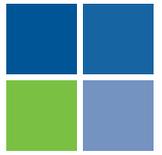


NIKE

NEW YORK STATE women, INC.



NIKE

The official publication of
New York State Women, Inc.

VOL. 62 ■ ISSUE 2 ■ DEC 2012

Our Mission

To build powerful women
personally, professionally,
and politically.

Our Vision

To make a difference
in the lives of
working women.



Dated Material — Deliver Promptly

Empowering Yourself and Others

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Let's all pull together for New York State Women, Inc.

-from Sue Mager



IT'S BEEN QUITE A RIDE since the June Conference when I took office. I've received great input – positive and negative! – from members and I am earnestly listening to the concerns of our NYS Women, Inc. members.

From the comments we received after the fall meetings in Niagara Falls, I think

the meeting did help to streamline our operations. Many thanks to those who attended! Also thank you to those who organized a great meeting where the business of New York State Women Inc. was accomplished with efficiency, respect, and courtesy. Kudos to all!

Using our members' comments and input, the next two meetings are in the final planning stages. June Conference will return to the Albany Hampton Inn, June 7-9, 2013. Region VI will be our host, and Linda Winston has agreed to chair, with the assistance of Robin Allen as vice chair. This meeting will include officer training and other workshops that members suggested at the fall meetings. And in a move to centralize at least some meetings, the spring 2013 board of directors meeting (formerly known as the winter board meeting) will be a one-day working meeting at the Griffis Institute in Rome, NY. The board members (officers, immediate past state president, regional directors, and special committee chairs) will meet to prepare business on budget, legislative platform, bylaw changes recommended

by the strategic planning committee. Since members will be voting on these items at the June Conference, please contact any officer or committee chair with your recommendations for them to consider. Share your thoughts and ideas to help accomplish our mission and vision. Although there will be no workshops or special meeting in Rome, members are encouraged to attend. Why not make it a "spring fling" weekend with fellow members after the board of directors' work is done? Chair Helen Rico, Vice Chair Lucille Argenzia, and your hosts, the members of Region V, are ready to welcome you to Central New York.

The good news in the wake of recent Superstorm Sandy: all of our East Coast members are OK. Many of chapters have already responded with donations of money, clothing and other necessities, as well as blood collections. An event like this can result in a wide range of emotions. Feelings of sadness, confusion, and helplessness can creep into our thoughts. While those feelings eventually fade, one method to help cope is to verbalize those feelings. Talking to your circle of calm caring people can help or you can try expressing your feelings through journal writing, art, or other creative outlets. And although the media coverage of an event like Sandy is vital, try to add a little laughter to your down time too, it's the best medicine to lift spirits. Don't stop your donations and prayers as we recover.

I am so looking forward to serving the next six months as your president, working with all of you to empower women personally, professionally, and politically.

Wishing you and yours the merriest of holidays and a prosperous 2013.



Calendar of Events

2012

20th of each month: Deadline: Communicator

December

- 9 Hanukkah First Day
- 25 Christmas Day
- 26 Kwanza First Day
- 31 New Year's Eve

2013

20th of each month: Deadline: Communicator

January

- 1 New Year's Day
- 15 Deadline: NIKE
- 21 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

June

- 7-9 Annual Conference, Albany Hampton Inn, Albany NY

Check online for updates or registration forms:
www.nyswomeninc.org



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Our Vision

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Cover image: ©Jupiter Images

NIKE Submissions

All contributed articles must be original work; all previously published works must be accompanied by the publisher's authorization to reprint. NIKE reserves the right to edit contributed articles for clarity and length, and reserves the right to refuse to publish any contributed article.

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From the Editor



This issue of *NIKE* offers some strategies for dealing with the stress the holidays can bring. Check out "Coping with or Connecting With the Holidays?" on page 13 and "Meditate to Reduce Stress" on page 21. The Chadwick Bay Chapter is offering its "Women's Weekend Get-Away" in February: what a great opportunity to pamper yourself and spend time with your mother, sister, or friends! Details are on page 16.

And we're debuting "My Story," our new feature that features . . . YOU! Amy Kellogg tells us how NYS Women, Inc. has helped her grow (page 7) and Western Suffolk Chapter members Sheila and Letty Sustrin take us on a unique journey (page 8). Every issue of *NIKE* features articles to help empower our members personally, professionally, or politically. Our cover story from contributor Claire Knowles outlines the key elements to empowering ourselves AND others.

As of our publication date, portions of downstate, New York City, and Long Island are still reeling from the effects of Superstorm Sandy. We have had many members ask what they can do to help. At this time, we have been asked to support the Red Cross (www.redcross.org/hurricane-sandy) and their efforts to assist storm victims. As we learn more from our chapters that were affected and what they might specifically need, we will pass along the information. Go to our website at www.nyswomeninc.org.

Do YOU have a great idea for *NIKE*? I'd love to hear it :) Email me at PR@nyswomeninc.org or whiterabbitdesign@roadrunner.com by January 15th.

-Katharine Smith

Next NIKE Deadline

Our next deadline is January 15, 2013. When emailing your submission type *NIKE* in the subject line, and send to the attention of Katharine Smith, *NIKE* editor at PR@NYSWomeninc.org. Published material must be accompanied by a letter from the publisher giving permission to republish and the credit line required to be included with the article. Articles for *NIKE* are usually 150 words (for chapter news) and 1,000 to 1,500 for features. If you rewrite the article using quotes, please designate where the reader can get the full copy.



Yes, you are a mover and shaker. You already know that you have personal power and you know that together, women can do great things. You know what *accomplishment* is all about. Still, let's look a little deeper and turn the *light on to empowerment* with a high beam focus.

To "empower" means *to give authority to, or power to act; to make yourself or someone else stronger, or more confident.* In essence, it is a *force for moving forward.*

Consider the key ring that you carry with you – the key ring that unlocks the doors that are most important to you, and the doors that you help to hold open for others. Today, you can add five new keys to that key ring. These are the keys to *empowerment – to carry with you wherever you go – the keys that will empower you to open new doors, to accomplish even more as you travel your personal and professional paths.*

1. Empowerment means you have to **stretch**. Consider the Tai Chi exercise move of *holding up the cauldron – that giant bowl that is your responsibility to carry.* Picture yourself holding it high in the air, then stretching upward even further, and being beckoned upward even more when that voice inside says, "What's that barrier you have to break through? Keep stretching...break through that ceiling!"

The need to keep stretching is Key #1.

