

Continuum

THE LLLI ALUMNAE ASSOCIATION

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Playtime. As mothers, we had no doubt about its value in the lives of our young and growing children. Chances are, most of us relished joining our little ones to build sandcastles at the beach, draw chalk pictures on the sidewalk, make snow angels in the yard, play make believe throughout the house.

Grandchildren, nieces and nephews, or young students pull many of us back into that almost sacred realm of child play. But who invites play into our adult lives? And when invited, is it a welcome, stop-by-anytime guest or is it more often an elusive no-show in a too-hectic day?

This double issue of Continuum takes a peek at play—and offers a sweeping invitation to its readers to come and play with the Alums at the LLLI Conference in Chicago, July 2001!

What is it about play?

The topic of play has been on my mind a lot lately. Perhaps it's a counterbalance to this dreary, midwestern USA winter that calls out for some light-hearted laughter. Or a yearning of my soul to break free of responsibility, just a bit, and let loose in some wild and crazy way. Could be the post-fifty need to "wear purple... run a post along public railings... pick flowers in other people's gardens." Then again, it might just be on my mind because I really like to play. And I haven't been doing enough of it lately.

"What is it about play?" I asked Nancy Franklin, an LLL Leader in San Antonio, Texas. As a Registered Play Therapist, I figured she should know.

"The effect of play on us humans," she wrote back, "is so multi-faceted that it's hard to define in a cognitive, literal sort of way." But then she went on to do just that: "Play is a function of spontaneity—or vice versa. In the true nature of play, one goes with the flow, follows her internal cues, stays on her own agenda. It's a flowing, popping, champagne bubble sort of experience. It nourishes"

Ahhh.

Lenore Terr, MD, author of *Beyond Love and Work: Why Adults Need to Play* [Touchstone Books, 2000], defines it in tantalizing terms: "There is an infectiousness to play. It beckons us to join in." The attraction, perhaps, is freedom. Kerr points out that "when we play, we sense no limitations. In fact, when we are playing, we are usually unaware of ourselves. Self-observation goes out the window. We forget all those past lessons of life, forget our potential foolishness, forget ourselves. We immerse ourselves in the act of play. And we become free."

Play frees us to wander. Through play, we can explore, examine, and experiment free from expectations or judgment. Our curiosity and creativity can flourish, unconstrained by any need for results.

Play frees us from worries ...and cares and pain and sadness and frustration. Play embraces our whole being and commands our full attention. As we become absorbed in the moment, our burdens slip away. Even if play has been physically or mentally demanding, the respite refreshes and restores.

Play frees us from time and space. In this rushed and hurried world where the clock is ruler and deadlines constantly loom, play suspends time and places us in an altered state guided by a more natural internal timepiece.

Play frees us to find and define self. When we're at play, we can try on new

personas—we can be whimsical or daring or dramatic. Permission is granted to pamper ourselves, connect with our inner needs, play out our wishes.

According to Terr, "We embellish our play with meanings unique to ourselves. And these meanings continue to develop as our lives become more complex.

"Play is essential to maturity. It gives us pleasure, a sense of accomplishment, of belonging. It is an opportunity for learning. It reduces our stresses. ...Play is important to our relationships. And it gives us flexibility....In today's world, play is a lost key. It unlocks the door to our selves."

I can't say there's a day in my life that goes by without any fun—but wholehearted play? It's past due at my house.

—Sue Christensen, Indiana USA

*It's a flowing,
popping,
champagne bubble
sort of experience*

And you thought LLLI Board members were all business...

No one can accuse members of the LLLI Board of Directors of lacking a strong work ethic. Board work is demanding, intense, and challenging. And the time commitment on behalf of La Leche League can be immense. Clearly, these women know how to work. What makes them effective and keeps them energized, however, may be that they also find the time to play.

The question posed to Board members was an easy one: What do you do for play time? for fun? Their answers give evidence that beyond the common bond of LLL philosophy, there is a delightfully diverse group of women who enjoy life—each in her own way.

Betty Crase: The entire LLLI Conference has become my “playtime” as it gives me the opportunity to reconnect with Leaders and friends.

Other aspects of “playtime” for me include being actively involved in my high school daughter’s activities. She and I have just returned from Los Angeles, California, from a once-in-a-lifetime acting career opportunity. Our week under the lights included many auditions for Vanessa and much leaning against walls outside closed auditions for me. Talking with the other parents who were there supporting their aspiring actors, actresses, and models was wonderful. By the way, Vanessa performed incredibly, won several awards, and has a number of top agencies and acting schools interested in her. Now we shall see.

As for other “playtime” activities, I love to read (romance novels in the past couple of years since Susan Elizabeth Phillips spoke at the Washington DC LLLI Conference) and I sing with an



Betty Crase

...often
that magical spark
pops up
and I suddenly realize
I'm having a ball

—Lynne Coates

adult group at our church. I just wish there was more time for these things.

Lynne Coates: Playtime for me means a time when I can become engrossed in an activity, to the point of enjoying the activity just because it makes me feel good—because it’s fun. Sometimes I find this kind of play when working at an activity that has a larger purpose than my enjoyment (like my LLL work)—and then it’s doubly delightful because it just happens.

