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From the Director: Denise Klein

Plan for the Rest of Your Life with Your Peers

Our pilot Life Plan class met for the first time in mid-January and will run for four consecutive weeks. Eight members are participating in this pilot class—trying out an approach we adapted from another village (Queen Anne's@Home in Maryland's rich program that they licensed to us).

The first session focused on participants' answers to the first in a series of questions the class will address: *What is important to you?*

Some of the answers were memorable: 1) *I'd like to answer the question: How do I live my life with my identity intact?* 2) *I want to become a ballerina in the dance of recognizing who I am at this point in my life and be absolutely realistic.* 3) *Flip the internal switch from "I take care of everyone" to "I need stuff."*

Subsequent classes will address these topics

1. What are your biggest concerns?
2. What stands in the way of addressing them?
3. What negative events could dramatically affect your current lifestyle?
4. What are options to address your issues or events that, perhaps inevitably, will occur?
5. What tools or resources would be useful?
6. What is at least one key action step to put your "Life Plan" into effect?

Our facilitator for the pilot sessions is Christine Hurley, an experienced administrator, teacher, and health care advocate/activist. We hope to use our own members as facilitators for the second and subsequent iterations of the Life Plan Class.

If this idea appeals to you, let me know. We're developing a waiting list for future classes and are excited about the value we anticipate this offering will add to your *Wider Horizons* membership.

As one of the participants said, "I look forward to having the opportunity to be vulnerable to others and to imagining together better ways to age in community."

Nora Langan: The Life of an Activist

By Charles Heaney



Self-portrait by Nora Langan

It wasn't always like that. For the first half of her adult life, Nora pursued a career in clinical social work. After graduate school, she concentrated on kids in difficult circumstances. In Pittsburg, her work centered on children who had experienced trauma in one form or another.

Later, in New York, she worked with an international rescue organization on behalf of Cambodian youngsters in the aftermath of the Viet Nam war.

Over time, however, the life of a clinician could not accommodate Nora's lifelong involvement with and passion for art (The self-portrait seen here was on display at our recent arts fair). And so, in her late 30s, she made a giant leap to Washington DC, where she secured a position with the National Endowment for the Arts. During her eight years at the NEA, Nora traveled around the country helping small, rural and otherwise marginalized communities to develop local arts education and cultural resources.

One of her stops was the troubled Hilltop area of Tacoma where she helped to create a self-sustaining program that steered at-risk young people into local "hot shops" (a.k.a. glass blowing establishments) where they learned a trade that offered solid career prospects. That program is still ongoing and

has become a self-supporting community resource.

The knowledge and perspective Nora gained from the high perch of the NEA kindled a desire to roll up her sleeves and experience, first hand, the real world of community development. It also laid the foundation for what would soon become a life of committed activism.

From D.C, Nora moved west and found a position with the Sonoma County Council in California where she continued her arts development work with isolated communities, including migrant workers and indigenous people.

However, it wasn't until she moved back to the Northwest that Nora adopted the role and life of a fervent advocate in the area of climate change and environmental justice. After training with the Seattle chapter of 350.org, the international climate advocacy organization, Nora has been working with a number of coalitions attempting to educate the public on derailing the fossil fuel "money pipeline" as she calls it—extraction, refining, transporting, insuring, etc.



Nora posing as human compost

A few years ago, Nora was attending a "People for Climate Action" meeting and forged a team with three other activists. This led to creating a nonprofit, Green Buildings Now (GBN), supporting BIPOC communities to promote a transition to sustainable fossil-free energy. GBN is now a coalition of 14 climate justice, civic, and interfaith groups,

and has just been awarded \$485,000 to complete decarbonizing an area in south Beacon Hill—installing solar panels and heat pumps and similar efforts.

What's next on Nora's environmental horizon? How about "Great Old Broads for Wilderness"—something to do with women, habitat protection and old growth forests. Stay tuned.