2. Empowerment can be heavy. It is a responsibility – one that you have signed up to carry. Because it can be a heavy cauldron, you need to balance that load with some joy and lightness. **Laughter** is that balancing key. Laugh and the whole world laughs with you; smile and the world smiles back. It has been written that we need about a dozen hearty laughs a day for staying healthy and balanced. Children can laugh hundreds of times in a day; but what about you, the adult career woman? When was the last time you laughed? **Balancing with joy is Key #2.**

3. The third key is provided in Stephen Covey's book, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. His habit, "**Keeping the End in Mind**" is powerful. Do you know what the end point is for what you're trying to do? Can you see it? Sense it? What are those big goals for you...personally, professionally, organiza-

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Dr. May Edward Chinn

Women Who Helped Build the Empire State

by JoAnne Krolak
Women's History Month vice chair

May Edward Chinn was born in Great Barrington, Massachusetts, in 1896. Her father, William, was the son of a plantation slave and the plantation's owner. Her mother, Lulu Ann, was the daughter of a slave and a Chickahominy Native American. Lulu Ann was a cook in the household of Charles Tiffany of jewelry store fame. Growing up as a part of the Tiffany household meant May learned to speak French and German and went on trips to concerts in New York City. May also learned to play the piano, and served as an accompanist to Paul Robeson in the early 1920s.

William thought women belonged at home and should not pursue higher education. However, Lulu Ann believed in the value of an education for her daughter and saved enough money to send May to school at the Bordentown Manual and Training Industrial School in New Jersey. Unfortunately, May had to withdraw from the school after contracting osteomyelitis of the jaw. Money was still a problem, and May did not have a high school diploma. However, with her mother's encouragement, May secured a high school equivalency diploma and passed the entrance examinations for Columbia University Teachers College. May entered the school intending to study music. One of her music professors mocked her ambitions because May was Negro (a term May preferred to



either Black or African-American). At nearly the same time, though, May received honors for a paper she had written on sewage treatment. This led to May's changing her major from music to science. In her final year at Columbia, May got a job as a lab technician in clinical pathology, finished her studies at night and graduated with a bachelor's degree in science in 1921. From there, May went on to study medicine at Bellevue Medical College. When she graduated in 1926, she was the first Negro woman to receive a degree from that institution.

After May graduated from Bellevue, she applied for a research fellowship at the Rockefeller Institute. When the Institute found out she was a Negro, the admissions officer suddenly discovered that "the appropriation for that position had not come through." May was then offered an intern-

"Upon graduation Chinn found that no hospital would allow her practicing privileges. The Rockefeller Institute had seriously considered her for a research fellowship until they discovered that she was black. With her fair skin and last name, many assumed that she was white or Chinese. She later told Muriel Petioni, former president of the Society of Black Women Physicians, that black workers snubbed her because they assumed she was passing as white, and did not want to jeopardize her position. In 1940, Harlem Hospital granted Chinn admitting privileges, in part due to Mayor Fiorello La Guardia's push for integration in the wake of the Harlem Riot of 1935."

Source: <http://harlemworldmag.com/2011/07/01/dr-may-edward-chinn-the-first-african-american-female-doctor-in-new-york/>

ship at Harlem Hospital and took it. The job involved riding in ambulances with the paramedics, and the drivers insisted
Continued on the next page

Column: My Story

My Story is a new feature that features YOU! Send us your story. Tell us how NYS Women, Inc. has affected your life; just what is it about this organization that has made a difference in your life! Turn to page 8 for the unique story of identical twins who are both members of the Western Suffolk Chapter, and how NYS Women, Inc. has helped them in their journey.

NYS Women, Inc. has helped me grow

by Amy Kellogg

THERE ARE MANY ORGANIZATIONS across New York State that interest me. I often find it difficult to decide to what groups and activities I want to support. NYS Women, Inc. has always been an easy participation decision for me. I first became involved as a member of the Tech Valley Chapter. I will always have a special place in heart for my chapter. They are an amazing group of women that taught me invaluable lessons as I was beginning my professional career. Through them I not only found professional growth, but personal growth as well. These women taught me many things, including the importance of perspective, compassion, humility, and philanthropy. They helped me grow and become a better leader.



When I was approached about becoming a state officer, my experience at my chapter helped me make the decision to run for office. I knew that in my chapter, I had met an extraordinary group of women. I was intrigued and excited to think about the women I would meet by becoming involved at the state level. And I have not been disappointed. At each meeting, I continue to meet new women from across the state from all backgrounds and walks of life. This is such a unique group. There aren't many organizations that support and encourage the participation of women the way this group does.

I also have been able to work with an executive committee and board that is comprised of strong and inspiring women. I have learned so many things from so many different people. Part of being a strong leader is knowing what your weaknesses are and learning how to turn those weaknesses into strengths. Working with the executive committee and the board has allowed me to witness women in action that do things well in areas where I may be weak.

This has allowed me to continue my journey of growth and development, and for that I will always be grateful.

State President-Elect Amy Kellogg is currently a partner at Harter Secrest & Emery. Her law practice focuses on representing a variety of New York State professional associates and businesses before the New York State legislature. She has been a member of NYS Women, Inc. since 2005.

Column: Our Story

WE WERE BORN WITH BUSINESS IN OUR HEARTS. Folks say we must have had discussions as “womb mates” and this has carried over throughout our entire life. We are identical twin sisters who have spent close to 70 years working side-by-side. Born during World War II, our early childhood years were filled with hearing about buying war bonds, rationing, partaking in air raid drills, and listening to war news every night on the radio. As young as our generation was, we wanted to do our part to help our country.

We were very enterprising five-year-olds: we wanted to earn money to buy a war bond. Our father helped us set up a lemonade stand in front of our house, our mother gave us a little purse as a pushka for our earnings, and we started on our first business venture! We felt a great sense of accomplishment when we bought our first war bond. Needless to say, our parents contributed to our earnings. They were our best customers. Dad used to say that he never wanted to drink another glass of lemonade!

By the time we were six, we were enchanted with our first grade teacher, and we both announced we were going to be teachers. We NEVER changed our minds. We worked hard throughout our school years to attain our goals. By the time we were sixteen, we enrolled at Brooklyn College, and were ready to learn how to be the two best teachers in the world.

While we attended college, we continued to further ourselves in the business world. Each of us worked part-time at different insurance companies in New York City.

Our family moved to Long Island while we were still in college, and when we graduated with B.S. degrees in Early Childhood Education, we were fortunate to get teaching kindergarten in the Brentwood, New York School System. Long Island was the suburban “haven” for city people, and because of the rapidly increasing population, schools were being built in every town. We were interviewed by one of the principals and he said, “I’ll take a chance on the two of you, if you’ll take a chance with me.” Thus started our teaching careers which lasted for 38 years.

In 1978, our principal called us into his office and said that he wanted to nominate one of us as “Brentwood Teacher of the Year.” He told us to go home and decide which one of us would be the candidate. We went to him the next day and told him that we were a team, and it’s “double or nothing.” He went to the Board of Education, and they let him nominate both of us together. We won the award!