When I set out to play, I often turn to music. I play several instruments and enjoy making music with others. I’m part of a Renaissance music group of seven people. We combine singing with recorder-playing, and we’ve just learned some period dances that we’re also teaching to others. We all have period costumes and making my outfit was part of the fun. We don’t have a heavy performance schedule (two or three Renaissance fairs a year, an occasional gig in between). Practicing for this group is usually fun, whether with the group or on my own. I also play in another recorder ensemble and with an ensemble at my church (I play flute for that one).

With my husband and kids I play

structured games—usually cards or sometimes a board game. This may start out as a duty thing for me, but more often than not, I enter into the spirit of play shortly after we start. We also enjoy jokes together and often have extensive discussions about comic strips in the paper. Camping trips are playtime for us. We don’t do that often enough.

And I play by doing physical exercise (walking, bicycling). Sometimes the exercise is just exercise, but it often turns into playtime, especially on a nice day or when somebody else comes along for conversation.

Other forms of play: going to the movies with my husband (or sometimes the whole family, or with friends) and reading light fiction.

I think that play often “just happens”—and if I want it to happen, I have to leave the door open by making time to engage in activities that I enjoy doing or joining an activity that a family member or friend enjoys. Sometimes the activity is just the activity (usually worthwhile in some way), but often that magical spark pops up and I suddenly realize I’m having a ball.

Sandy Davis: This is “easy” to answer. I play everyday. I run and bike and swim and ski and hike. Since I do it regularly,



Lynne Coates and Susan Deo

sometimes compete, and spend our vacations biking or skiing in the Rockies, you might not think it is play-time. But the chance to be outdoors, exercise, make friends, is a daily renewal of the mind and body, like sleep and eating. My husband has been a competitive athlete all his life and our six children participate in sports. Sometimes we "play" together, sometimes not.

When I am waiting for the computer to log into our connection, I play solitaire. How fast can I play, how many times can I play, how many times can I win while I am waiting? Yes, it takes awhile to get logged-in.

My husband (and his father before him) talks in puns. Sitting around the table with our family can be a mental challenge, especially for a foreign student. Our exchange student this year knew she was understanding English well when she could keep up with the words flying around her.

Susan Deo: For "play" I like to go to the beach with my family and explore new places with them. We also like to cook together when we have the time!

In addition, I volunteer as a docent at a local interpretive center where we

have a prime spot to watch the annual migration of the Pacific gray whales and, through the same docent program, I lead tours of a habitat restoration park and a shoreline park that has a cobble beach and great tidepools.

Anne Easterday: My life is still very much taken up with my five children (aged two months to eleven years). I would have to say that playtime for me usually means spending time with friends, whether it is talking over coffee with my home-schooling friends, or with my neighbors while watching the kids play at the pool. I really treasure the time I have to share with other women with similar interests.



Anne Easterday

Welda Hoerz: I READ! My escape, my relaxation, my gift to me is reading. I read mostly mystery, detective stuff and historical fiction—so it's not that I am really doing anything edifying when I get away from the theme of breastfeeding!

Nan Jolly: For fun, I walk on the beach, read poetry out loud, practise Tai Chi, sing hymns with gusto over the dishes, dance! Interesting, mostly solitary pursuits. Must be that I'm an introvert and recharge on my own!

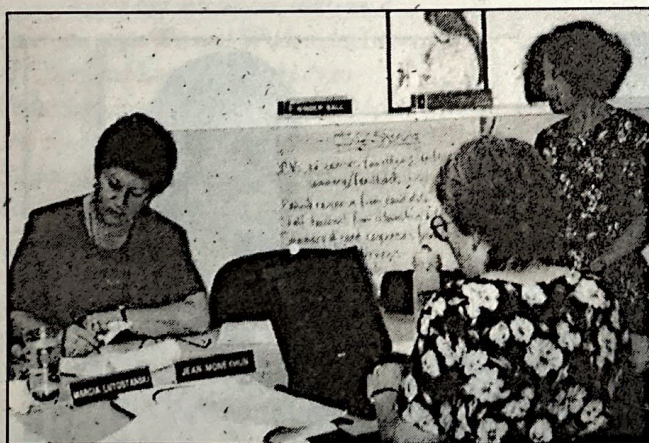
Mary Ann Kerwin: For play, I ride my bike outside about 10 miles almost every day (except when there is snow or ice on the ground). When biking is not possible, I take walks, often on a nearby canal with a daughter and two little grandchildren. During the summer, I lap swim 15 to 20 minutes almost daily and play tennis occasionally. For fun, I enjoy reading, singing, playing games, and especially enjoy interacting with my large family.

Marcia Lutostanski: In Texas there's lots of space and there is a large park about 20 minutes from my house. On the weekends, my husband, teenagers and I run around with our 6 month old labrador puppy. We race, play tag, throw a ball and hopefully in the process get wet either in the creek or in the huge puddles left after a rain storm. (Houston has had lots of rain this year!) After an afternoon like this, we might pick up sandwiches or order pizza and then all pile on the couch to watch an old movie.

