



## December 2023 - Volume 36, Number 4

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- Jo-Anne Elder-Gomes
- Anne Hutton
- Randee Kaitcer
- Susan Mocsny Thomas

Secretary  
Sue Ann Kendall

## Letter from the Editor

I've always enjoyed the fall. Crisp, cooler temperatures along with flashes of reds, golds and browns amidst the green of pine trees and evergreens are my cup of tea.

As I write this, we are driving from our home in North Carolina to Atlanta, Georgia for the US Thanksgiving with my husband Brian's aunts and many cousins. I love this holiday as it involves food, gratitude, and love for friends and family, without the expectations of decorations and gift giving.

Of course I think of prior Thanksgivings spent with my family, some of whom are no longer with us. And I'm thinking of my 99 year old father whose health is declining, even though his brain remains sharp.

Fall is one of those four cycles we see every year, reminding us of the larger cycle of our lives. This year really brings it home to me from the birth of our new grandson in July to the 99th birthday of my father in September. And of course, we think of our LLL friends and family who have gone before us and honor them in [We Remember](#).

At the same time, we look forward to the winter holidays and celebrations with our friends and family members. I hope your holidays are happy, no matter which you celebrate!

Susan  
*Continuum Editor*

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## **Save The Dates! October 24-27, 2024!**

### **Exciting News about a Friends Trip!**

Details will be coming soon about a Friends of La Leche League trip, October 24-27, 2024. This will be a special trip to celebrate the 68th anniversary of the founding of La Leche League International, in conjunction with the publication of the new edition of *The Art of Breastfeeding*. Pencil this in on your calendar now so you won't miss it!



Edna Kelly in front, with Mary Ann Kerwin on a bus tour from the Friends of La Leche League trip to Albuquerque, New Mexico in 2013.

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## **My Memories of Mary Lofton**

by Mary Gisch



**Front row left to right: Doris Shertz, Mary Gisch, Mary Lofton  
Back row left to right: Sharon Barsotti, Carol Esposito, Fran Dereszynski**

La Leche League International and LLLIllinois lost a wonderful woman, mother and Leader, Mary Lofton, on October 7th. Mary and her husband Richard, who passed in 2019, had four children, Kathy, Jane, Michael, David, as well as grandchildren. In early September, Mary was able to hold her first great granddaughter. Mary was a very caring woman, mother and Leader. She loved art, books, and poetry. She wrote many touching poems.

Mary and I became friends early on in our Leader years. We met after we had had active LLLI Groups' mothers and babies. We were at District Meetings and helping out at International Conferences. We chatted easily and found many things in common. She was delightful!

When I was CLA for Illinois, Mary became the ACL. At that time there were many Leaders and active Groups. Mary was great to work with. We were on the phone constantly, planning this or that. Happily, both her daughters breastfed their children and Jane later became a Leader.

Eventually, Mary started working in the office of LLLI in Franklin Park, IL. She and many of us were concerned about the mothers we did not reach with Group meetings. After much discussion, Mary started the Peer Counselor Program.

At one point Marian Thompson stepped down from Public Relations work. Mary

became manager of the Public Relations Department. She was answering questions from the press and other letters that came in, as well as sending out announcements for International Conferences. She worked at presenting a clear image to the public for LLLI: the role that breastfeeding plans in the health of mother and baby.

Although Mary never retired from being a Leaders, she did retire from LLLI work. Though not entirely, for Mary and Katy Lebbing became the LLLI liaisons for the LLLI Archives at De Paul University, Chicago, IL.

For the past 15 years, Mary and Joyce Kashe invited a group of friends four times a year to Mary's home, which she called her "English Cottage," to chat about interesting things. They named it Quest. The motto for Quest was the quote from Carl Sagan, "Somewhere, something incredible is waiting to be known." Interested friends, mostly retired Leaders, came and shared their lives, thought, and interesting topics. It was enhancing our knowledge, sometimes poignant, but usually fun and delightful.

Dear Mary, we will miss your insights, kindness, your laughter, and your smile. Your poetry was lovely and sounded so very like you. I will miss you, dear friend. God bless you and your family.

-- Mary Gisch, October 2023



Above: Quest meeting in Mary Lofton's yard at end days of the COVID-19 pandemic.

At right: Another Quest meeting where a member's selected the topic of gloves. Notice the Quest motto in the frame.