It was inspiring to sit down with someone totally committed, with the knowledge, passion and energy, to taking on some of the most difficult and divisive issues facing our society today. If she succeeds, the world will surely be a better place.

Vive la Différence!
**Now Men and Women Both
Have Coffee Groups**
By Michael Kischner

Wider Horizons (WH) men have been gathering just to drink coffee and talk for years. WH women started on Nov. 9, 2022. The women have certainly been gathering with each other, but usually to do something other than just talk—knit warm things for others, cook as a group, discuss a book. Getting together just to talk seemed a male thing, as though the Matters of Importance we often discussed didn't allow for multitasking.

My press credentials got me into the first meeting of Women Drinking Coffee on November 9 in the community room at Victrola Coffee. Ten or twelve men have been using the space since pandemic restrictions lifted. The heavy rectangular table accommodated us comfortably.



Gil Glinsmann, John Barber, Robby Barnes, Tom Heller, Dick Zerbe, Michael Kischner, Phil Gerson, Tom Sykes, Charles Heaney, Wolfgang Kluge, Joe Garcia, and visitor James Fearn

When I arrived on November 9, fifteen women were squeezed around the table, already in lively conversations with their neighbors. I took a seat off to the side and began my anthropological observations.

Ann Lawrence called the gathering to disorder and began the self-introductions. Each self-introduction threatened to spin off into a new conversation before the ladies recalled themselves to the task at hand, which was completed in about an hour. They then seamlessly moved on with the conversations, which gradually became one conversation.

As a consummate male single-tasker, I cannot list the topics covered because I stayed focused on getting down the names of all those present. By the time I had to leave for an appointment, the topic had become where to meet next. Those present agreed that the Victrola room was noisy and small and the single rectangular table constricting. As I left, the women were taking **Micki Lippe** up on her offer to host the next meeting at the Lippe's house. Micki would provide basic tea and coffee; others could bring their own fancier beverages or goodies. They might cluster in small groups. Maybe switch groups. All of this was decided in about six minutes.

On Wednesday, December 7, fourteen men sat around that constricting rectangle at Victrola. **Bob Anderson** introduced a prospective member, **Gil Glinsmann**, Gil told us he had worked in the energy business on wind, solar, and geothermal energy projects in various locations in the country and abroad. He was also, and remains, an advocate of energy conservation efforts. After brief and orderly self-introductions, the rest of the meeting consisted of questions to Gil about clean energy, energy policy, and climate change. Gil, who had not been warned of this, was a good sport about it, and we all left enlightened on this Matter of Importance. Gil and his wife, **Gail Glinsmann**, have since joined WH.

I could not attend the women’s December meeting, and so yield my space to **Eleanor Dills**, who kindly sent this report: “Another Wednesday morning event found 19 *Wider Horizons* women arriving for coffee, and catching up with old and new friends, at **Micki Lippe’s** warmly inviting Capitol Hill home. Colorful nutcrackers looked on from the fireplace mantel as we greeted one another and began what became a steady and lively conversational hum. Micki had arranged tables and chairs so that we could chat comfortably in small groups. Part way through she suggested we move to new spots and new conversations, and we did! Topics ranged from our recent experiences, to books, to politics, our families, and more. There’s no warm-up period to these gatherings; we just dive in, delighted to be in one another’s company again. After an hour and a half we reluctantly said our goodbyes, feeling renewed and most grateful for Micki and Bill’s generous hospitality.”



From left: Julie Anderson, Denise Lishner, Gail Glinsmann, Anne Focke, Micki Lippe



From left: Ann Lawrence, Pat Siggs, Denise Klein, Gray Wilson



From left: Wren Campbell, Eleanor Dills, Joan Bergman, Barbara Schwartz

On Jan. 4, the men were back in the Victrola room, while the women met again at the Lippe’s home. I mentioned Eleanor’s report and how the women’s fledgling coffee group was already thriving. **Tom Sykes** said, “Vive la différence!” In the ensuing discussion, the question somehow arose of whether men or women are more risk-averse. **Bob Anderson** told us a story from early in his 1970 marriage to **Julie** after they had known each other for only three and a half months. As a dutiful young husband, he was working away at his job when Julie suggested that, in order for them to get to know each other better, he should give up his job and they should travel for a year. This they did, not only to their own benefit but to the benefit of many

others, including their fellow WH members today.