We haven't been doing it much lately, but when we get the chance as a family, we like to play tennis. We'll play with one person for about 30 minutes and then switch. When we're tired of singles we'll team up and play doubles. My eldest son can easily beat us all, but we all try to play fair so that everyone gets a chance to shine.



Marcia Lutostanski



Jean Moneyhan, Lynne Coates, and Sandy Davis tackling a Board assignment

The Board at play, continued...

Jean Moneyhon: My greatest enjoyment in life is time spent with my family. I never get tired of being with them! My play is really my volunteer efforts—I receive so much more than I give. My relaxation is the short time I spend each day rocking in the winter and swinging in the summer. I believe that if every adult spent 10 minutes a day rocking or swinging like this, we'd all feel better and be happier. It is like returning to your mother's arms! You don't even need a rocker or swing; just move back and forth while seated. Spend this time in quiet, repetitive movement; think of nothing or something pleasant—whichever is most comfortable; breathe deeply; and enjoy.

Ginger Sall: Our family enjoys reading out loud to each other. We read novels, nonfiction, news papers, and magazines. It's a reflection of our times that the kids see this as the equivalent of a live performance of an audio book—as if comparing a play to a movie. A positive aspect is that we often read as if we are acting the parts... like some of the readers in books on tape. Typically, someone sits at the kitchen counter and reads during meal preparation or clean up. We haven't quite figured out what

to do about talking over the kitchen noises. A usual comment is, "I can't hear when the water's running."

Cynthia Sherar: I like to write—journals, projects for school, my novel, articles for LEAVEN, etc. Crossword puzzles are high on my list. When I have a chunk of time, I love to do genealogy research and have even made a few trips—looking through church and census records, walking through cemeteries, and so on. I do a lot of sewing as well. I also enjoy playing board games with my kids, especially Scrabble and Cribbage.

Cindy Smith: As far as "play time," frankly, I don't have much. To me, play time means spending time with people I enjoy being with—people who make me feel good about myself and people who can widen my thinking and my perspective.

I have several groups of people who do this for me. Friends from LLL are one group. We don't do this enough, but those few weekends we've stolen to get away and talk, talk, talk are some of the best play time moments for me.

Mike and I have a few couples we enjoy going out with—usually one at a

To me, play means
spending time
with people I enjoy

—Cindy Smith

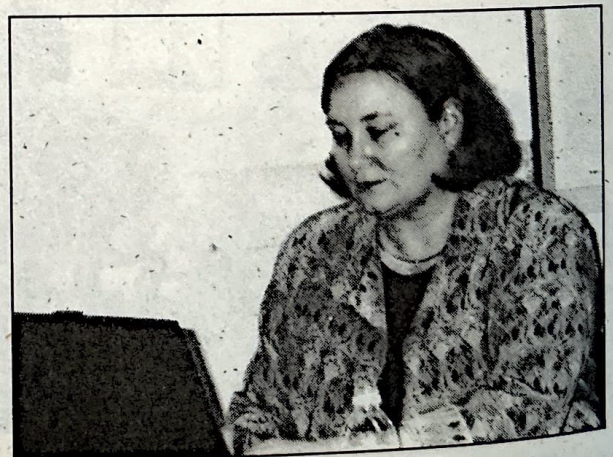
time—who can generate great dinner conversations. So we look for a top-notch restaurant, don't worry about how long we have to wait, tuck ourselves away in the corner of the bar or waiting area and start talking. It may be hours until dinner is finally over, but what a wonderful evening.

If I need playtime alone (which sometimes happens) I like to curl up with a good novel (or sometimes a not-so-good, easy-to-read one) and just enjoy myself. It would be even better if I had a box of chocolates beside me!

Another thing I like to do alone is browse through antique stores. I know nothing about antiques and I hardly ever buy anything. But looking at all the old stuff, imagining who might have owned it, how they might have used it—was it a gift? was it precious to someone?—those flights of mental fancy are fun!



Cindy Smith, Cynthia Sherar, and Mary Ann Kerwin not at play...



Ginger Sall

Playtime for grownups

Okay. I know that LLLI Conferences are for mothers and babies and families and professionals who deal with the issue of lactation day after day. But what does an LLLI Conference have to offer me—someone who hasn't nursed a baby in a very long time, whose children are way past the diaper stage, and who is looking at what I want to be when I grow up? Certainly I want to improve my Leader skills, but do I want to spend all that money to go and listen to more about nipple confusion?

Let's reframe the LLLI Conference for those of us beyond the weaning stage. Let's consider the conference as enrichment and playtime for grown-ups! Frivolous? Not really.

Speakers who entertain and inspire us, activities which soothe or invigorate us, and rich discussions with other like-minded people all help us reconnect with our LLL roots and recharge our LLL batteries. This summer's Conference program bursts with enrichment and play opportunities that will rekindle our souls as well as our volunteer spirit.

