees and groups.

*Wider Horizons* success is also due to our hard-working, fully engaged Board that aims to support members' priorities. The Board's capacity to tackle challenging issues, increase our responsiveness to members, and chart new directions is growing. I am deeply grateful to our two immediate past-Presidents, **Sue Lerner** and **Ann Lawrence**, for their leadership in laying a strong foundation for the current Board to effectively move the organization forward. The Board is a committed, informed team who build upon each other's strengths, listen to and value each other, and are ready to step up to various tasks.

In the past five months, the Board has clarified *Wider Horizons* purpose, agreed on norms to guide our decision making, addressed governance issues to enhance our effectiveness, designed new opportunities for member input, and held a widely attended and engaging Annual Membership Meeting where we were energized by our members' enthusiasm, wisdom and resilience. One critical reason for our board effectiveness is **Debbie Ward's** skillful coaching, facilitation, and insightful suggestions about meeting structure and process.

Looking ahead to the rest of the year, we will be clarifying roles and responsibilities of the Board, the Executive Director, and the membership, assessing the potential of leadership coaching for both the Board and the ED, and beginning to consider succession planning. We will also be seeking and nominating new Board members, and I hope many of you will consider Board service. It is a satisfying and enjoyable experience, filled with a sense of accomplishment, wisdom and occasional humor! As always, I welcome your questions, ideas and suggestions.

**Nancy Hooyman, Board President**  
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## Tribute Giving: Generosity Plus Gratitude by Bob Anderson



Last September *Wider Horizons* received a \$5,000 donation honoring **Paul Beck**. It was given in gratitude for all Paul had done for his condo community and for who Paul is as a person. Little did the donor know how much that simple act of generosity and gratitude would impact our *Wider Horizons* (WH) community.

The gift inspired me to present the idea of a Tribute Program to the Fundraising Committee. Members **Ann Lawrence** and **Charles Heaney** readily agreed to work with me to flesh out the concept. We then invited first Board members, and then others, to consider honoring an individual or group for their contributions to our community. Here are the names of people and groups who have been honored in this way:

Honoring her parents Earl J. Robb and Jeanne A. Robb: **Nancy Robb**. Honoring **Donna Sunkel: Ann Lawrence**. Honoring **Allan Blackman**: Cheryl Scott, Sharon and Bob Winn, Marie Erbstoesz, Spring Zoog and Richard Marks, **Mark Stensager**, Elaine and Paul Von Rosenstiel, Bill and Cie Elder, and Eleanor Littman.

Honoring **Denise Lishner** and the Housing Options Task Force: **Bob and Julie Anderson**. Honoring **Ann Lawrence: Nancy Hooyman** and **Jeanne Marie and Bob Thomas**. Honoring **Audrey Hansen** and **Sue Lerner** for the work in setting up the Democracy Action Group: **Nancy Hooyman**. Honoring **Joan Bergman** for her work increasing members' awareness of Seattle's Black communities: **Charles Heaney**. John F. Kennedy said: *We must find time to stop and thank the people who make a difference in our lives*. If you'd like to thank or acknowledge someone, either in the WH community or not, you might consider using the Tribute Program to make your appreciation known. Denise Klein has the forms that make it easy to do so. Each living honoree will be informed a gift has been made honoring them.

## **Somesuch Players Hit the Big Time** **by Janet Tufts**

Many of us seniors read obituaries, not just to see if any of our friends or acquaintances are gone, but also because we are fascinated by the stories they tell, either explicitly or merely implied. *Wider Horizons* member **Romney Humphrey**, a writer, is one of these story catchers. For many years she has read and collected obituaries from around the country, capturing those that suggest a story.



**Romney Humphrey, *Wider Horizons* member and author of "Obits"**

One result of this search is her play, "Obits," a play about life, not death, overseen by Time, pondering "the choices folks make with their nearly ninety thousand seconds a day, year in, year out." Some of the obituaries are simply presented, in part, or whole, by a Reader who then asks questions that one might have about the back story. Or a back story becomes a live possibility as we watch players interact or respond around the writing of an obituary.