Several others present then told stories from their days of early courtship and marriage, and the conversation expanded to various other topics, including the difference between spirituality and religion. Another new member, **Fletch Waller**, told us about a psychologist in an all-male Toastmaster's group he belongs to who counseled against going co-ed. The psychologist's advice was heeded for six years.

In my experience, that was one of the best conversations our men's group have had. We were still at our rectangular table, focused on one central topic at a time. But it seemed as if something of the women's freedom in their changing clusters had entered our proceedings. Eleanor Dills reports that, at their January meeting, the women decided to meet two times a month to give people a choice of dates. Nothing was said about needing a rectangular table.



First Year of our Social Work Program Deemed a Success!



In December of 2022, we completed an evaluation of the first year of our Social Work Program. By all measures, the Program has been quite successful. Challenges remain, including helping more members understand the nature of the program and its benefits.

In addition to a review of the data collected by our social worker Janet Salsbury, two

surveys were part of the evaluation. The first asked all members two questions. Most responded affirmatively to both questions: 1) Do you think having a social work program makes your or others' membership in *Wider Horizons* more valuable? 2) Do you think having a social work program provides a sense of security or reassurance to our members?

A second survey asked members who met individually with Janet whether they would recommend her to other members. Most of the 32 respondents said they would. Respondents also provided narrative responses. Here are some of the comments:

1. Janet is a very sensitive listener and professionally supportive. She saw herself as a problem solver and we, oldies, never know what problems we may encounter. As a senior who lives alone, it is good to know that a professional like Janet is in place.
2. Our visit with Janet was pleasant and she asked the right probing questions. It is comforting to know she is available.
3. I have referred other villagers to her and would do so again. I met with Janet by phone once with concerns about how best to advocate for health care for a relative. She was helpful in explaining some limits to home health services and in offering needed emotional support.
4. I was very impressed. She has good listening skills and let "the client" (me) chatter without reinterpreting what I said. I would say, from my time with her, she has the skills to address issues presented by the age group served by *Wider Horizons*.
5. It's like having a safety net...a person I could turn to confidentially...a pro-

fessional and someone familiar with the village to look to for ideas, guidance, direction, but not a part of the village. It provides a service I don't feel anyone else in the village can regardless of background.

Here are important conclusions of the evaluation:

1. The individual assistance aspect of the program should be continued for an average of 5 hours/week. If demand warrants, the budget could be increased.
2. Having a single individual available is likely to be viewed more positively than referral to other options, so as long as Janet is willing to continue, we will be pleased to have her as our contractor. She has done a good job of establishing the program.
3. Ongoing promotion of the program by using the comments of satisfied customers will be the most effective marketing approach. We will do this in a *Newsletter* article and in the *Monday Morning Memo*, as well as in other creative ways.

Join us at the Movies! By Denise Lishner



I was having bagels and coffee with **Micki and Bill Lippe** one morning when one of them lit up and suggested having a *Wider Horizons* movie club. Bill added he wanted to learn how to

watch films critically and understand what makes a film "work." Being a long-time film buff (I'm in three movie groups), I said, "I'll make sure it happens!"

About 10 of us met to decide on criteria for selecting movies we would watch and discuss (e.g., not violent, not deeply depressing but substantive, no subtitles). We would watch these on our own, then discuss them at a monthly Zoom meeting.

A book club friend once told me something that really resonated: never simply state that you liked or did not like the book. I decided to frame the discussion of each movie with a series of thought-provoking questions that would encourage viewers to observe how the direction, cinematography, acting, lighting, and music contributed to the effect of the film. I also created questions that went beyond simple plot lines to peel away layers and illuminate what the film meant to convey.