The following poem chosen by Mary's family was in her funeral program.

**Untitled**

*The half open window reflected a light  
From a lantern across the road.*

*The darkness was deep --  
Yet the crickets and I did not sleep.*

*They, searching for love, and I  
No longer hearing the mating sone.*

*The echo of night sounds whispered,  
Calling me to sit outside . . .*

*The wind sighed, "Yes, come outside  
And sit in our world for a while."*

*Hesitant, I looked down from above  
And descended the stairs.*

*As in a dream the night  
Cloaked me in coolness.*

*The crickets became politely silent,  
The leaves awoke briefly with a flutter.*

*The light was still shimmering  
On the beaded glass,*

*As the breath of this shadowy world.  
Hushed me to sleep.*

-- Mary Lofton. October 2018

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## Keep Your Membership Active!

This is your membership information:

<<First Name>> <<Last Name>>, membership expiration date <<Expiration Date>>.

To renew your membership online, sign in in [HERE](#) with your email address as the "Username or email" and your password. (If you don't remember your password, click the button to reset it.)

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## 2022 Mini-Grants Fund LLL Leader Education

by Paula Clay, 2022 Mini-Grants Team



Jill Rabin and Rachel Murphy

**Julia's Way** was one of the recipients of our 2022 Friends of La Leche League Mini-Grants program. The grant funding has enabled the organization to schedule a special program for La Leche League Leaders, focusing on facilitating breastfeeding in babies with Down syndrome. This webinar session will be offered exclusively for LLL Leaders worldwide, providing in-depth information on how to help Leaders support mothers who want to breastfeed their babies with Down syndrome. The training is scheduled for Thursday, January 18, 2024 at 7:00 pm Eastern Time (12:00 am January 19 UTC).

The presenters for the session are Jill Rabin, M.S. CCC-SLP/L IBCLC, and Rachel Murphy, RN, IBCLC. Ms. Rabin has lectured internationally on the topic of breastfeeding and adapted baby-led weaning for babies with Down syndrome. Ms. Murphy is the mother of a child with Down syndrome who was successful in breastfeeding that baby through several obstacles, which inspired her to help other mothers of babies with Down syndrome. Both Ms. Rabin and Ms. Murphy are consultants with the Julia's Way organization through the MDSC National Parents First Call Center, and they are co-moderators of the monthly breastfeeding support group.

Friends of La Leche League is so pleased that our 2022 Mini-Grants program has enabled this wonderful learning opportunity, as well as so many [other valuable projects](#) world-

wide. For more information about this webinar or to register for the training, please use this [LINK](#). All registrants will receive a link to the training recording.



Beautiful babies pictured on the *Julia's Way* website.

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## We Remember: A Friends of La Leche League Tradition



**"...In the blowing of the wind, and in the chill of winter, we remember them..."**

**“So as we live, they too shall live, for they are now a part of us, as we remember them.”**

“We Remember” is a tradition started by the Friends of La Leche League in 2001, paying tribute to Leaders who have died.

Throughout the history of La Leche League, we have connected to each other on a deep level across countries and cultures. Part of our mission as Friends of LLL is to keep connections strong as we remember and appreciate those who have died.

Leaders’ names are recorded in calligraphy in the “We Remember” album by Susan Mocsny Thomas and posted on the [Friends of LLL We Remember page](#). We also have a special event at each Friends of LLL trip. If a deceased Leader’s name is missing from this list, please **send us the information here**. Include the Leader’s name, year of death, and location (country, state/province) where Leader was active. If available, submit year of birth and obituary link. Or email these details to [WeRemember@friendsoflll.org](mailto:WeRemember@friendsoflll.org). When possible, include an obituary link.

These are the names of Leaders we have been informed of since October 2022. Names in blue are linked to their obituaries.