When we reached the magical age of 55, we began to be besieged with notices in our school mailboxes about how wonderful retirement would be. We definitely were NOT ready to go that route. On the Brentwood seniority list, we were number one and number two. (Letty was number one since she had signed her contract one minute ahead of Sheila.)

Fortunately, there was a wastepaper basket right below the mailboxes, so in went the notices for the next four years!

In June 1998, we were offered an extremely attractive retirement package. We had to make an instant decision, and we decided we had to go

with the money. We cried all day in school, and then all night at home. Our life was going to be over. What was to happen to all the children if they didn’t have Ms. L. or Ms. S. (as we were affectionately called) to take care of them?

We carried home 22 boxes of our own personal things and stored them in the garage. Letty was able to go through her share and get rid of what she would not need (it took Sheila two years).

Of course, by the time September rolled around, we were volunteers at our old school. As many parents had to work, we assisted the PTA with the Book Fair, Holidays Fairs, etc. Life was good again. When we went to help out at our first Book Fair, one of our former pupils, now in second grade, came running over to us, hugged us, and said, “Oh good, now you’re back from vacation.”

We laughed at this, but later we had a serious discussion. Children DO NOT know what retirement means and we felt we should do something about this. Since we were youngsters we had enjoyed writing and were always on the staff of our school newspapers and yearbooks. Now, we could follow a dream we had always had. This would be the perfect time to write a children’s picture storybook. Our “Life After Retirement” career was about to begin!

What to write about? Why a teacher, of course! This book was not going to be autobiographical, but... We created Mrs. Belle, a bubbling, kid-loving, fun-loving teacher, who brought happiness to the students she taught, and we titled it, “The Teacher Who Would Not Retire.” Little did we realize that we would eventually be business partners in our own company.

Writing the manuscript was the easy part. More difficult, was the search for a publishing company that was willing to take a chance on unknown authors. We persevered, and in 2000, Blue Marlin Publications of West Bay Shore, New York, bought our story. Before we knew it, we signed a contract, and

Working Together: From Childhood to “Life After Retirement”

by Sheila and Letty Sustrin



Sheila (left) and Letty Sustrin with their Scottie, Belle.

“Belonging to NYS Women, Inc. has been one of the highlights of our lives. We have gained inspiration from the women in the group. When we joined, we were – and still are – amazed at their success stories. The diversity of the group is wonderful.”

were told it would take about two years for the book to be in print. The illustrator was provided by the publisher, and his illustrations made our characters come alive.

The first book was very successful and we joined writing groups like the Society of Children’s Book Writers and Illustrators and the Long Island Children’s Writers and Illustrators. Our life was full: we spent most of the school year doing presentations, signings, and readings at schools, libraries, adult and retirement groups. Kim Nowakowski asked us to make a presentation to her then-BPW/NYS local, and we joined their membership when we realized the organization, which eventually became the Western Suffolk Chapter of NYS Women, Inc., was an exciting group to belong to.

Our accountant told us we should form a simple partnership, name our business, get an EIN number, and a State Sales Tax I.D. Life wasn’t so simple anymore. This second career had become a serious and meaningful business to us. Fortunately our questions were answered by the fellow members of our Western Suffolk Chapter. Owning a business has made us feel young again and we’ve begun a new life as Sustrin Books.

In 2005, the second book, “The Teacher Who Would Not Retire Goes To Camp,” made its debut. This was followed by, “The Teacher Who Would Not Retire Discovers A New

Planet,” in 2009. The planet book was reviewed and recommended to school libraries in New York State by the NYSUT United Magazine “Check it Out” column. This November we debuted the fourth book in the series, “The Teacher Who Would Not Retire Becomes A Movie Star.”

Belonging to NYS Women, Inc. has been one of the highlights of our lives. We have gained inspiration from the women in the group. When we joined, we were – and still are – amazed at their success stories. The diversity of the group is wonderful. There are bankers, computer geniuses, website designers, private business owners, educators, retirees who have second careers, the list goes on and on!

Since we’ve been so involved with writing and scholastics, we were asked to co-chair the scholarship committee. We did that for a few years, and enjoyed the challenge of helping to find deserving recipients. Through our years of membership, we have both encountered some serious illnesses. Our Western Suffolk Chapter friends were caring and sympathetic which shows true friendship.

So, as you can see, no matter what your age, old or young, you can be a business woman. You can succeed. You can overcome new obstacles as they crop up. We’ve both learned that there is truly a “Life After Retirement.”

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Public Relations is Important for NYS Women, Inc.!

by Linda Przespasniak

WHAT'S BETTER THAN GETTING SOMETHING FREE? Effective public relations can give you and your chapter or region influence in your community, in politics and in the business world. Good public relations builds membership and makes current members feel like they are part of something that makes a difference. In addition, visibility gives the public a better understanding of who NYS Women, Inc. is and what we do. Businesses also realize that we are a resource and local politicians take notice.

How do we get our message out? Use your local media effectively and often. Letters to the Editor on important topics and press releases announcing events and accomplishments of members are some ways to promote NYS Women, Inc. Public service announcements and appearances on local news and talk programs are a great way to gain visibility. Technology and social networking, such as Twitter and Facebook, are now means to reach the masses. Does your chapter/region have a website?

Keep it short and simple (KISS) and know your deadlines. Don't get discouraged if the media doesn't cover your story or event the first, second or third time. Your job is to build a relationship with reporters and editors. When a reporter calls



or emails, that phone call or email is your top priority. You want to help them as much as possible because your ultimate goal is for NYS Women, Inc. to be seen as a resource they can turn to.

Linda Przespasniak is communications chair for NYS Women, Inc. She is a member of the Buffalo Niagara Chapter.

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NYS Women, Inc.: Understanding Our Organization

by Renee Cerullo

MANY NEW MEMBERS HAVE JOINED NYS WOMEN, INC. since our reincarnation as an entity, so here is an overview of our organization. There is so much to NYS Women, Inc. that many members don't know. In the past months since I became your 2nd vice president I've learned a lot and it has been eye-opening as I have visited the various regions.

Brief History

Before 2009 our organization was known as the Business and Professional Women's Clubs of New York State, Inc. (BPW/NYS) and was part of a national organization that originated in 1919.

The mission of the Business & Professional Women's Club of the United States of America was "to achieve equity for all women in the workplace through advocacy, education and information." BPW/USA's vision was "to be the leading advocate for working women."

In 2009 BPW/USA was dissolved and state organizations were given the choice of disbanding, joining Business and Professional Women (BPW) Foundation, or creating their own organization.

The New York State branch opted to become their own entity. Since then we have been working hard to create our new organization and develop our own identity.