Here are just some of the terrific movies we've watched since we began a year ago: *Lincoln* with Daniel Day Lewis; *The Verdict* with Paul Newman, *Ikiru* directed by Kurosawa, *Casablanca* with Bogart and Bergman, *In the Heat of the Night* with Sidney Poitier and Rod Steiger, *Doubt* with Meryl Streep and Phillip Seymour Hoffman.

The questions we pondered for *Doubt* show the depth of our discussions:



✚ The movie never tells you whether the priest was guilty of abusing the boy. Did you make a decision? If so, when and how did you decide about guilt or innocence (or whether it remains unknowable)? How strongly did you believe what you decided?

✚ Did the senior nun (Meryl Streep) have any actual evidence to support her claim or was she acting out of emotion, intuition and/or projection?

- What did you notice about the camera work and lighting and how did they contribute to the mood and theme of the film?



Questions posed for *The Verdict* included:

- Why did Paul Newman’s law colleague give him this (very hard to win) medical malpractice case? Why did he accept it?
- Why did Newman refuse to pick up the phone as it kept ringing at the end of the film?
- Paul Newman was a heavy drinker in real life as he was in this film. Does an actor need to have experienced in real life what a character experiences to really portray that character well?

In addition to being exposed to (mostly) fine movies, we’ve had very stimulating and interactive conversations after each one. And we have all learned from each other what Bill Lippe wanted from this group: how to watch movies critically and understand what makes them work.

This group is open to everyone in *Wider Horizons* and you can join us anytime!

Spring Break on the Ranch (A Calf in the Bath)

By Gay Hoerler



I was home from college on spring break and desperately waiting for my turn in the

bathroom to take a long soak in the tub. Having just spent almost 2 years of college with the nuns, I had a new standard of cleanliness—you know, next to godliness—that really wasn’t all that applicable in ranch life. I had just scoured out the tub when in comes my dad lugging a newborn calf which he deftly deposits in the tub and begins to fill the tub with warm water.

A spring storm had come upon us with little warning, bringing wet snow and sleet. My mom had taken my three high school age siblings to Sioux Falls to a youth conference where they were snowed in 4 hours from home. This left us short-handed; just Dad, myself, Kitty and Scott who were in elementary school, and Amy, our “last minute” sister who was just three.

Springtime storms are difficult for ranchers because this is calving season. During a spring storm with wet melting snow, any cow showing signs of giving birth needed to be moved into the barn because a calf born into the mud, standing water and slush would die within several hours. This situation required someone to get up every two hours or so, go to the corrals and check.

For the calves occasionally born into standing water, there was always the same remedy: a hot bath (which removed mud, manure and bits of the birth sack), after



which my dad would pull the calves out onto the floor and rub them down with towels until they started to move, give them a shot of whiskey to warm them up and lug them downstairs for an overnight stay in front of the little propane stove near my bedroom. I have gotten up in the morning to 5 or 6

calves outside my bedroom door...and yes, there was always a mess to clean up. Most of them would be returned to their mothers first thing in the morning. As soon as the mothers demonstrated attachment, the pairs would be put into a larger pasture.

During this particular storm, being the only other adult there with my dad, I went to the barn just once or twice a day. Otherwise, I was busy keeping everyone's coats and boots dry, washing the endlessly needed supply of bath towels, rubbing down calves, doling out whiskey and keeping the family warm and fed.

All of us in my family have taken part in this "spring calving during a storm" ritual from time to time during our growing up years, as well as other arduous tasks. Picking rocks on newly plowed fields, stripping bluegrass in July, butchering antelope, dressing chickens; these were the "whole family" endeavors to which everyone living at home was required to contribute. Although, as an adult, I have not chosen to continue that prairie way of life, I am not sorry to have had the experience. It has given me strength of body and spirit, an endless sense of resourcefulness, a strong friendship with perseverance and MANY fond memories.

And I did finally get a well-deserved soaking bath, several days later.