So please join me in Chicago July 7-10, 2001. I'll be the woman doing water aerobics early in the day and getting a massage during late afternoon. I'll be attending lots of sessions that have caught my attention, such as: *Parenting with Wit and Wisdom in Times of Chaos and Loss*; *The Journey to Financial Empowerment*; *Chinese Medicine through the Stages of Women's Lives*; *Exploring the Next Level: Myers Briggs*. You'll hear me laughing in the halls or reminiscing with League friends or envisioning a future when every baby is breastfed. I might even belly dance. I'll definitely be having a great time.

Hope to see you there. Let's play!

—Nancy Franklin, Texas

[Ed note—Nancy will present a session "That's Life: A Drama Workshop for Self-Awareness" at the conference on Monday morning, July 9.

Rejuvenation: everyone's invited

Renew your spirit... Energize your body...

Try something new... Have fun!

Choose from a wider array of rejuvenation activities than ever before at this summer's LLLI Conference in Chicago. Once again sponsored by the LLLI Alumnae Association, activities begin as early as 6:00 a.m. and run throughout the day July 8th, 9th, and 10th.

Here's just a sampling:

- ✱ **Early morning walks or Water Aerobics** to start off your day.
- ✱ **Yoga**—select, Rejuvenating, Energizing, even Chair Yoga—to experience knowing and understanding your body from a new perspective.
- ✱ **Belly Dancing** to give women of all sizes and ages an opportunity to experience the power of the female form! Women of all sizes and ages feel at home in the dance that inspires us to love our bodies as they are.
- ✱ **T'ai Chi Chih** to discover an ancient form of gentle movements which can strengthen and integrate body, mind, and soul.
- ✱ **Massage** to rejuvenate you midway through your day.
- ✱ **Five Element Shisatsu** to learn meridian stretches and simple self healing using points, meditation, and relaxation exercises.
- ✱ **Aerobic Workouts** for cardiovascular and strength training.
- ✱ **The Art of Motherhood** to create a visual art image reflecting your thoughts and feelings about motherhood.
- ✱ **Virtual Makeover and Computer Hair Imagery** to see a whole new you. Print your makeover to share with your hairdresser for the real thing!
- ✱ **Feng Shui** for ideas on bringing peace and harmony into your home.

And more. Stop by the Astoria Room to sign up for activities.

—Sue Steilen, Alumnae Conference Planning Team

Tea... a joyful simplicity!

I love teas! My maternal grandfather was born and raised in England. He moved to the United States as a young man to work as the head gardener on an estate in Pennsylvania. His emotional ties to everything British remained strong throughout his life and he made sure that his grandchildren, who were growing up on a small family farm in Ohio, knew how to make a proper pot of tea! I *loved* "having tea." It was so elegant, so relaxing, so civilized!

One of my favorite memories from the years I served on the LLLI Board of Directors was the day Sarah Gill surprised me with the gift of an English teapot that she brought straight from England. I still use it everyday along with the fine-china tea cup I received as a thank you when I left the US Western Division Staff.

A print of Mary Cassatt's painting of a graceful gloved lady enjoying a cup of tea and a moment of comfort graces the wall behind my computer.

When my oldest daughter was married, I hosted a tea in her honor with our out-of-town relatives the day before the wedding.

I was delighted when the LLLI Alumnae Association decided to host a tea at the Orlando Conference in 1999 in honor of our seven Founders and the women who began LLL Groups throughout the world. All of us who attended enjoy lingering memories of that very special occasion.

Now the Alumnae Tea at the July 2001 LLLI Conference is luring me back to LLL in a most befitting way. After 23 years as an active Leader and a decade serving LLLI as a member of its staff and Board of Directors, I had planned to retire from LLL in 2000. Then, Pam Oselka, coordinator of the LLLI Alumnae Association called with an offer I just couldn't pass up. She knew that I'd become involved in the fashion industry [ed—see page 7] and she wondered if I would be interested in coordinating a fashion show for the upcoming tea. How could I turn down the opportunity to merge two special aspects of my life—tea and fashion—on behalf of La Leche?

I'm happy to report that plans for the "Simply Elegant Afternoon Tea" are coming right along. Our setting is the fabulous Grand Ballroom of the Hilton Chicago. A "Kaleidoscope of Fashion" show will feature LLL models of all ages and sizes wearing fashions from Weekenders and our other Conference exhibitors. The Founders will be our honored guests. Humorist and former Leader Bobbe Lyon, who enlivened one of the luncheons at the last LLLI Conference, will be our mirth-filled Mistress of Ceremonies.

Can't you just see the colors and curves, the glances and smiles, the celebration of womanhood? There will be a cup of tea waiting at the table just for you. If you can, please, join us!

—Alice Edwards, Colorado USA

"Take the time-hallowed tea party, for example....

A tea party exemplifies the benefits that play offers.

...Tea play generates moments of perfect manners, perfect peace in communal settings. Teas, in fact,

bridge the gap

between play and ritual.

There are several

' pleasures in tea parties:

the dressing up,

the good manners,

the delicious and dainty food,

the chance to sit down

to good conversation."