New York State Women, Inc. at the State Level

NYS Women, Inc. is a state-wide entity run by an elected executive committee and the board of directors. The executive committee (or EC) is made up of the president, president-elect, 1st vice president, 2nd vice president, secretary and treasurer, all of whom are elected each year at the annual June conference. The board of directors consists of the immediate past president, all the region directors, and all standing committee chairs (bylaws, communications, finance, membership, personal/professional development, and public policy). There are a total of 17 directors. The standing committee chairs are appointed by the NYS Women, Inc. president. Additionally, a parliamentarian is appointed by the president.

The purpose of the state organization is to develop the programs for the regions and chapters that will help women develop professionally, personally, and politically. The state helps guide the regions and chapters. The state organization can act

Continued on page 19

"You can do this, Nancy. Kick its butt!"

"It's a freakin' battle, girl ... but you can do it. Just beat the heck out of it."

"Don't let that monster inside you win!"

Those were just a few of the proclamations from well-meaning encouragers reacting vehemently to my news that the biopsy showed lung cancer. They were scared; I was petrified. Even doctors and nurses stressed to me this was a combat zone. They spoke of the war that I would be waging, and the weapons I would have in my arsenal and their dangerous possible side effects.

A hostile atmosphere composed of hysteria, denial and fury alternately waxed and waned around me. I was in a daze those initial days, and the fog, lifting now and then, revealed horrors too deep to contemplate. They must have screwed up the results. This can't be me they are talking about. We don't get cancer in my family! One morning, a clueless nurse practitioner announced, "Ah, so you are the lucky one who gets to introduce cancer to your family's genetic line." I felt shattered.

The barrage of references to warring, violence and fierce resistance left me shaking in my boots. I know myself. I have spent years honing an attitude of peace. From my hippie days to becoming an ordained minister in a meditation church, peace and gentleness have been my quest. Although perhaps this fight mentality is effective for others, I knew it would not work for me. So, I got quiet.

I waited and listened for my inner guidance. I knew there must be a gentler way to approach this current crisis. Perhaps, letting go of the crisis idea was the first thing. Since the onset of my spiritual quest, I have always sought the lesson in every hardship and tried to learn from all my experiences. So, why not with cancer? There must be a lesson here. There must be something of value that this tumor is showing me.

I am not saying I didn't feel betrayed by God and the universe, at the onset, but I was at least willing to hear the divine side. I quieted myself and began to listen.

The first and most audible statement came from deep inside my very own soul. "I want to live!" I have lots of purposes and dreams. I am not willing to leave before I have made at least one major contribution to this planet. And I wanted to experience true romance again. I wanted to play with my grandkids, feeling the joy of my grandmother role.

Considering my past trauma-filled life, this was indeed a revelation to me. I didn't want to leave; I just wanted to be living a more joyful, easier existence. That was the first revelation, followed by countless others.

Image: ©Jupiter Images

A peaceful approach to healing

by Nancy Jo Eckerson

I gradually came to see this cancer as my teaching tumor – and eventually, as I prayed to release it with the help of chemo and the divine radiant energy of radiation, I even named it. Timmy, the teaching tumor, came and went, blessing me with many epiphanies.

I cannot answer for everyone's approach to cancer. I cannot even begin to understand why some stay and some don't make it. But I do believe that, for me, and most likely for countless others, the quickest path to healing is most certainly fostered by a peaceful approach.

I hope that this will help some patients who are scared, and cannot find one single blessing in all of this. The blessings are there. We need to quiet ourselves and allow them to come to the surface.

Nancy Jo Eckerson is a writer based in Akron, NY. She helps people put their values on paper by creating their ethical will, a non-legal document used to share their values, beliefs and hopes for the future. Nancy welcomes questions and comments; contact her at njeckerson@verizon.net or 716-542-6544.

Reprinted with permission. Originally published in The Buffalo News in the Tuesday, October 16, 2012 edition. To see the article online go to: <http://www.buffalonews.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20121016/OPINION/121019485/1120>

Want to Be a Better Public Speaker? Practical Tips to Make it Happen

by Judi Clements

WHY IS IT THAT EVERY TIME NEW CLIENTS ENTER MY office for public speaking consultations... they all think they are the only ones with a public speaking problem. In actuality, more than 90% of the population has a deep-seated fear of making a fool of themselves giving a speech. In fact, according to the *Book of Lists*, public speaking is the number one fear, with the fear of dying, a distant second.

Let's shed some light on this stage fright issue right now. A mild case of stage fright can actually be good for you! That's right – stress – in a limited and controlled form, can charge your body with the adrenaline you need to give an effective presentation. Think of your mild stage fright as a sort of pre-game tension. If you label this tension excitement it will serve you well and help you give a better speech. If you label it fear it will hurt you and cause you to speak poorly.

Based on more than twenty years of experience as a communication specialist, I can tell you that most people fear public speaking because they have never really learned the right way to prepare and deliver a speech. Once you learn how to do this, your stage fright will diminish quickly.

Most stage fright is caused by the tendency to think more about yourself, than about what you have to say. This leads you to negative self-talk such as: Oh no, I'm putting them to sleep. I shouldn't have said that; it was stupid. Boy, I must look dumb. These negative messages will cause you to lose your concentration, skip vital sections of your presentation and stammer your way to failure.

Like a professional actor, you must attain a kind of public

solitude when giving a speech, an awareness that you're in front of an audience – without dwelling on the fact. It is the ability to balance your concentration between what you're saying and how you're projecting yourself. When you worry too much about you and not enough about your speech material, your mind can wander, making you lose your place and your entire focus.

So remember: Learn to control your stage fright or it will control you.

Four Proactive Tips for Dealing with Stage Fright

1. Think of your stress as excitement, which can help your presentation.
2. Learn the proper techniques for preparing and delivering a presentation.
3. Concentrate on your audience and your message, not on yourself.
4. Using positive self-talk, talk yourself into being a good speaker.

Judi Clements, president of Judi Clements Training & Development, in Clifton Park, NY, offers training, coaching and keynotes in management, communication, wellness, and customer service.

Judi combines her educational and theatrical talents into every program she writes and delivers. As one participant put it, "We laughed while we learned!." For more information on her speaking schedule, visit: www.judiclements.com.

Grace LeGendre Endowment Fund, Inc.

Spreading the News...

-Helen E. Swank, Publicity Chair

DO YOU REMEMBER FRANK SINATRA CROONING THE words, "Start spreading the news . . . I want to be part of it – New York, New York?"

Well, now it's our turn to start spreading the news about the 2013 Grace LeGendre Endowment Fellowships available to New York State women enrolled in graduate study at New York colleges and universities. Please tell your chapter members, friends, work colleagues and others about this special opportunity.

Mary Ellen Morgan, chair of the 2013 selection committee, reminds us that the deadline for completed 2013 applications

is February 28, 2013. Applications can be obtained from her at 901 East Lake Road, Dundee, NY 14837; home telephone 315-536-8440; email Dmmea@aol.com. Please remember that it takes lots of time to gather the transcripts, letters of recommendation and other supporting documents that need to accompany the applications, so get started now.

