

WICS Newsletter

Widowed Information and Consultation Services

Spring 2014

Signs of Spring

By Dorothy Hanley



One young woman I knew told the story of moving into her dream house. She and her husband planted huge quantities of spring bulbs that fall. That winter, suddenly, he died.

In the spring, when the bulbs began to grow, she furiously tore them out of the ground, unable to deal with this sign that life goes on, regardless of the tragedy she experienced.

For other people, signs of spring provide hope for renewal out of tragedy. More light, perhaps even sunshine, trees and shrubs budding and the feeling of relief that winter is over.

Each of us is different. Our perceptions of who we are and how we will come through this life transition and what the future will bring are diverse.

There are those who are convinced that life is over, totally without any hope of normalcy or enjoyment, ever again. Others realize that although the grief process is a time of irrationality, the future does hold possibilities. Of course, the possibilities are unknown, but at least there is some hope. Coming to these conclusions takes time. In the beginning, it's nearly impossible to see beyond the next minute or hour, but as time passes, it becomes clearer that the future is ours to do with as we wish. That's a large order, isn't it? Going from having things well planned to starting again. Some people view this as a challenge and rise to the occasion, others shrink from taking the responsibility and hope for rescue. It's not a case of who has (you should pardon the expression) guts and who doesn't – we are who we are not only from our personality, but from our life experiences. It's not a case of brains or brawn – muscles don't make a person strong inside where all this is happening.

What we often see is the emergence of a 'new' person from the depths of the grief process – someone who is stronger and more able to deal with the world. We sometimes hear that families have difficulty recognizing this person who has appeared from the depths of grief, the changes are just too profound. We hope that you have learned that you have the capabilities to face life as a single person, deal with your responsibilities and work on becoming a whole, healed person.

It's your spring time, too. Just as the bulbs push up through the soil in the spring, the changed person you have become emerges from the depths of grief and sorrow.

A Promise

The colors of life change as we go through grief.
We begin black and white;

Then gray settles over us, seeping into our pores,
surrounding us,

Smothering us for a long period of time;
then slowly the colors change.

We may not even be aware of their changing
'til one day we see a rainbow,

And know it was meant for us.

~ Faye Harden, Tuscaloosa, AL

A wise person once said, "*No winter lasts forever; no spring skips its turn.*" For those of us who have lost a mate, it seems that death is only an ending. But for the survivor, it must also be a beginning.

This is not a beginning most of us ever planned to make and we are not prepared. Opening our hearts and our minds to accept this most terrible loss puts us on the path of eventual understanding. Yet it is a path that we alone can make meaningful. For it is the process of grieving that changes us and finally permits us to emerge from widowhood to personhood.

This transition cannot be rushed. Like the spring at the end of a cold and bitter winter, it will come.

You Did Not Die

You live in the beautiful wind that blows.

You live in the sound of birds that crow.

You live in the sun that shines so bright.

You live in the peaceful dark at night.

You live in a star I see in the sky.

You live in ocean waves that come in with the tide.

You live in the smell of flowers and grass.

You live in the summer that goes so fast.

You live in my heart that hurts so much.

You did not die, we only lost touch.

~ Shari Swirsky, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

WICS

Board of Directors

John Hanson	President
Holly Finkbeiner	Secretary
Sara Acree	
Claudia Antuna	
Burnie Barbus	
Larry Dixon	
Elaine Eggebraaten	
Le Habryle	
Sue Styer	
Ann Thorpe	

Consultant
Molly Krinsky

WICS Contact Information

Phone: 206-241-5650
Email: wicsoffice@qwestoffice.net
Website: www.kcwics.org


Windermere
REAL ESTATE

www.windermere.com
425-235-7777

WICS would like to thank
Windermere
RE/Renton, Inc and **The**
Windermere
Foundation for their
generous donation to our
children's program.