—Lenore Terr, MD

Please join the LLLI Alumnae Association and our special guests, the Founders of La Leche League

for a *Simply Elegant Afternoon Tea*

5:00 p.m. Sunday Afternoon July 8, 2001 ~ Grand Ballroom Hilton Chicago

LLL opens doors in unexpected ways

I learned about Weekenders, my fashion business, inadvertently through La Leche League. Toward the end of my term on the LLLI Board, I turned 50. I liked most things about my age. I was energetic, experienced, and ready to convert what I'd learned in the first half of my life into the wisdom of a crone. I didn't even mind the gravitational pull of my "moving South" body too much, but I was having a terrible time finding clothes that fit and weren't matronly looking!

Luckily, Carol Burke from Canada was serving on the Board at that time. For years, I'd admired the very comfortable, contemporary, classic-looking clothes she wore to our meetings. I finally asked her about them and learned that they were called Weekenders, a clothing line developed in Canada and sold only through home-based fashion coordinators.

I not only loved the clothes but also the idea of supporting someone in her home-based business. I placed an order through Carol's coordinator in Canada. When the clothes arrived, I was delighted to show them off for my friends in Denver, who loved them as much as I did.

For some time I had been toying with the idea of owning my own business. I had developed strong skills through my LLL work, including excellent communication skills and a thorough knowledge of budget, finance, strategic planning, marketing, management, and conflict resolution. But, through LLL, I had also enjoyed the freedom to develop competencies as I needed them, to set my own working hours, and to bring my own brand of creativity to my work. I wasn't sure I wanted to commit to the confines of a typical job.

So, I took a leap of faith. I became a Weekender Fashion Coordinator and

began building my own home-based business. I loved the product, the flexibility, the creativity, the women I worked with, and the company. Here

*I wasn't
sure I wanted
to commit
to the confines
of a typical job*

was another organization structured to support women. Of course this time it was a network of experienced business-woman supporting each other instead of one breastfeeding mother supporting another, but Weekenders' structure was so similar to LLL's that I felt competent and right at home. The Weekender USA office was even in Chicago!

—Alice Edwards, Colorado USA

[Ed—Alice and other Weekender Fashion Coordinators will be exhibiting at the LLLI Conference. The clothing also will be modeled during the "Kaleidoscope of Fashion" at the Simply Elegant Afternoon Tea. If you'd like to find out more about Weekenders, visit their website at <www.weekenders.com>]

Life & livelihood:

Synchronizing what you do with who you are

For the past 10 years, Idene Goldman has been a teacher of "Inner Education" and a believer in self-alignment. Through her Vision Works workshops, she asks some thought-provoking questions:

- ❖ Is "what you do outside" reflective of "who you are inside?"
- ❖ Is what you experience inside yourself synchronized with what you tangibly produce?
- ❖ Are the results and relationships in your life congruent with your vision?
- ❖ Are the "parts" of who you are working together, or fighting it out on an inner battleground?

One of the important tasks of alignment, according to Idene, is to become attentive to the talents, values, strengths, and unique qualities that come standard with each of us. It means

keeping these valuable self-assets alive, practical, and applied in our lives.

Idene will be bringing her knowledge and leadership skills to the LLLI Conference in Chicago this July through two sessions:

"Life and Livelihood: Synchronizing What You Do with Who You Are," and "The Family Color Wheel: The True Colors System of Understanding Different Personalities in Your Family."

*In the pursuit of being
all we can be,
do we remember
who we already are?*

LLLI welcomes a new Executive Director and Director of Operations

Two key positions in LLLI have recently been filled.

The Board of Directors announced that Anne Gaskell, an LLL Leader of North Yorkshire, Great Britain, has accepted the position of Executive Director for La Leche League International.

Prior to accepting this position, Anne served as a program manager for a large inner city further education college (similar to a community college in the USA) and as a biology lecturer. Anne and her husband Vince have three children: Elizabeth (20), Paul (18) and Alice (14).

Anne discovered La Leche League in 1980 and it has been a part of her life ever since. She became a Leader in 1983. In Great Britain, she served as Chair of the Publications Department and Chair of the Council of Directors. From 1996 to 1998 she was a member of the LLLI Board of Directors from Zone Europe. In February 1998, Anne left the LLLI Board to accept an expanded management position at Park Lane College. In that position, she developed and gained certification for new programs in sports science, in collaboration with Leeds University.

Anne will continue to reside in Great Britain and will spend extensive time at the Schaumburg office during the first year as she builds working relationships with the staff there and with the LLLI community throughout the world.

Many activities at the Schaumburg facility will be coordinated by the Director of Operations, who will report directly to Anne.

Anne will begin her responsibilities about April 1, 2001.

Tim Dosemagen began serving as Director of Operations for LLLI in mid-

January, 2001. He directs and coordinates all the LLLI business operations that take place out of the Schaumburg office.

Tim comes to La Leche League with a wide range of experience. He served for seven years with the United States Air Force as a special translator within the Operations organization of the National Security Agency during the Carter and Reagan administrations. He spent three years in the Republic of Korea and traveling throughout East Asia as a Chinese Cryptologic Linguist.

After leaving the Air Force, Tim switched from serving country to serving youth. He spent the last 11 years on the executive staff of two local Boy Scouts of America councils headquartered in Highland Park, Illinois and Racine, Wisconsin. During this time, he led sales and service teams to post an unbroken string of year-to-year increases in membership, earning numerous national Boy Scout council recognitions.