The play has been performed twice as a short theatrical piece, once in Florida and once in California. Now Romney is expanding it into a full-length play and in March the Somesuch Players, the *Wider Horizons* play-reading group, were given the privilege of reading this work in progress, incorporating the new stories in with the original ones.

Our reading of "Obits" generated a lot of discussion, more than any other play we have read, with everyone joining in. Romney was delighted by the skilled performance of the many readers, and she especially appreciated the lengthy discussion, which gave her valuable feedback, something that the format of a live play does not provide.

For many of us readers this play was about much: love, disappointment, confessions, anger, sadness, heartbreak—even humor—a rich stew of soulful stories.

## For My Children: Obituary Facts

### Fiction by Michael Kischner

*Note: I wrote this after participating in a Somesuch reading of the excellent play "Obits" by Wider Horizons member Romney Humphrey.*

Dear Children,

Selfless parenting can continue unto death. I think often of how to leave you with as few burdens as possible when I depart. Consulting documents and my private journals, I have gathered in this letter the information needed for writing my obituary. I hope this spares you trouble one day.

1. Born October 31, 1940, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

2. Taught English in the Seattle Community Colleges for 39 years.

3. Was the sole family breakfast cook and school-lunch preparer, rising early to cook cracked wheat cereal while making sandwiches from home-baked whole-wheat bread. Physicians attested that this was not responsible for later gluten intolerance claimed by two members of the family.

4. Was the sole dog walker and ball-thrower for the family's beloved dog, George, 1970-1986. About two hours a day for sixteen years in thunder, lightning, or in rain. When George and I returned dripping from such walks, the children showed George much solicitude.



5. Taught both children to drive so well that in my later years they freely and frequently returned the favor.

6. Took a deep but never intrusive interest in the upbringing of my granddaughters. Journal for 1999-2010 records eighty-three child-raising errors committed by the parents, of which I called only a handful to their attention. Freely granted that all five granddaughters have somehow managed to raise themselves into exemplary young women.

7. Though committed personally and professionally to high standards of English grammar, I winced in silence each time I heard my progeny use "lay" as an intransitive verb, suppressing the urge to ask them if they were referring to eggs. I stopped recording instances of this error around the time the children left for college, where their grasp of the issue was not strengthened.

These, then, are the vital facts about my life to be included in an obituary. Depending on kids' sports schedules and traffic conditions at the time, you may want to add a sentence about who was at the bedside as I lay (past tense of "lie") dying.

## Need to be Cared For

### by Denise Klein

Charles Wheeler and I have a special bond based, in part, on the fact that he and my husband David Soper were both 6' 4" tall. The day after David died, I saw Charles. He said to me, "do you want a hug"? I gratefully accepted that compassionate and comforting offer! He saw I needed to be cared for and acted accordingly.

In the past several years, Charles and I have been communicating in a sort of shorthand language. His latest email to me said, simply: *Need to be cared for.*

I believe Charles trusts me to interpret his brief, often slightly cryptic messages. This is my spin on that one:

1. We'll all need to be cared for by someone (unless we die very suddenly).

2. It's not always easy to need to be cared for.

3. Those struggling with the “need to be cared for” may want to talk about that.

So this brief article is about some *Wider Horizons* resources we’ve added this year that could address one or more of these messages.



A year ago, we hired Louise Andersen. With a lovely, caring attitude, Louise has now helped at least a dozen of our members with tasks they wanted to get done. You can contact me to see if her services might be useful to you.

Then, more recently, we selected Janet Salsbury to be our social workers. Janet is available for 10 hours a week and you can contact her through me or directly: [jsalsb@hotmail.com](mailto:jsalsb@hotmail.com)



Janet is available to problem-solve with you or to just talk about anything that’s on your mind. She will also be facilitating a “Solo Aging” Group beginning this June.