Barbara Cemen, New Gal in Town

By Janet Tufts

"You are all so elegant!" This was my introduction to Barbara Cemen, my new Tai Chi teacher. Everyone smiled as they were very used to hearing her praise them. Two weeks later, Barbara wandered into the *Wider Horizons* fall art show, looked around,

stated, "These are my kind of people," and joined our village right then and there. We met again soon at the village scarf exchange hosted by Eleanor Dills, and then again at Mickey Lippe's home during a "women drinking coffee" session. I was hooked. This was an interesting woman!



Barbara (right) with Julie Anderson at the Art Show that caused her to join *Wider Horizons*

We went out for tea after a recent Tai Chi class, and I had the welcome opportunity to ask Barbara more about her life. She is a charming conversationalist, recounting her life with warmth, candor and amusement. Barbara is first and foremost a teacher, and she was singular in her pursuit of her career. For example, she acquired an early teaching job after walking by a school playground where she saw two boys fighting; she interrupted them and said she'd like to take a seat for the event. This stopped them cold. And that is when the school principal rushed up. He thanked her for stopping the fight and immediately offered her a teaching job working with a special 6th grade class of *slow* kids.

Sure enough, when she first entered the classroom they warned her that they were stupid, but she soon proved them—and the school—wrong. Barbara started out by teaching them a new math program she had just recently learned in an education class. Suddenly they were "brilliant," performing better in math than all the other 6th graders in the school. The change was so dramatic

that the principal promptly asked her to teach the method to all the school math teachers. She remained there for 2 happy years. Lucky kids!

A few years later, Barbara moved to Seattle where she was hired to set up a school for gypsy students, as they were not attending any local schools. She added, with a wry smile, maybe they hired her because she looked like a gypsy. As program manager, she hired her staff, found a location in Fremont and then encouraged the “Rom” people to send their children to this one-room classroom where students ranged in age from 6-16. She met each roadblock with the suspicious parents and ultimately won them over.

Later she lured a number of the parents to night classes where they, too, learned reading and writing, followed by other practical skills like Home Ec for the women. Barbara happily remained at that job for about 15 years, learning some “Romany” from her students along the way and making many friends. She’s still in contact with some



of these students. Before retirement, Barbara served as Assistant Principal in charge of arts programs at Summit School, followed by a few years as principal at Seattle Alternative School #1. What a dynamo!

(above & left, Janet Tufts)

Wider Horizons Gatherings



House Concert at Debbie Ward's, Summer 2022



Recruiters honored at Debbie Ward's, January 2023

Front: Janet Tufts

2nd row, Debbie Ward, Sue Lerner, Joan Bergman, Ann Lawrence;

3rd row, Denise Klein, Julie Anderson, Nick Utzinger, John Rochford, Susan Adler



Happy Hour at Herb & Bitter, November 2022



Bob and Julie Anderson on vacation in Arizona, January 2023



At New Year's lunch hosted by Sue Lerner & Kay Beisse
From left, Pat Siggs, Gay Hoerler, Charles Heaney,
Judie Messier, Nancy Hooyman



Eleanor and Scott Dills at Sue and Kay's New Year's lunch

Phil Gerson's Play *The Space Between Dreams* performed by Wider Horizons and other readers on January 22, 2023



Wider Horizons Art Show, October 2022



Victoria Bestock and Wren Campbell
at the *Wider Horizons* Art Show



Liz Ohlson and Ellen Taussig playing music at the Art Show

Carolyn Allen (1943-2023)



**Carolyn Allen on the occasion of
her retirement from the
University of Washington**

In *Braiding Sweetgrass*, Robin Wall Kimmerer says, “The most important thing each of us can know is our unique gift and how to use it in the world. Individuality is cherished and nurtured, because, in order for the whole to flourish, each of us has to be strong in who we are and carry our gifts with conviction, so they can be shared with others.”

Carolyn knew what her unique gifts were and her friends cherished her for her individuality.

We will miss her indomitable spirit and her incisive wit, among many other wonderful qualities.