Tim resides in Antioch, Illinois with his wife Cheryl, son Jeremy (11) and daughter Mellissa (10). He enjoys writing (he is currently working on a novel), involvement with Rotary International, and Asia-watching, especially China. His Doctorate is in Education from Nova-Southeastern University, Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. His graduate work was in Human Service Agency Management.

Marketing LLL in the mainstream

Seventy-five thousand new mothers who visit Sears Roebuck stores in the USA will be receiving a packet which includes information about La Leche League and breastfeeding. (The packet does not include any promotion from a formula company.)

Lansinoh arranged for the free inclusion of LLL material in order to promote breastfeeding. For this opportunity, LLLI developed a new trifold pamphlet strictly focused on the new mother. A postage paid reply card gives mothers the opportunity to request a free "Introductory Packet" from LLLI. Mothers who return the card receive two to three information sheets or pamphlets, a Catalogue, and a promotional offer for NEW BEGINNINGS and membership.

According to Judy Torgus, LLLI Publications Director, the early response has been tremendous and over 350 new mothers have now been introduced to La Leche League through this special Sears promotion.

Lansinoh has developed still another project that will reach more mothers with information about LLL. This involves a packet of materials designed for working mothers that will be sold at K-Mart stores. Lansinoh has placed an initial order for 10,000 copies of LLL's "A Mother's Guide to Milk Expression and Pumping" for the packet. The pamphlet is currently being redesigned for a fresh and modern look.

"Many women have a natural thinking process that is circular and multimodal, not linear and causal. Ideas, thoughts, and wisdom come from all our parts- our brain, our uterus, our higher power. We must learn to trust our thoughts."

—Christiane Northrup, M.D. Women's Bodies, Women's Health (a perpetual calendar)

Going "Chaordic"—building an LLLI structure based on LLL principles

At their October 2000 meeting, the LLLI Board of Directors gave a green light to start working on an exciting process over the next two years that will address the structure and organization of La Leche League International.

Recently, a mailing was sent to every Leader in the world that explains this new chaordic initiative and opportunities for participation. (If you did not receive a mailing, you can find all the information online. See box.)

Guidance in the process comes from The Chaordic Alliance, a group that works with organizations to build structures that are as "flexible, innovative and diverse as the increasingly complex worlds in which they operate."

The decision to begin this process has been a thoughtful one, with involvement from Leaders in different countries, departments, and levels of LLL. This broad involvement will continue to grow because both sharing information and listening are integral to the chaordic design process.

There are lots of good reasons for La Leche League to undertake this organization design process. Here are some:

❖ **It's time.** Way past, according to many in La Leche League. Addressing the *organization* of our organization has been high on the LLL to-do list for close to a decade. It's been studied, discussed, developed, and done in a piece-meal fashion over the years. Today, Board support is strong—a critical element for success, there is high Leader energy for the process, and growing interest and enthusiasm as word spreads. In addition, LLL is well-established in many parts of the world and LLLUSA is finally on the road to reality. So we now have the capacity to engage in meaningful discussions about and actions toward power-sharing and self-governance.

❖ **It's needed.** LLL had a healthy "kitchen table" start. Today, however, its structure, especially beyond the local Group, is more closely aligned with the traditional hierarchy of corporate America. "We actually *do* know how to do this chaordic thing and we do it quite successfully at the mother-to-mother Group level," says Leader Meg Sondey (Ohio USA). "We just need to figure out how we can apply our skills and knowledge to create an organizational structure that supports Leaders and Groups as well as our Leaders and Groups support mothers."

❖ **It's healthy.** Periodic self-examination is important for any group. "The older and larger an organisation gets," suggests LLLI Board member Nan Jolly (South Africa), "the more traditions get entrenched, whether or not they are actually helpful. It's time we had a fresh look at what we're doing, so we don't carry on doing something just because it's always been done."

❖ **It's energizing.** ACL Lydia de Raad (The Netherlands) found an unexpected reward when she talked about this process with another Leader. "It made me feel proud, not of my teaching capabilities, but of us together, trying to find our path—thinking, talking, discussing *our* organisation. I have a few dozen colleague-Leaders here in the Netherlands. And if I can reach this point, this understanding, this feeling, this bonding with every one of them, then the sky will be the limit. If a reorganisation can touch people in *this* way—positive, thrilling, exciting—it *must* be worthwhile."

❖ **It's affirming.** When we open up the dialog to talk about our beliefs, explore differences, and find common ground, something good happens. Our indi-

vidual and collective strengths bubble up. We are reminded about our uniqueness as an organization—and as Leaders. Through the chaordic design process, we are challenged to create a structure that invites creativity, a wise use of talents, meaningful communication, and space to become all that we can be.

❖ **It's future-oriented.** This process is important, says Vivian Skripek (California USA) "to ensure that LLL is around for at least the next 50 years as a growing, thriving organization."

To learn and do more:

❖ **Visit the LLLI website:** <www.lalecheleague.org> to keep current on this process.