Yes, it's now your turn to "start spreading the news" about the GLEF Fellowships which have supported 134 women since 1989. Let's continue to help women to be "king of the hill, top of the list, head of the heap" as Frank Sinatra sang in his hit song, "New York, New York."

Coping with or Connecting with the Holidays?

by Claire Knowles

Plan ahead. Keep a calendar – no surprises; delegate responsibilities.

Keep things simple; very simple. Exercise as much as we can.

Stay positive. Fight the urge to spend indiscriminately.

Watch those sweets. Minimize alcohol intake. Mind nutrition. – get plenty of protein and veggies.

Keep family dinner times simple.

And most important, get as much sleep as possible!

If we can heed all this important advice, we'll be well on our way to coping with the added stress of the holidays.

But how can we actually connect with the deeper meaning of this holiday time, to enjoy it more fully, even within the midst of stress? Here are some considerations:

- Find some personal quiet time

every day – carve it out – just for you. Breathe deeply while in this space. Focus on being grateful for the abundance that is already present in your life. Recognize that it is in the spaces between our busied activities wherein we find our balance . . . like the white space between the words, the rests between the notes of a musical score.

- Visualize what you want to have happen. Take the time to envision happier connections, friendships, smiles, meaningful family gatherings. Envision the way you want it to be. See yourself in those situations. Create (in your mind first) how you want future things to flow and your positive role in them.

- Set clear intentions for yourself . . . to stay calm, to go with the flow, to make this time special, to be aglow, to

Continued on page 20



Image: © Andrea Crisante | Dreamstime.com

IT'S THAT TIME AGAIN. THE HOLIDAYS ARE UPON US. Our stress levels rise. We have to pack more into our already-busy days. The to-do list seems endless. There is shopping to do. There are packages to wrap and send, events to attend, decorating to do, dinners to make, and extra family needs – all calling for our attention, our time and our doing. Sometimes it gets to be "crazy town!" Yet we know that somehow, someday, we have to make time for *number one*. We crave being able to enjoy the holidays and to not be run over by all that we have to do.

The self-help literature abounds – every checkout counter has magazines with information on how to avoid burnout, overload and stress during this special time of the year. After all, holiday time is *meant to be wonderful!* We read the articles. We know that to stop the chaos this year, we must:

What should you do when loved ones can no longer handle their household finances?

-provided by the Financial Planning Association® (FPA®) of Western New York

A MISSED PAYMENT HERE, A LOST CHECK THERE, AND now it appears the person who's been handling household finances may no longer be fit for those responsibilities.

Much is at stake for families that find themselves at such a financial crossroads. To stay on the right path, financial experts suggest that families confront the situation promptly and decisively, because failing to do so could produce some pretty unpleasant consequences – financial hardship and lack of control over one's own financial future, not to mention greater susceptibility to fraud and bad feelings among family members.

How to keep your future on track when a situation such as illness, deteriorating health, diminished mental aptitude, or simply a lack of desire suggest it's time to put household finances in someone else's hands? Start with the following suggestions from the Financial Planning Association, the country's largest group of personal finance experts:

Address the issue directly with the person who's been handling household finances. Use a non-threatening conversation or series of conversations to gauge the person's awareness of the situation, their receptiveness to relinquishing the financial reins, and their thoughts on who should succeed them in that role. During these conversations, said Renee Porter-Medley, CFP®, senior financial planner at Key Private Bank in Naples, Fla., it helps to "have true stories from reliable sources on how people just like them are taking financial and legal steps to protect themselves."

As the person's spouse/partner, do you have the desire, time and know-how to assume those duties yourself? If you have the desire and time but lack the know-how, it's time for a crash course in household finances.

Whether or not you choose to take the financial reins yourself, it helps to know your options. And because plenty of people have been down this road before, there's a wealth of reliable resources for gathering vital insight and guidance for such situations. Here are two:

- The Financial Planning Association's FPA.net.org consumer portal at www.FPA.net.org/LifeCrisis/. Click on "Caring for a Loved One."

- The "Legal and Financial Matters" section of the AARP's Caregiving Resource Center <http://www.aarp.org/relationships/caregiving-resource-center/legalandfinancialmatters/>

If you decide those duties aren't for you, carefully choose an adviser or team of advisers to handle them. Start by enlisting a Certified Financial Planner™ professional to assess your situation and provide a financial roadmap for the short and long terms. Visit FPA's national database of personal finance experts at <http://www.fpanet.org/PlannerSearch/PlannerSearch.aspx> to find one near you. Depending on your situation, it may also be wise to consult a professional guardian, attorney, accountant and/or life insurance agent. A capable, trusted adviser can handle everything from bill-paying to big-picture issues such as financial and estate planning, freeing you and your family to focus on other things, notes Porter-Medley.

Gather all important documents and account information – estate planning documents, investment, retirement and bank account documents, insurance policies (life, health, disability, etc.) titles for home and automobile, and more.



Images these two pages: ©PhotoDisc

Long-Term Care Insurance: Who Needs it?

People need long-term care insurance, or LTCI, for many of the same reasons they need other kinds of insurance, whether it's life, health, disability, homeowner's, or automobile: to protect themselves and their loved ones against unforeseen events – in this case a health/medical issue that requires potentially expensive long-term care and rehabilitation, at home or in a care facility.

Why would I need long-term care insurance? For one, a person has more than a two-in-three chance (68 percent) of becoming disabled or being cognitively impaired at age 65 or older, according to the American Association of LTCI (AALTCI). What's more, the cost of care is expensive, so having LTCI protects your retirement nest egg from a financially draining long-term care need. It also protects your loved ones from the emotional, financial and psychological burden of a long-term care event.

What is long-term care insurance? What do I get for the money? Offered by insurance companies through insurance brokers and agents, LTCI policies typically cover all or a portion of the cost of various types of care, from in-home services (such as physical therapy and rehabilitation) to care at assisted living facilities and nursing homes. They cover those costs for a specified period of time, and/or up to a specific dollar amount.

At what age is it best to buy long-term care insurance? The best time to buy LTCI is when you're healthy, before a health issue emerges to prevent a person from qualifying for a policy. The typical age range for buying LTCI is roughly 50 to 60. Generally speaking, the younger and healthier you are, the less LTCI costs.

What does a policy cost? The price of an LTCI policy varies depending on the person's health as well as the value and duration of the policy's features and benefits. In general, according to the AALTCI, a single person, age 55 and in "standard" health, would pay somewhere around \$2,000 a year for a policy with average benefits, while a couple, both age 55, in the preferred health class, would pay about \$3,000 for a shared policy with average benefits.