PLEASE NOTE: If you are no longer interested in receiving the newsletter via USPS mail, please contact our office to be removed from the list

Gifts of Love

In loving memory of PHILLIP O'NEILL
from Barbara O'Neill



In loving memory of TED MARTIN
In loving memory of CURT ROSS

from Joan Ross



In loving memory of ALBERT MAYER
from Sharon Mayer



In loving memory of JACK WITTE
from Joan Witte



In loving memory of ALLAN ALDERMAN
from Darlene Hale and Family



In loving memory of MEL THORPE
from Ann Thorpe



In loving memory of JOE HAGGERTY
from Sharon Haggerty



In loving memory of SLAVA PEREPELKIN
from Marianna Oreshkin



In loving memory of DICK HALE
In loving memory of ANNE HALLMAN

In loving memory of JIM MILLER
from Darlene Hale



In loving memory of PAUL
from Evelyn Riley



In loving memory of GEORGE BROWN
In loving memory of CURT ROSS
from Dottie Brown Girone



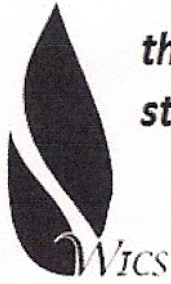
Please help us help others by sending a LOVE GIFT today. WICS relies on your donations. Your gift allows WICS to support grieving individuals and families in our community. We invite you to send a gift in memory of your loved one. You and your loved one's name will be noted in the next newsletter.



Workplace "Matching Gift" programs can increase your donation. Check to see if your employer will match your gift.



All donations are tax deductible.



*the flame
still burns*

Support Group Meetings

For all widowed men and women who would like to share their concerns and experiences and discuss coping skills.

BALLARD: 7 p.m. Tuesdays

Please contact Doug for details.

Contact: **Doug** 206.441.9490

BELLEVUE: 7 p.m. Mondays

10420 S.E. 11th St. — Pilgrim Lutheran Church (Corner 11th St. & Bellevue Way)

Contact: **Kathy** 425.653.7209 (best to call M, W, F during the day) or email at:

clancyKa@comcast.net

COVINGTON: 7 p.m. Tuesdays

25810— 156th Ave SE, St. John the Baptist Catholic Church

Contact: **Le** 253.630.0324 or email at: saraacree@comcast.net

FEDERAL WAY: Currently, this group is not having meetings, but are looking for a new place and time. They are continuing to give support, information and connection.

Contact: **Molly K.** 253.839.4560

KIRKLAND: Currently, this group is not having meetings. But, they are offering support, information and connection.

Contact: **Holly** via email: hlfinkbeiner@gmail.com

RENTON: 12:30 p.m. Wednesdays

211 Burnett North, Renton Senior Center

Contact: **Burnie** 425.255.1888 or email at: burnie@comcast.net

Gifts of Love

Amount: \$ _____ In Memory of: _____

From: _____

Send Acknowledgement to (name): _____

Address: _____

Return to: WICS, P.O. Box 66896, Seattle, WA 98166

North

Every Friday

Dinner at 4:30pm

For more info contact:

Delina Bardon
206.789.8852

Federal Way

2nd Monday

of each month
Dinner at 5:30pm.

For more info contact:

Carole
253.927.0404
bzeebee@msn.com

East

Bellevue

Dinner at 5pm before
Monday group meetings.

For locations call:

Kathy Clancy
425.653.7209

All WICS members welcome.

WICS Weds

A support group for those who
have remarried or are in a
coupled relationship.

For info re: monthly
meetings of WICS-Weds
please call:

Diane at 253.839.5453



*As long as I can I will look
at this world for both of us.
As long as I can I will laugh
with the birds, I will sing
with the flowers, I will pray
to the stars, for both of us.*

~ Sascha Wagner

Memorial Day

*For each grave
Where a soldier lies
At his rest*

*For each prayer
That is said today
Out of love*

*For each sigh
Of remembering
Someone who died*

*Let us also give thought to
The mothers and fathers
The brothers and sisters
The friends and the lovers
Whom death left behind.*

~ Sascha Wagner

Grief Time

Time progresses, ever onward,
A tragedy occurs
Time still moves warped in our
minds eye
A year, then another passes,
The pain retained.
At first sharp
Then slowly blunted
'Til only an ache remains
Covered
By carefully laid scar tissue
Of emotions
Under wraps.