❖ **Check out The Chaordic Alliance (TCA):** <www.chaordic.org> and read *Birth of the Chaordic Age* by its founder, Dee Hock

❖ **Join Talkchaordic,** an LLL email discussion group about this process. Go to: <www.egroups.com/invite/talkchaordic> and click "join."

❖ **Attend the LLLI World Assembly** July 7, 2001 in Chicago to explore with Leaders worldwide how we can work together to better accomplish our purpose.

❖ **Participate in Leader Breakfast Roundtables** July 9 and 10 at the LLLI Conference.

❖ **Share your thoughts** through the multiple avenues that will be available to you in the coming months.

❖ **Volunteer your time and talents** in support of this process.

La Leche League USA: an idea whose time has come?

Many of us are familiar with the story of the founding of La Leche League in 1956 at a church picnic in Franklin Park, IL USA. Once past these early days, however, few of us are clear on the details of what happened next.

From simple beginnings to a worldwide organization. La Leche League of Franklin Park became incorporated in 1958 and its first Group outside of Illinois was established in Ohio. In 1961, the first Group outside the US was started in Canada. By 1964, La Leche League of Franklin Park changed its name and its incorporation to La Leche League International in recognition of the fact that there were 115 LLL Groups across the USA and six Groups in other countries.

Little thought was given to the impact or consequences of becoming an international organization; the primary concern was to recognize the presence of those Leaders who wanted to take the philosophy of mothering through breastfeeding to women all over the world. The time was ripe for the message of La Leche League. The opportunity was not to be missed.

As time marched on, various international LLL entities took on more responsibility for the day-to-day management of supporting the organization in their countries. Difficulty communicating with LLLI in Franklin Park (before email!), as well as cultural and language differences, made local autonomy an attractive option. Some of these entities became Affiliates, bound by legal agreements to LLLI. Other parts of the world developed individualized ways of working, both internally and in cooperation with LLLI, in response to the challenges of distance and language. In each arrangement, the local entity accepted some degree of responsibility for the support of Leaders and at least

some of the business operations in their part of LLL.

Meanwhile, in the USA, most of these responsibilities continued to be coordinated through the office at Franklin Park (and later at Schaumburg) Illinois. Leader administrative support, including Leader Department activities such as Area Conferences, PL support, and HRE, were eventually delegated to two administrative units—the Eastern United States and United States Western Divisions. The Executive Director of LLLI supervised the Directors of the US Divisions. Over the years, this has worked well in most instances.

A national USA identity. The idea that La Leche League in the USA should take more responsibility for its own affairs has been suggested for many years. The task seemed so large and complicated that nothing was done. The topic again surfaced at an August 2000 meeting of the US Division Directors and the LLLI Executive Director. This time, the idea of creating a national identity for LLL of the USA seemed to be in line with other current developments within LLLI.

As LLLI embarks on an exploration of new ways of working together through a chaotic process, it is an ideal time to consider the impact of a national identity for LLL in the USA. How would the presence of an LLLUSA entity affect the work Leaders do in their community and on the promotion of breastfeeding in the USA overall? We recognize that there are gaps in breastfeeding support in the USA that LLLI, because of its international scope, cannot appropriately fill.

Some examples that come to mind are coordination with WIC on a national or state level, more direct

involvement with the US Surgeon General on breastfeeding issues, participating in the US Breastfeeding Committee, and lobbying at the federal and state level. It is time Leaders in the USA take responsibility for these and other activities related to breastfeeding in the US and release LLLI to focus more energy on the international breastfeeding community.

In previous discussions about LLLUSA, the US Division Directors, the Executive Director, and the LLLI Board have been enthusiastic, but unable to move the process along. At the August meeting, a steering committee was proposed as a means to take the necessary next steps. A group of Leaders with broad experience and long-term knowledge of the organization were charged with thinking beyond what LLL in the US is today and to think ahead to what it could be.

The possibilities are endless. Nine people met together over the weekend of January 19-20, 2001 to discuss why LLLUSA is needed and how it might be created. Some ideas discussed for the purpose of LLLUSA were:

- ❖ to create a national identity for La Leche League in the USA
- ❖ to seek additional ways to fulfill the mission of La Leche League in the USA beyond the current basic traditional responsibilities of Group Leaders (e.g. political advocacy, breastfeeding education, public relations)
- ❖ to respond to national or culture-specific issues related to breastfeeding in the USA (i.e., health care system, legislation and legal system, corporate climate, etc.)
- ❖ to create an entity charged with responding to opportunities to promote breastfeeding within the USA

LLL among the nominees for The Gates Award for Global Health

❖ to create expanded opportunities to use the range of experience and resources US Leaders and members represent

❖ to better serve the needs of breastfeeding mothers and babies in the USA

First steps: listening. How are we going to go about creating this entity? While we believe this idea has great merit, before we proceed we want to hear from a broad spectrum of LLL Leaders and members in the USA. Any decisions will be made only after an open dialogue that is as inclusive of Leaders and members as possible. We will begin by posting an input form <<http://www.lllusa.org/lllusa/survey.html>> that we encourage all US Leaders and members to fill out. We are open to ideas about how to create and support ongoing, open avenues of communication to promote a free exchange of information and ideas about the development of LLLUSA.