How can I find a policy that fits my budget? The bottom line with LTCI: some coverage is better than none at all. Long-term care insurance policies can be tailored to fit a range of budgets. Shared-care policies (where two people draw from a single pool of benefits) are a more affordable option for couples, for example, while singles might consider a three- or five-year limited benefit policy. A policy with a future purchase option allows you to lock in coverage while you're younger and in good health, then buy more coverage later. Also consider buying LTCI through an employer. Many offer group policies that require no medical exam and cost less than individual policies.

For more information: The "Health Insurance" page of the AARP website at www.aarp.org/health/health-insurance/ or the AALTCI's consumer portal at www.aaltci.org/long-term-care-insurance/. To consult a financial planner, check out the Financial Planning Association's national database of personal financial experts at www.FPA.net.org/PlannerSearch/PlannerSearch.aspx.

Provided by the Financial Planning Association® (FPA®) of Western New York.

Organize, review and, if necessary, revise these documents and accounts. If the person who has been handling household finances is no longer capable, it's important to review how certain accounts and assets are titled. If they're jointly titled, make sure the signatory requirements specify an "or" rather than an "and," notes Porter-Medley. Also, in consultation with an estate planning attorney, review and revise estate planning documents – such as durable and limited power of attorney, healthcare



proxy/agent/surrogate and advanced healthcare directive – so they correspond to any change in roles and responsibilities. For more info, visit the American Bar Association at www.americanbar.org/portals/public_resources.html. Under "For Consumers," click on the "Estate Planning FAQs" link.

This column is provided by the Financial Planning Association® (FPA®) of Western New York, the leadership and advocacy organization connecting those who provide, support and benefit from professional financial planning. FPA advances the financial planning profession and its members demonstrate and support a professional commitment to education and a client-centered financial planning process.

Chapter News

Buffalo Niagara – Region VIII

On November 8th Renee Cerullo, president of BNC, was honored as a nominee at the 23rd Annual ATHENA Awards Luncheon. Held in Buffalo, the luncheon benefited Everywoman Opportunity Center, a Western New York not-for-profit corporation that helps women achieve economic and personal self-sufficiency.



Everywoman serves women from a variety of economic backgrounds, including displaced homemakers, older women, single heads of households and public assistance beneficiaries.

The ATHENA Award® honors individuals in the community who have attained and personify the highest level of professional excellence, demonstrate support for the goals of women professionals, and provide significant and selfless assistance on their behalf.

Chadwick Bay – Region VIII

Women's Weekend Get-Away

The Chadwick Bay Chapter will be offering its "Women's Weekend Get-Away" February 1st to 3rd, 2013 at the Clarion Hotel in Dunkirk, NY. Spend the weekend with your mother, sister, or friends. Pamper yourself, participate in learning workshops and browse through the shopping expo.

The weekend kicks off with a Friday night meet n' greet with a cash bar and will include pampering treatments, a group psychic reading, shopping expo, and more!

Sign up for the scheduled workshops, including Creative Corded Jewelry; Are You Prepared? (Red Cross personnel will instruct you in emergency preparations); Dried Flower Arrangement; Reconnect With Your Inner You; What Color Is Your Communication Rainbow?; Basket Weaving; Be A Party Girl; Women's Self Defense; and an Iron Chef "game" (no cooking required!).

The cost of \$159 (based on double occupancy) covers two nights accommodation and meals. Early bird registration is \$29 (by December 30, 2012) and cost after that date is \$39. For more information contact the Chadwick Bay Chapter, P.O. Box 649, Dunkirk, NY 14048 or go to <http://www.nyswomeninc.org/Events.aspx>.

Professional Business Women of Rome – Region V

- submitted by Helen Rico, Past State President

On Thursday, October 25, 2012 the Rome chapter held a breakfast forum for candidates in the 24th Congressional District. The forum was held in conjunction with the Rome Chamber of Commerce at the Beeches Restaurant and Conference Center in Rome, NY. Lucille Argenzia, NYS Women, Inc., public policy committee chair moderated a forum between the incumbent Congressman Richard Hanna



Members of the Rome Chapter of NYS Women, Inc. along with the Rome Chamber of Commerce are pictured with incumbent Congressman Richard Hanna and Mr. Lamb.

and Mr. Dan Lamb. Other chapter members attending included Helen Rico, Audrey MacDougall, Anne Thayer, Sara Ayala, Jim Ayala and Beth Ann Jones. More than 220 people were in attendance, including five area high schools with approximately 75 students.

Richmond County – Region II

- submitted by Iris Altilio

The 2012-2013 year started big for the chapter with close to 40 women attending the September meeting. New President Gale Cohen welcomed and inspired us by stating "We are a TEAM – Together Everyone Achieves More. Our chapter can stand out; our unique gifts have to be shared."

News from our committee chairs and encouragement to the membership to join committees were on the agenda. Several new roles add depth to the chapter. Parliamentarian Margherita Clemento will guide us on parliamentarian procedure and is the speaker for our November meeting. Neale Steiniger is our "Behind the Scenes Resource Center," and has or will find all the answers to our questions.

We're excited about the new scholarship committee which will guide the chapter in awarding a scholarship to a local woman returning to school. Chair Roberta Hayes did her homework this summer. A Ph.D. and associate professor, Roberta knows a lot about both homework and scholarship. Requirements, application process, funding distribution – there's a lot to consider. Several members quickly raised their hands to join and help.

Since we'll need funds to award a scholarship, Funding Chairs Linda Hansen and Marilyn Lengo have already planned two fundraisers: November 11, 2012 at Michael's Pocket Book Shop and Karaoke Night on April 19, 2013. Visit Staten Island and join us!

We continue to work with the Staten Island Youth Justice Center, have a member-mentoring-member program, and we're looking for candidates for Career Recognition. So many different opportunities, something for everyone...and that was just the September meeting. It's going to be a great year!

JWA Photography
Ayalajw@earthlink.net

Chapter News



Left to right, Onalee Stamp, Christine Brown, Mary Ellen Morgan and JoAnne Krolak.

Southern Finger Lakes Women – Region VII

- submitted by JoAnne Krolak

On August 25, 2012, SFLW members Onalee Stamp, Christine Brown, Mary Ellen Morgan and JoAnne Krolak drove to Rochester, NY and toured the Susan B. Anthony house and historic site. They learned a great deal about Ms. Anthony and her efforts to get the right to vote.

The chapter was notified that the application to shift its affiliation from Region VI to Region VII was successful. On October 20, 2012 chapter members attended their first meeting as Region VII members when they went to the Fall meeting in Canandaigua, NY.

The chapter awarded its annual Woman of the Year honors when it observed the 2012 New York State Women in Business Week at its October meeting. The chapter is currently taking applications for the Women's Career Enhancement Scholarship and will announce the recipient at the November meeting.



Committee News



NYS Women, Inc. members enjoying the 2012 Women's Day at the Fair.