~ Melissa Anne Schroeter,
Rockland County, NY

© 2011 Permission to reprint granted by the author

You Are So Strong

*"You are so strong"
Empty words
That don't touch the reality
That my life has become.
Walking through fog
Incredible pain
Searching for the beloved face
I crave to see
The voice that I strain to hear
over the noises
Of people who have no idea
Of what the world has lost.*

~ Charisse Smith, Tyler, TX

Subscriber Form

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Return to: WICS, P.O. Box 66896, Seattle, WA 98166

Subscription: \$25 per year



Annual Retreat at Seabeck, WA May 30-June 1, 2014



At the beautiful **Seabeck Conference Center** on Hood Canal.

“Compassion, Inspiration, and Hope”



Cost: \$210.00 per person (shared room)
See Registration Form for more information

For Children/Family Program - see registration form on other side.

Registration begins at 4:30pm on Friday afternoon

Friday evening supper is at 6:30 pm



Your Program. ♥ Your Retreat. ♥ Your R&R.

- ♥ Walk the beautiful grounds or explore the beach. ♥
- ♥ Attend practical presentations that are diverse and stimulating. ♥
- ♥ Attend activities that are fun and allow for individual and group participation. ♥
- ♥ Make this weekend yours by paying attention to what you need. ♥

We will send directions and a map with the acknowledgement of your registration.
Or you can go to the Seabeck website: www.seabeck.org



Registration Due By: **May 1, 2014.**



For more information, call WICS at 206-241-5650 or email: wicsoffice@qwestoffice.net

There will be a WICS/TCF Children's grief support program for children ages 5-17 and their parents. If you are interested in bringing your children to the retreat, call **206-241-5650** for more information.

Registration information on back of this page.



2014 REGISTRATION FORM ~ \$210.00 pp ~ Registration due by May 1st

SPACE IS LIMITED!! SEND IN REGISTRATION FORM & FEE EARLY!



Name: _____
Address: _____
City, State: _____ Zip: _____
Phone: Home (____) _____
Alternate (____) _____
Email: _____

Please check all that apply:
 Single Occupant room – **add'l fee: \$40** per person
(Limited number of single rooms available.)
 Double Room with: _____
 Special Diet: _____
 Special Needs (Physical limitations/other considerations): _____
 Chair Massage – available Saturday for \$20. Payment & appt made at retreat. Please indicate your interest.
 Box Lunch – Sunday (for those who need to leave early)
 I plan to **stay for lunch** on Sunday

Signature: _____
Waiver: WICS and Seabeck Conference Center assume no responsibility for injury to guests, loss or damage of personal property. Participants are responsible for safeguarding their persons and possessions during the retreat.

2 Nights (Shared Room) **& 6 Meals:** (Fri. supper thru Sun. lunch) **\$ 210.00** USD per person _____
(Lodging includes all bedding, towel, washcloth & soap)
Single Occupant Additional Fee: **\$ 40.00** USD per person _____
Contribution to Scholarship Fund: (To assist others to attend the retreat) _____
Total Enclosed with Registration: (Make Checks payable to **WICS**.) _____

Send Completed Form And Payment To: WICS PO Box 66896 Seattle WA 98166.
*Make checks payable to **WICS** or use the form below to pay with credit card.*

PARENTS AND CHILDREN PROGRAM REGISTRATION

ADULT - \$150 **Maximum per family: \$375**
YOUTH - \$100 (12-17 years old)
CHILD - \$75 (5-11 years old)

Reminder: Sturdy shoes must be worn any time children are playing outside.