Finally, our Program to help people plan for the rest of their lives (Life Plan Program) is getting underway. Two initial phases will help us shape this initiative:

1) researching what other villages/organizations have done and what materials are available (Christine Hurley is our consultant for this phase); and 2) finding out what is most on our members’ minds (via the Monday Memo and the Phone Tree) so we can match that with available resources.

We are so fortunate to have the resources available for these programs, thanks to donors to our Planned Giving Fund. Keep in mind that we *all need to be cared for* and that *Wider Horizons* can help you figure out who will care for you and how.

## Fiber Arts @ WH: Our Gifts Beget Others’ Gifts

by Jane Cotler



Several weeks ago, I stopped at Acorn Street Shop because I was in the area and because this is my favorite yarn store! One reason for my “visit” was to thank the owners again for the lovely 20% discount gift for yarn chosen for members to complete projects for our *Warm for Winter* donations. The staff and customers loved the fact that our *Warm for Winter Project* knitters were providing hats, blankets, and scarves annually for families served by Wellspring Family Services.

And while I was there I took the opportunity to “interview” the owners and a few customers, as I wanted to introduce both our Fiber Arts Interest Group, and all Wider Horizon members who are also knitters, to Acorn’s pleasures and abundant stock.



Acorn Street Shop is co-owned by Janet Charbonnier and Mary Rourke and is located at 2818 NE 55th Street in Seattle. The store opened in 1979 and has experienced a steady flow of “knitters” ever since.

If you have not yet visited this yarn store you will definitely be in for a treat. I am simply amazed by the vast array of yarns presented by varying degrees of color and weight. A staff member is always available to help you with your choice of yarn and patterns. An incredible array of “tools” of the trade are also on hand for purchase.



Micki’s jewelry is in the permanent collection of the Tacoma Art Museum and has been exhibited in the Bainbridge Island and Bellevue art museums as well as numerous galleries across the country.

An essay by Judith Wagonfeld accompanying an exhibit at the Curtis Steiner Gallery begins by noting Micki’s love of nature (she hikes weekly) and notes how her art reflects it: “Mirroring nature’s randomness, Lippe embellishes pieces with an eclectic array of found and fabricated miniature objects.” Visit Micki’s website at [www.looselyhinged.com](http://www.looselyhinged.com) to see photos of her unique creations as well as her resumé, which includes teaching, conference presentations, and service on boards.

P.S. Thanks also to **Naomi Shiff** above for acquiring yarn donations for the *Warm For Winter Project*. We also want to acknowledge the outstanding hosting provided for this group for years by **Donna Sunkel** and the leadership that **Joan Bergman** has assumed for guiding the group since Donna’s death.



## Art and Community: Micki Lippe Joins Wider Horizons by Michael Kischner



Micki’s commitment to community led her to found the Women’s Shelter Jewelry Project in 1999. The project collects jewelry donations from many sources, sorts it, sends much of it to shelters, where many abused women struggle to rebuild their self-image, and sells the gold and silver scrap. The proceeds, about \$50,000, have gone to shelters.

“We all wish there were no women’s shelters – please remind readers of this,” says Micki. In the 1980s, when Micki and her husband **Bill** were living in Oklahoma, a neighbor shot her husband, who had been abusing her for years. She was acquitted. Then Micki learned that a friend in her exercise class was being physically abused by her husband. Today Micki knows that shelters are a sad necessity.

Two main threads have run through **Micki Lippe’s** life—a 50-year commitment to art jewelry, and giving back to the community in the form of the Women’s Shelter Jewelry Project.

Domestic abuse is only one of Micki's causes. Born and raised in Memphis, she left at eighteen vowing never to live in a place where there was racial injustice and conflict. Having now lived in many parts of the country, she has sadly realized that injustice and conflict exist wherever humans live.