Bylaws

- submitted by Margherita Clemento

The proposed revisions to the bylaws were presented at the board of directors meeting and special/member meeting on October 13, 2012 and were approved.

The revised bylaws will be posted on the website and have been emailed to the executive committee, immediate past state president, parliamentarian, standing committee chairs and vice chairs, special committee chairs and vice chairs, region directors, assistant region directors, and chapter presidents.

As a reminder, if you have not updated your bylaws, please do so now. Send them to Margherita Clemento at mclemento@nyc.rr.com or via USPS at 880 68th Street Apt.3J, Brooklyn, New York 11220-5703 in triplicate together with the approval form signed by your chapter president or secretary.

Should you need any assistance, please feel free to contact Margherita Clemento.

(Bylaws committee: Margherita Clemento, chair; Marilyn Mannino, vice chair; and Viola McKaig; Neale Steiniger; Clare Sullivan)

Women's Day at the New York State Fair 2012

- submitted by Pat Ferguson

The 2012 Women's Day at the New York State Fair was held on Wednesday August 29th. Of the 130 people in attendance, 24 women were NYS Women, Inc. members. The presentation "DeClutter and Simplify Your Life", by Deb Cabral, the DeClutter Coach, was well received. The morning program, "Batting the Silent Killers of Women", by Freida Weeks and Leisha Tedford, confirmed how important it is to look after

ourselves. The morning and luncheon speakers' universal theme of our health was very timely. Cheryl Lavin, director of the Women's Building, arranged a very large luncheon (marvelous dessert), decorated the room, obtained Women's Hall of Fame material, and provided great coordination. Local television personality, Liz Ayers, introduced dignitaries in attendance including Congresswoman Anne Marie Buerkel, 25th District, and Syracuse Mayor, Stephanie Miner.

Deb Cabral introduced her new book, *DeClutter Your Life Now! A motivational guide to tackle the clutter in ALL aspects of your life*, and was available for signing. For more information about Deb Cabral, visit www.decluttercoach-deb.com.

Next year, Women's Day will be on Wednesday, August 28th, 2013. Please contact Cheryl Lavin if you have an inspiration for next year's theme or potential speaker (Cheryl.Lavin@agmkt.state.ny.us or 315-487-7711x1264). If you would like to be on the mailing list for a save-the-date reminder, you can contact Cheryl.

Women's History Month

- submitted by JoAnne Krolak

November was American Indian Heritage Month. After nearly a century of advocacy, National American Indian Heritage Month was first recognized through Joint Resolution by Congress in 1990. Now recognized annually, November is a time to learn more about the history and heritage of Native American peoples.

To learn more go to The National Women's History Project online at www.nwhp.org.

Please Send Your Region and Chapter News to:

Ramona L. Gallagher at PR@nyswomeninc.org



NIKE All Stars

The 2012-2013 NIKE All Star Campaign is in full swing and thank you to our loyal supporters who have already sent their listings in. Members will have an opportunity to contribute at our annual conference, and chapters, regions and friends of NYS Women, Inc. can send contributions anytime to the NIKE Business Manager. Information on contributing can be found on our website.

Publication July 15th/Sept. issue Oct. 15th/Dec. issue
Deadlines: Jan. 15th/March issue March 15th/May issue

NEW YORK STATE women, INC.

Rates: Platinum Patrons: \$75 and over
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Make check payable to: NYS Women, Inc. (memo: NIKE contribution)

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Understanding Our Organization

Continued from page 10

as the voice of the entire organization on political matters for the membership.

Regions

Up until July 1, 2012 regions were called districts. We currently have 11 regions but this will change on July 1, 2013 when some areas will be combined to form eight regions. They are primarily based on county lines and geographical areas. A region is a group of local chapters. Regions have a region director, assistant region director, secretary, and treasurer. Regions hold meetings twice a year – in the spring and fall. A region's responsibilities can vary: they pass on information from the state level to chapters; they often hold professional development workshops at region meetings; and create opportunities for chapters to see what other chapters are doing or bounce ideas off each other. Some regions provide scholarships to local women and soon they will run the Reality Store™ program for young people in their communities.

Chapters

Most members are familiar with, and active at, the chapter level. This is the most direct connection with NYS Women, Inc. Chapters hold meetings offering a variety of programs. Each chapter has its own makeup and focus – professional, political or personal development, community service, etc. – what a chapter concentrates on is driven by its individual membership.

Membership

When you join NYS Women, Inc. you are a member at all three levels and pay dues for all three levels. As a member you are welcome to attend meetings at all three levels, too. You'll get the most out of your membership when you're active at each level.

Stay tuned for the next installment of "Your NYS Women, Inc."

Renee Cerullo is first vice president of NYS Women, Inc. Contact her at Cerullo@RLComputing.com or RLComputing.com.

Have you Heard?



NIKE TEAM ROLLS OUT

THE MEMBER SPONSORSHIP!

Your NIKE team is excited to announce a NEW sponsorship opportunity **exclusively** for NYS Women, Inc. members! This member-only level is being offered for the first time and provides our members with an incredible deal to advertise their business to the entire NYS Women, Inc. membership. Not only is this a great value from an advertising standpoint, but it will also position you and your business as a supporter of our vibrant organization.

Details are listed below. You can sign up and pay for your sponsorship at our website at nyswomeninc.org, or contact NIKE Business Manager Robin Allen at NIKEmgr@nyswomeninc.org.

Don't miss out... Take advantage of this outstanding offer today!

\$400 Member-only Sponsorship Includes:

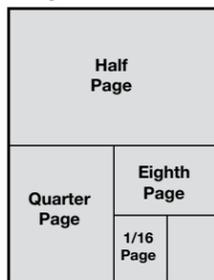
- Half-page ad in 4 issues of NIKE (valued at \$500)
- Sponsor logo on NYS Women, Inc. website linked to sponsor homepage
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NIKE Ad Rates

Back Cover
 1 issue: \$600 • 4 issues: \$2,000
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 1 issue: \$400 • 4 issues: \$1,400
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Please email your ad (in pdf format) to JDinsty@roadrunner.com and whiterabbitdesign@roadrunner.com. Checks should be made out to NYS Women, Inc. (memo: NIKE ad) and mailed to: Robin Allen, NIKE Business Manager, P.O. Box 1265, Binghamton NY 13902-1265

New York State Women, Inc.

Our Mission
 To build powerful women
 personally, professionally, and politically.

Our Vision
 To make a difference in the lives of working women.

“Appreciation is the highest form of prayer, for it acknowledges the presence of good wherever you shine the light of your thankful thoughts.”
 -Alan Cohen

Continued from page 13

enjoy special moments, to ignore the negatives that may creep up in family patterns or with immature friends. (Be prepared to let the small things go.)