Parent's Name: _____
Address: _____
Phone Number: _____ Email: _____
Contact Number while at Seabeck: _____
Special Diet Needs: _____
1. Child's Name: _____ Age: _____ 2. Child's Name: _____ Age: _____
Allergies/Physical Limitations: _____ Allergies/Physical Limitations: _____
3. Child's Name: _____ Age: _____ 4. Child's Name: _____ Age: _____
Allergies/Physical Limitations: _____ Allergies/Physical Limitations: _____
Parent's Signature: _____

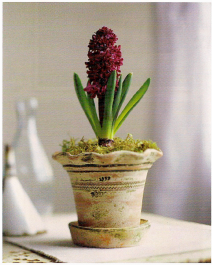
Waiver: WICS and Seabeck Conference Center assume no responsibility for injury to guests, loss or damage of personal property. Participants are responsible for safeguarding their persons and possessions during the retreat.

To pay by Credit Card: PLEASE clearly print the information below.

Person's Name as it appears on card: _____
Card Number: _____
Expiration date: (Mo/Yr) _____ V code (3 digits on back of card): _____
Phone number: _____ Zip code of mailing address for this card: _____
Your signature: _____

Grief and the Cracked Pot

Jan Borgman, LISW-S, FT, jan.borgman@cchmc.org



Jill was unprepared for the phone call she received while repotting a beloved plant. "Jack's been in an accident; you need to get to the hospital right away." As she hung up the phone, she knocked the flowerpot off the counter. It lay on the floor, shattered, but she didn't have time to worry about it. All she could do was think about Jack and prayed that he would be okay.

It wasn't until she arrived at the hospital that she learned of the seriousness of the accident. "The next few hours will be vital. If we can stabilize him, then we can plan the next course of

action."

As Jill and her family sat in the waiting room, trying to make sense of what had transpired that afternoon, her mind drifted back to the flowerpot that she left behind. She thought of the symbolism that it held. Her life felt shattered and unattended. The flowerpot wasn't an ordinary pot. Jack had given it to her on their first date. He had planted a bulb in the soil. She thought it was an odd gift for a first date. The bulb grew and bloomed as did their relationship. Jack used to tease her that he wanted to see if the bulb would take root and grow. If it did, then he knew they were meant to be. If it died, he figured their relationship would end.

When Jack proposed, he tied the ring to the flowering bulb. That is when he told her of the "symbolism" of the gift. The pot was used in their marriage ceremony and was used as a decoration on the head table at their wedding reception. Over the years, gifts were often placed in the pot. She wondered if the shattered pot would now represent a shattered life.

The hours passed and new milestones were set. "If he survives the night.. "If he survives this surgery ... " The hours and days were marked by "ifs." When Jill finally went home, she gently picked up the pieces of the shattered flowerpot and placed them on the counter. She was too tired and perhaps too scared to do anything with the pot. As the days lingered with uncertainty, Jill tried to piece the flowerpot back together. She knew it would never be as beautiful as it once was but she knew she could love the scarred pot.

Jill knew that she would love the scarred Jack. She prayed that Jack would heal and return to her. Jill brought the frail, broken pot to the hospital and placed it in Jack's room with a newly planted bulb. She told him what happened and how she carefully repaired the pot. She filled it with dirt and planted a new bulb in it just for him. She told him that he needed to get better so the bulb would take root and bloom.

But unlike the treasured flowerpot, the doctors were not able to repair Jack's shattered body. Despite all their efforts, Jack did not survive the aftermath of the accident.

She took the pot home with her and carefully held it as if she was cradling a treasured gift. Jill didn't know if she would be able to gather the pieces of her shattered life. How would she survive without her beloved Jack?

As she prepared for Jack's funeral and burial, she placed a few pieces of their "beloved pot" in his pocket with a note that expressed her deep love for him and thanked him for all the beauty he brought to her life. At the funeral, the minister's eulogy included the pot and the importance it played in their life and in his death.