[Anne-Marie Arsenault](#) ~ Quebec Canada

[Kay Batt](#) ~ Washington United States

[Kristian Billiot](#) ~ Louisiana United States

[Ruth DeRosa](#) ~ Maryland United States

[Jane Gilbert](#) ~ Great Britain

[Johanna Horton](#) ~ Illinois United States

[Vicky Maline](#) ~ Colorado United States

[Gail Moak](#) ~ California United States

[Alison Parkes](#) ~ Great Britain

[Norma Ritter](#) ~ New York United States

[Helene Scheff](#) ~ Rhode Island United States

[Virginia Steele](#) ~ Kansas United States

[Mary Strack](#) ~ California United States

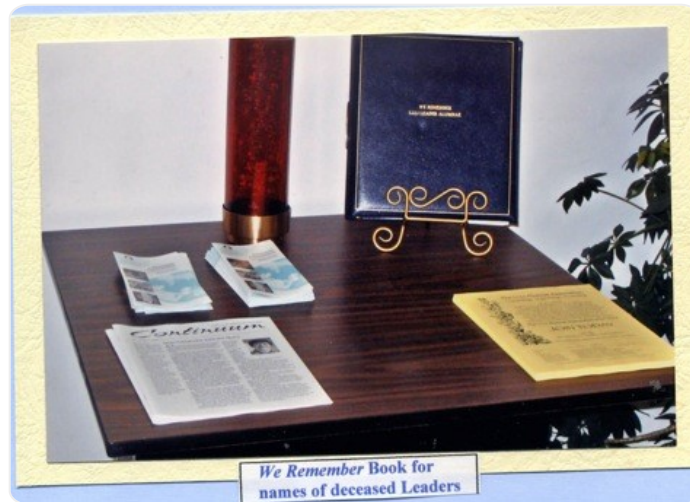
[Anna Utter](#) ~ Maryland United States

[Keitha Whitaker](#) ~ Mississippi United States

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The We Remember book and candle as they once were displayed at the LLLI offices in Schaumburg, Illinois.

Susan Mocsny Thomas now holds the books and maintains the calligraphy listing at her home.



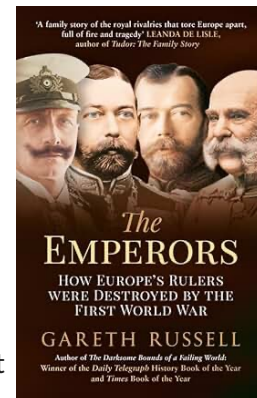
## You Might Like to Read...

by Mary Gisch

Send Mary your suggestions at [Giscmary2@gmail.com](mailto:Giscmary2@gmail.com)

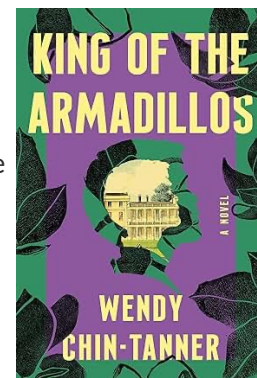
### **The Emperors: How Europe's Rulers Were Destroyed by the First World War, 2014, by Gareth Russell**

The author explains the various reasons for World War I and shares some of the inner workings in each of the Empires. Most people are aware of the hemophiliac son of Tsar Alexander, but few knew that Kaiser Wilhelm II had a daughter with Down syndrome and kept her with the family. Archduke Franz Ferdinand was the heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary; his death was not a simple murder. It was a threat to the empires of Austria-Hungary, Germany, and Russia. Some of the Emperors were against war but were unable to stop it from happening. Russell speculates that the weak royalty was not only undermined by the Nazis in Germany and the Soviets in Russia, but by President Wilson's strong feeling of no need for royalty. The only royalty left was King George V of England and India. *A great read for history buffs!*



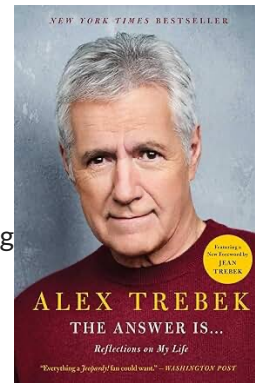
### **King of the Armadillos, 2023, by Wendy Chin-Tanner**

The author is sharing her father's experience of living with Hansen's Disease at age 15 and being cured at 18. This historical novel tells of the Carville National Leprosarium in Louisiana. Victor came from China at age 8, and lived with his father and brother. His mother was still in China. How does a boy from China and now New York City deal with this calamity? It is a touching and endearing look at a life with a much dreaded disease, which thankfully can now be cured. *Armadillos can also get this disease!*