- Trust yourself. Do not allow self-blame, or should-haves to seep in. Trust your decisions for planning, doing, connecting with others, and incorporating some me time. Recognize that you are doing the best you can given time and resources. Super Woman does not exist. Trust yourself to know that when you suddenly experience higher tension, that you can *Stop*, you can *Breathe*. Recognize that there is another, calmer way to be; then consciously choose that calmer path. (Being frenzied is a choice; you *can* choose to be calm.)

- Get moving; physical movement is beckoning. Take a walk, breathe in deeply, even if it is just for a few minutes each day. That personal space is crucial; so is the invigorating value of that outdoor walk to your energy and your mindfulness.

- Incorporate a spiritual aspect to the holidays. Consider why this time of year is so important for you. Rekindle that inner spark, that inner knowing.

- Reach out in connection to others in need. Doing just one small deed or helping another in a small way is good for the heart connection of being in service to others. Deliver some cookies or flowers to a nursing home, put a pair of mittens on a mitten tree – giving is good. It is the small things that lift the spirit (not the expensive ones).

- Allow yourself to rekindle joy –personal joy. Carve out that important space by the fireplace, listen to uplifting music, invite deeper conversation with family or friends. See/soak in each important unfolding moment for the joy that it holds. Appreciate the special moments!

That is the real key – to slow down enough so that you consciously “appreciate the moments” – moments that do matter!

Claire Knowles is a member of the Buffalo Niagara Chapter of NYS Women, Inc. Check out her website at www.LightsOnLeadershipSuccess4Women.com.

Feature: Personal Development

Meditate to reduce stress

by Leanne Oldenbrook

WE HEAR SO MUCH ABOUT MEDITATION. WHAT IS IT? Why should we do it? How do we do it? “One definition of meditation is training your mind to focus on the present moment rather than obsessing about past or future,” says Leanne Oldenbrook, owner of CMYoga. “We spend so much time regretting the past or worrying about the future that we miss the good things happening right now, often creating unnecessary stress,” Leanne points out. Meditation practice brings us back to our breath, back to our bodies, back to the peace of the present moment, clearing and quieting our minds.

The health benefits of stress reduction through meditation are well documented: controlled pain of chronic diseases like arthritis, improved immune function, lowered blood pressure, and restored balance to sufferers of depression. Regular practice can even affect your personality by changing brain function, resulting in feeling happier and more enthusiastic. There are many ways to meditate besides seated

practices; they include supported on the floor, chanting, and guided meditations, and by trying a few you can easily find one that works for you.

To begin to meditate right now, first take time to move your body by walking or doing a little yoga or a brisk workout. Sit quietly on the floor or a chair with your spine long, close your eyes, relax your body, breathe slowly and naturally and let your mind be free of thoughts. Don’t worry about doing it right; when thoughts come back, just notice them without dwelling on them and go back to your breath. Try it for five minutes, and slowly work your way up to fifteen or twenty minutes a day.



Buffalo-based yoga instructor, Leanne Oldenbrook can be reached at 716-864-1194 or crescmnyoga@yahoo.com. Online: www.cmyoga.com or www.facebook.com/yogabyleanne.

Image: ©Jupiter Images

Season’s Greetings!
*Best Wishes for a Joyous Holiday Season
 and a Happy New Year!*

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Empowering Yourself and Others

Continued from page 5

tionally? This is not your to-do list nor your New Year's Resolutions. This is about the big dreams in your life, the achievements that are pulling you forward – the ones with your name on them in bold letters. **Keeping the end in mind is Key #3.**

4. Understand that *mediocrity* can creep in to diminish your degree of success and empowerment. Mediocrity means of *only average quality, or to not stand out*. Mediocrity has been described as a dimension that is bound by the likes of *indecision, compromise, past thinking and lack of vision*. But you have been endowed with a certain mixture of abilities, talents, skills and opportunities that make you unique and significant. There's something within each of us that cries out to be *above average, extraordinary, to be empowered to act, to move forward*. It is in that recognition, that we **resist mediocrity**. Abraham Maslow gave us the life secret that is at work here: You will either step forward into growth or you will step back into safety. **Resisting mediocrity is Key #4.**

5. The final key comes from our self awareness and being awake. It is to consciously know that each of us has that **choice** – whether to step forward into growth or to step backward into safety. Empowerment of oneself or of others is a choice. People choose to stop or not, to build walls or not, to act or not, to push through to the next level or not, to move forward or not, to see things from other views or not. Each of us has a built-in barometer that tells us (if we are aware and awake to it, that is) of our own level of empowerment. That barometer is the answer you give to this specific question, *“How do I greet change?”* (You can substitute the word change with dilemma, situation, etc.). The conscious introspection is what is so important. **Key #5: Every empowered step forward is a choice!**

Life is here and it is now. Either we meet it and we live it, or we miss it. When you choose to be empowered, you won't miss it. You will be all that you want to be.

This article is excerpted from Claire Knowles' inspiring luncheon talk at the October 2012 board meeting in Niagara Falls. Claire is a member of the Buffalo Niagara Chapter of NYS Women, Inc. She's the author of *“Lights On! A Reflective Journey... Illuminations to move your Life Forward with Ease.”* Go to her website at www.LightsOnLeadershipSuccess4Women.com.



NYS Women, Inc.

Professional Development Programs

Through regular meetings at the chapter level, NYS Women, Inc. offers continuing programs addressing the needs of working women, health issues, planning retirement, financial planning, and technology, among others. In addition, the following programs are offered at the state level:

Personal & Professional Development Program

The Personal & Professional Development Program offers a speech competition as a learning experience which challenges the candidates to grow personally and professionally by competing with others. It offers opportunities in personal and professional development, increased visibility and opportunities to express the candidate's opinion about issues of concern to women. This competition is open to any member of NYS Women, Inc. who is in good standing and is not currently competing in one of the other speech competitions (New Careerist or Career Recognition).

Career Recognition Program

The Career Recognition Program seeks to recognize the achievements of women re-entering the workforce or women who have experienced an exceptional occurrence in their position. Through competition, this program will sharpen interviewing and public speaking skills. The program recognizes the achievements of women who are new to the workforce as a result of a career change; who have earned an exceptional achievement/advancement in a position; or who have returned to the workforce after an absence of at least three years.

New Careerist Program

NYS Women, Inc. New Careerist Program Speech Competition recognizes the accomplishments of women between the ages of 21 and 32 who have been employed full time for a minimum of one year in their career area and provides them with professional development skills and opportunities. The New Careerist Program Speech Competition involves a competitive selection process within chapters, regions and the state competition.

Youth Leadership Program

The Youth Leadership Program is a weekend seminar, which challenges high school girls to new career options by offering workshops, networking and mentoring. The annual Youth Leadership Conference offers an opportunity to introduce ourselves to young women of high school age and to offer them leadership and life programs.

For full details on all these NYS Women, Inc. programs, go to <http://nyswomeninc.org/Home.aspx>.



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