Last year, macular degeneration forced Micki to close her studio, which had sustained a thriving business. Talk to her for an hour and you learn that this blow has not stopped her. She is full of energy and plans, and some of these will benefit *Wider Horizons*, which she joined this year "because now I have the time."

She talks of jewelry-making classes, jewelry-sorting sessions for the WSJP, and guided visits to the Pratt Fine Arts Center, on whose board she sat for nine years. She has already organized a Low Vision Support Group for members. The name is a misnomer. Micki's eyesight is impaired; her vision is anything but low.



**B.B. King's Blues Club in Memphis**



**The riverboat to New Orleans**

## **Coming Back to Life**

**by Charles Heaney**

For the past two-and-a-half years, we have put on hold travel plans, family gatherings, cultural activities, dinners with friends and a host of other in-person events due to the threat of COVID.

We've washed our hands, worn our masks, kept our distances, gotten our vaccinations and boosters in order to do what we could to stay safe. Clearly, each of us has to assess their own risk tolerance, but with the worst effects of the epidemic apparently behind us, at least for the near term, some may feel emboldened to venture out from our enforced hibernation.

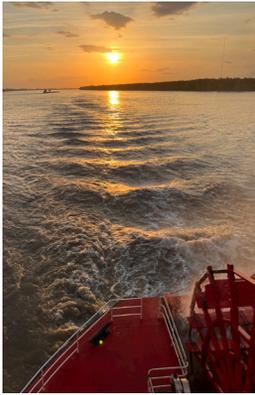
That's what my wife, **Gay Hoerler**, and I did to finally fulfill her sister's desire to celebrate her 70th birthday (two years late) by taking a paddle wheeler down the Mississippi. We first flew to Memphis with its deep musical roots, where we boarded a charming riverboat for a seven-day cruise to New Orleans.



Stopping in places like Naches, Vicksburg, and Baton Rouge, we visited Civil War battle fields, the opulent homes of cotton barons, and the meager quarters of their enslaved workers.



We visited a working cotton farm and got to pick some cotton (very carefully). Displayed there was a replica of the original cotton gin that brought great wealth to the southern states.



The riverboat was spacious and comfortable with ample opportunities for recreation and solitude when you needed it.

And then there was New Orleans, with its charming architecture, rowdy nightlife, and fabulous food—if you don't mind long lines. I waited forty years to eat at Galatoire's and it was worth the wait. And the weather in April made it all the more enjoyable.



Architecture in the French Quarter



Bourbon Street

All in all, we had had a marvelous escape from routine and came home feeling truly relaxed and refreshed. I hope that whenever you feel ready to move out into the larger world again, you experience the same level of excitement and gratitude that we did. For people like us, pausing life for two years can be especially significant and resuming, especially joyful.

## Member-Organized Activities by Denise Klein

More and more frequently, our members are taking on the responsibility of planning and organizing activities. In a member-centered organization, that's particularly appropriate and, as we all know, activation and a sense of agency and purpose are crucial to providing meaning in later life (and extending the years of heathy life). Here are a few recent examples:

- **Eleanor Dills** and **Ann Lawrence** have organized a series of every-other-week urban walks that so far have included the Arboretum, the Center for Urban Horticulture, Cowen/Ravenna Park, and an alley ramble on Capitol Hill. As many as 10 people attend (there is a changing set of walkers).
- **Debbie Ward** and **Ann Lawrence** have organized "cioppino dinners" monthly with a variety of diners.
- **Carol Mirman** and others have planned, organized, and led museum trips, most recently to the Bellevue Arts Museum where Carol is a docent and led a tour for us.



- **Denise Lishner** is leading a monthly movie group that has recently watched *Casablanca*, *A Fish Called Wanda*, *The Godfather*, and *Lincoln*.
- **Micki Lippe** came up with the idea for a low vision support group that now meets monthly.
- **Chris Morris** and **Sandra Wheeler** are organizing a bridge group. Stay tuned!

If you've got an idea for an activity, let me know and I'll help in any way you like. It is these kinds of offerings that make our village enticing.