## The Answer Is... ; Reflections on My Life, 2020, by Alex Trebek

This autobiography was written at the end of Trebek's life. Alex wanted to share his thoughts about his upbringing in Canada, his family, and his interest in game shows, which started in Canada. It is surprising how many shows he was on before he hit it big with *Jeopardy*. He was fascinated with *Jeopardy* and participated in some of the planning. He shares a number of photos. He bravely faced cancer and left a strong legacy. *A very pleasant walk down memory lane.*



## Stalking Around the Christmas Tree (A Christmas Tree Farm Mystery), 2023, by Jacqueline Frost

A Christmas story for the holidays -- what could be better? Ballerinas arrive to perform *The Nutcracker Suite* in a Christmassy town in Maine. Christmas Eve will be doubly special because a local woman, Holly, is getting married! *In addition to all the fun and good cheer, it is a very good detective story.*



## Pins Make Great Gifts for LLL Friends

Friends of La Leche League is your source for Leader recognition pins. These make great gifts for all occasions and are treasured by long-time Leaders. We also carry the LLLI 65th Anniversary pins and our own Friends of La Leche League pins.

1-9 pins are \$6.00 each.  
10-25 pins are \$5.00 each.  
26 or more pins are \$4.00 each.



## Order Pins

## Tributes Honor Those Who Inspire Us

Below are current tributes to Leaders and friends of La Leche League. Want to honor someone with a tribute? Use these [instructions and form](#) to submit them.

### Tributes through December 2024

Honoring **Marian Tompson**, Evanston, Illinois USA

*"I honor Marian Tompson, as one of the seven Founders of LLLI, but also as a person who has always been able to see all sides of an issue."*

From **Rebecca Magalhaes**, Neponset, Illinois USA

Nov 12 2023 – Nov 12 2024

In Memory Of **Mary Lofton**, Riverside, Illinois USA

*"In memory of my dear friend, Mary Lofton, whose kindness, laughter, and gentle spirit will be missed."*

From **Mary Gisch**, Westchester, Illinois USA

Nov 8 2023 – Nov 8 2024

In Memory Of **Gail Moak**, Oakland, California USA

***"To a special friend who had such an open heart and fostered the way to moms wanting to breastfeed in a time when it was frowned upon. May her dedication and work continue on. Blessed are those who knew her, blessed are those that unknown to them she touched their lives. Gail in our hearts you are still there."***

From **Yomaira and Eugene Lampi**, Portland, Oregon USA

Sep 23 2023 – Sep 23 2024

In Memory Of **Gail Moak**, Oakland, California USA

***"Gail was a dear friend and colleague, the epitome of kindness and grace. I could always count on her to share her wisdom with me."***

From **Edna Kelly**, Houston, Texas USA

Jun 27 2023 – Jun 27 2024

In Memory Of **Gail Moak**, Oakland, California USA

From **Amy Shaw**, Hull, Massachusetts USA

Jun 23 2023 – Jun 23 2024

In Memory Of **Gail Moak**, Oakland, California USA

***"In Memory of my sister, Gail Susan Moak, who left this Earth too soon but left an everlasting memory with her kindness and gentle spirit."***

From **Denise Moak O'Neill**, Coral Gables, Florida USA

Jun 20 2023 – Jun 20 2024

In Memory Of **Gail Moak**, Oakland, California USA

***"To Honor the Life and dedicated work to LLL and Friends of LLL and in memory of our wonderful trips."***

From **Rae Schopp**, Westbury, New York USA

Jun 8 2023 – Jun 8 2024

In Memory Of **Gail Moak**, Oakland, California USA

***"Gail warmly welcomed me as a newbie to Friends of LLL, offering gentle guidance and support. She loved her family, swimming, flowers and her vintage home. Most importantly, Gail lived her life with intention and meaning. I am going to miss her terribly. May Gail's memory always be for a blessing."***

From **Randee Kaitcer**, Fort Worth, Texas USA

Jun 8 2023 – Jun 8 2024

In Memory Of **Johanna Meyer Horton**, Illinois USA

***"As a La Leche League Leader for over fifty years, Johanna's support of breastfeeding and families ranged far and wide. During her family's time there in the 1960s, she co-founded the first LLL chapter in Norman, Oklahoma. Thus, opening the door for me, and many others, to become Leaders in Oklahoma. (Thank you, Johanna!) Always on her toes, she shared her Wordle score on Facebook, a daily event many of us looked forward to."***