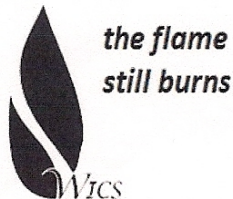
The cracked pot was now part of Jill's grief journey. In the months that followed the funeral, Jill felt Jack's presence whenever she saw the cracked pot. The bulb she planted after the accident peeked through the soil the day he died. It bloomed on the one month anniversary of his death.

Some days the water seeped through the cracks when she watered the plant. Jill often felt like the pot, scarred and no longer whole. Her emotions seemed to seep through her and she cried easily. She thought about giving up and throwing the pot away, but then she would remember the good times and laughter that she shared with Jack and knew that she, like the pot, still had a purpose. Despite the frailty of the pot, life continued to grow within it, as long as it was nurtured. The bulb seemed oblivious to her grief. In the midst of her own brokenness and frailty, life found a way to continue.

As Jill walked her journey of grief, she was able to find healing and hope in the midst of her brokenness and pain. Her life would never be the same again but despite the scars, she would be able to experience new hope and enjoy life. And just as the bulb she planted for Jack after the accident needed to grow, it meant letting go of the familiar and trusting that the new pot would support new growth. Over time, Jill learned new ways to integrate her life with Jack into her life after his death.

Eventually Jill was able to let go of the cracked pot. She took the remains of the pot she so dearly loved and had a potter make a new planter that included part of the old, beloved cracked pot. And the new pot has become a part of her new life, integrating the past with the present. A new bulb has been planted, taken root and is blooming. Jill looks at the new pot that sits lovingly on her window sill and finds hope for herself, knowing that her beloved Jack will always be a part of her. Letting go doesn't mean forgetting, but can be a way to integrate the past with the present and to find strength even in the brokenness of life.

WICS Newsletter
PO Box 66896
Seattle, WA 98166



Spring 2014

NON-PROFIT ORG
U.S. Postage Paid
Seattle, WA
Permit #1014

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

**Seabeck Retreat
May 30 – June 1, 2014
Registration Form
Enclosed**



Our Annual Retreat in Seabeck, WA ~ May 30 - June 1, 2014

For decades the widowed have been crossing the wooden bridge into the serenity of Seabeck Conference Center in historic Seabeck, Washington, just an hour and a half drive from Seattle. The majestic Olympic Mountains rise to the west, scenic Hood Canal lies between you and the Olympics and the wooded hills sloping up from the beach set this place apart from being just another conference center. This peaceful place sets the tone for a healing weekend. One feels secluded and protected from the outside world while feeling the calm and comfort of being with other people. We believe that other widowed people are the greatest resource and support for this complex journey we have to travel.

Our retreat is just that...a *retreat*. We leave behind the busyness of our everyday lives and enter a relaxed and safe haven to bond with other widowed people. The retreat is a place where we share our thoughts, feelings, and precious memories of our loved ones. The weekend includes a keynote speaker, workshops, sharing time, a reflection room, crafts, and other activities.

The retreat is low-key and there's no pressure to attend every scheduled session. The weekend is yours to use however you need to take care of yourself. If there's an activity and you'd rather take a nap or take a walk, do what YOU need to do. It's a nurturing environment. You are with people who understand what you are going through.

WICS plans the retreat with a bereaved parent group, The Compassionate Friends. We share the main speaker and workshops, but WICS and TCF have separate sharing groups, memorial ceremonies and housing.

Together, we offer a children's program for those who want to bring their children (ages 5-17). The children's group has their own program, activities and ceremonies.

At Seabeck you will find others with caring hearts who can relate to you. People from Washington, Oregon and British Columbia attend our retreat. Please join us at our Seabeck Retreat this year!

For info call: 206-241-5650 or email: wicsoffice@qwestoffice.net.