We do not see LLLUSA as an additional administrative structure for US Leaders, but rather as an additional road to provide support, resources, and services for the promotion of breastfeeding in the US. The intent is not to burden Leaders with additional responsibilities of reporting, but to open up possibilities for Leaders (active, reserve, and retired), as well as interested members, to take on new roles. The structure of LLLUSA will exist only to support the functions it serves. Activities of LLLUSA will always be designed with the LLLI mission in mind.

This seems an idea whose time has come. If you are from the USA, give it some thought; talk with other Leaders; ask questions and gather information. We want to hear from you! Come visit: <http://www.lllusa.org/lllusa/committee.html>

—LLLUSA Steering Committee

La Leche League is among the 70 nominees for the first Gates Award for Global Health. The \$1 million award is offered by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to "recognize an organization that has made a major and lasting contribution to the field of global health."

Improving the health of women and children, particularly in the developing world, is the overriding goal of the Foundation's Global Health Program. Preventing deadly diseases among poor children by expanding access to vaccines, and developing vaccines against malaria, HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis, are central priorities.

Nominees will be judged on their accomplishments and contributions to

date. Included in the criteria:

- ❖ Extraordinary contributions toward progress in the knowledge and practice of health in low-income societies.
- ❖ Innovation in program design
- ❖ Organizational capacity
- ❖ Collaboration with others
- ❖ Evidence that contributions have been adopted across geographic and organizational boundaries, and
- ❖ Substantial impact on health around the world.

The Foundation website is found at: http://www.globalhealth.org/awards/gates_nominees.php3#L

One more good reason for mothers to breastfeed

A new study in *The Lancet* by Atul Singhal and colleagues [February 10, 2001] reports that consumption of human milk instead of formula by children born prematurely is associated with lower blood pressure in later life.

Two parallel randomised trials were conducted in five neonatal units in the UK. Dietary interventions included donated banked breastmilk versus preterm formula, and standard term formula versus preterm formula.

When these children were followed up at age 13-16, the mean arterial blood pressure was lower in those children who received banked breastmilk (either alone or in addition to mother's milk) than those who received preterm formula. There were no differences found in the term versus preterm formula comparison.

Join the Alumnae!

YES, I want to keep in touch and support LLLI. My Alumnae membership category is checked below. Enclosed is:

- \$6 for CONTINUUM (I am currently an LLL Leader or member)
- \$19 for an LLLI Alumnae Membership (includes CONTINUUM)
- \$36 for CONTINUUM and an LLLI Individual Membership
- \$50 for a 3-year LLLI Alumnae Membership (includes CONTINUUM)
- \$75 for a 5-year LLLI Alumnae Membership (includes CONTINUUM)

Name: _____
 Address: _____
 State/Province: _____
 Zip/Postal Code: _____
 Country: _____
 Current LLL status: _____

Send to: LLL International, P.O. Box 4079 Schaumburg IL 60168-4079 USA

Continuum

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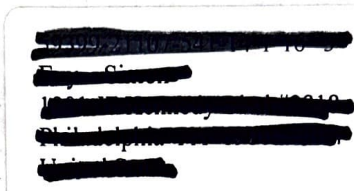
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Double issue!

LLLI and Alumnae updates

- ❖ **Need an LLLI Conference registration?**
You can register online, or download conference registration forms and materials from the LLLI website: <<http://www.lalecheleague.org>> or you can contact Jan Cina by phone: 1-847-519-7730, ext. 218, or write to: LLLI, P.O. Box 4079, Schaumburg IL 60168-4079, or email: jcina@llli.org.
- ❖ **"Over 21" gathering at Kitty O'Shea's Pub**
Looking for an opportunity to have your young adult LLL children connect with other LLL "kids?" An informal get-together in the Hilton Chicago will be held Saturday evening, July 7 for just that purpose! Flyers will be sent to those who are interested. Send addresses to Sharon Barsotti, at LLLI, P.O. Box 4079, Schaumburg IL 60168 or email: SBarsotti@llli.org
- ❖ **Breastfeeding ads may be on the horizon.** La Leche League is in the initial stages of petitioning the Ad Council for a possible future campaign to promote breastfeeding. The Ad Council is a non-profit organization set up for the specific purpose of creating and disseminating public service announcements.
- ❖ **Are you published?** Don't forget that the LLLI Alumnae Association is collecting information on published Leaders or former Leaders. For more details, contact Edna Kelley at <[eekelly@swbell.net](mailto:EEKELLY@SWBELL.NET)>
- ❖ **Take a walk!** Call up an old LLL friend and take a walk on behalf of breastfeeding. To contact the Area Walk Coordinator in your Area, call 847-519-7730, exts. 233, 271 or 286.
- ❖ **The great Alumnae Donation Drawing is back!** Handmade quilts, Mexican silver jewelry, art and more at this summer's LLLI Conference. If you have a prize to donate or want to help, contact Sharon Fairborn, at 949-673-2741 or <jsjls2@yahoo.com>