From **Rebecca Keepers**, Yukon, Oklahoma USA

Jun 6 2023 – Jun 6 2024

Honoring **Anne Marie Miller**, Athens, Georgia USA

***"Thank you for all you have done and are doing to help mothers and babies and for those of us who are also dedicated to helping them."***

From Marguerite Gravlee, Valdosta, Georgia USA

May 29 2023 – May 29 2024

## Tributes through March 2024

In Memory of Bonnie Read Bragg

*“Bonnie became a Leader in 1970 approximately. She was a dear friend. She and I worked together as Leaders once she became one in Penobscot Valley LLL – Bangor, ME Area. She was a nurse, and once her children were old enough (in school) she worked as an obstetrical nurse, so she retired from LLL Leadership. She was a wonderful Leader. Sadly, she passed in 2017 due to complications from Parkinson’s Disease.”*

From Cynthia Blease, Maine USA

1/14/2023 – 1/14/2024

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## We Appreciate the Support of Our Donors

Friends of La Leche League programs and activities are primarily funded by memberships and donations. We gratefully acknowledge those who have contributed to our organization. If your name has been omitted, misspelled or listed incorrectly, please accept our sincerest apology and inform us by contacting Treasurer Anne Hutton at [Treasurer@FriendsofLLL.org](mailto:Treasurer@FriendsofLLL.org).

### Unrestricted Donations from April 2023 to Present:

Mary Gisch  
Marguerite Gravlee (2 gifts)  
Ranee Kaitcer  
Edna Kelly  
Rebecca Keepers  
Yomaira and Eugene Lampi  
Lou-Ellen MacDonald  
Denise Moak O’Neill  
Rae Schopp  
Amy Shaw  
Marianne Vaikener

### In-Kind Donations from April 2023 to Present:

Anne Hutton  
Penny Piercy

### Restricted Donations to Fund Mini-Grant Program

### Unrestricted Donations from April 2022 to March 2023:

Anonymous (3 donors)  
Carroll Beckham  
Jane Bland  
Cynthia Blease  
Keisha Colson  
Lorelei de la Reza  
Jacque Gates  
Judie Gubala  
Mary Gisch  
Gloria Glidewell  
Marguerite Gravlee  
Anne Hutton  
Margaret Loffelman  
Genevieve Mandala  
Vivienne Miller  
Barbara Searing  
Merike Tamm  
Marian Tompson  
Marianne Vakiener

from April 2022 to March  
2023:

Judith Ellison

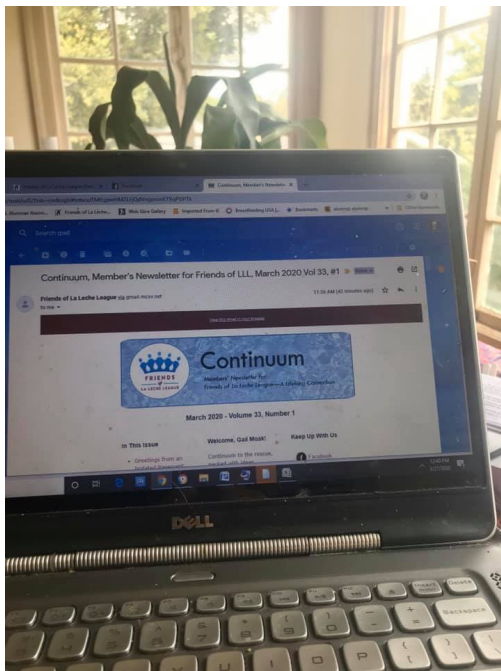
In-Kind Donations  
from April 2022 to March  
2023:

Penny Piercy

Donate Now

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## Call for Articles



We are always looking for writers to submit articles of interest to your fellow members of the Friends of La Leche League! We believe that your stories have something to offer to other Friends. Please don't worry that your writing will not be acceptable. We are skilled at editing, and we will make your words shine!

We look forward to reading more articles, and it may just be yours that we are waiting for!

Send your ideas to  
[Publications@FriendsofLLL.org](mailto:Publications@FriendsofLLL.org).

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## Friends of La Leche League Mission Statement

**The mission of the Friends of La Leche League is to support La Leche League as a resource and inspiration for future generations, encourage lifelong connections with the LLL community, and share the insights and wisdom that began with the breastfeeding relationship.**

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