

# MAINSTAY

**Well Spouse® Association**

*Support for Spousal Caregivers — You Are Not Alone*

## **DATELINES...**

Log on to the WSA website for the latest news on upcoming events...  
[www.wellspouse.org](http://www.wellspouse.org)

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## ***Accentuating the Positive in Family Caregiving***

**By Barry J. Jacobs, Psy.D.**

At the 2000 WSA conference in Philadelphia, a brief interaction with several workshop attendees changed the course of my psychological career.

I was presenting the story of a family member who said she was happy to be caring for her father with dementia. "She must be in denial," an older woman suddenly shouted from the last row. I was taken aback by her vehemence. Several others in the room nodded in agreement with her. Was caregiving a thankless task for everyone?

"Is there anyone here," I then asked, "for whom caregiving has been rewarding?"

"It has been for me," said a young man sitting to my right. "I love my wife and am glad for the chance to take care of her." The woman in the back of the room looked shocked.

This small incident made me realize that family caregivers have a range of experiences—some negative, some positive—but the positive ones are often not readily expressed. Instead, we live in a culture in which the predominant narrative is that caregivers are burdened and beleaguered. There's a steady stream of tragic caregiver movies, memoirs and magazine articles. At support groups, caregivers vent about their lack of sleep, their frustrations navigating the health-care system, and their feelings of abandonment at the hands of other family members. Their tone is often sad and angry. That has certainly been the gist of what I've heard from WSA members when I've attended local WSA support group meetings over the years.

Yet caregiving research does demonstrate that some caregivers thrive in their roles. According to the 2015 National Alliance for Caregiving and AARP survey, about 16% of caregivers say they are not stressed at all by caregiving. And, in my clinical practice, it is not unusual for me to hear from even stressed caregivers that they feel like caring for a loved one helps them grow personally and spiritually, gives them an enhanced sense of purpose, and provides them with the gratification of keeping their families together during tough times. More than one former family caregiver has told me she is grateful for having had the chance to be the primary caregiver to someone she loved, no matter how hard or messy or wearying the caregiving was.

With these insights in mind, I changed the focus of my psychotherapy

*(continued on page 2)*



Dedicated to the support of  
spousal caregivers

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Our newsletter takes its name from  
Maggie Strong's book *Mainstay: for the*  
*Well Spouse of the Chronically Ill.*

Our articles are available for reprint.  
Permission required.

(continued from page 1)

practice for family caregivers. Instead of emphasizing strategies for minimizing caregiving strains (e.g., utilizing increased support, setting limits), I began to work with struggling caregivers on maximizing the potential gains. I've done this by stressing the following points:

—**Caregiving is a choice:** All caregivers need to appreciate that they've chosen to make sacrifices on behalf of a loved one for a variety of reasons, and that they have the power to choose differently at any time.

—**Values inform choices:** I ask caregivers, "Why do you choose to do all that you do for your loved one?" The responses I hear reflect complex personal and spiritual reasons—e.g., "I want to give back to someone who took good care of me"; "Because it is the right thing to do morally"; "Because God has put this task in my life's path." I want caregivers to identify these values underlying their choices and then to elevate them to "caregiver mission statements."

—**See the forest, not the trees:** When caregivers can keep the big picture in mind—i.e., how they may look back at this difficult phase in their life at some point in the future—then they are less likely to feel mired in the muck of day-to-day caregiving duties and are more likely to grasp the greater purpose they're serving.

These are just some of the strategies I use for promoting positive caregiving. Others include finding new means of keeping love alive; role-modeling for others, particularly children, about the meaning of marriage and family; testing one's strengths and accepting one's limitations. These approaches don't work for every caregiver I treat, but help many to reap caregiving's rewards.

This shift in my psychological practice has been reflected in a similar shift in my writing. In 2006, my first caregiving book, *The Emotional Survival Guide for Caregivers*, presented means of reducing caregiver strain. In 2016, my second caregiving book (co-written with Julia L. Mayer, Psy.D.), *AARP Meditations for Caregivers—Practical, Emotional and Spiritual Support for You and Your Family*, presents nearly 150 stories of caregivers who have found the silver linings in their dark clouds. We tell the stories of many well spouses in this book, including those who overcame negative forces through accentuating whatever was positive during their caregiving years.

—**Dr. Jacobs serves on WSA's Honorary Board of Directors.**

### "It Takes a Village"

We are looking for an accessible van for my husband who  
has been on dialysis for more than 36 years.

He is working full time.

Contact: Dawn Troyanowski

[dtroyanowski@mcpsd.k12.wi.us](mailto:dtroyanowski@mcpsd.k12.wi.us)



Send your "Takes a Village" requests to [mainstay@wellspouse.org](mailto:mainstay@wellspouse.org)

## *Our Readers Write ...*

Thank you, Dorothy and Jan, for your Presidents' Perspective (*Mainstay*, June/July 2016). There are times that I've not quite felt like I qualify as a caregiver. My ill spouse can cook, drive, write a check if he needs to, etc. I can even go to the respite weekends without having to arrange for anyone to even look in on him. But yes, I've had to take on the running of the household inside and out. And take care of all the paperwork—financial, medical, etc. Yes, I take him to doctors' appointments because he can't walk very far. I handle all the calls from the doctors because he doesn't always understand what they're saying or forgets it. I handle all the household maintenance. So yes, I'm a caregiver who is tired and really appreciates the acknowledgement of that job. And it is a job, more so for a lot of others. Thank you.

Like Rebecca Martens, I'm in the process of setting up my "room of my own." It's the guest room that I'm decorating with all things beach-related, since that is my place of peace. She's given me ideas of other things to include. Good for you, Rebecca!!

Great recap of our Wildwood Respite Weekend, Bob Mastrogiovanni!! We had a blast trying new restaurants, walking the boardwalk, bicycling and dancing our hearts out. The Trivia night was a hoot thanks to Gene and all the guys and gals who participated. No one cuts loose more than a Well Spouse at a respite weekend. I really enjoyed eating meals and actually talking with old and new friends. I didn't realize how much that meant to me until I was back home eating breakfast and lunch alone. What great friends we make at these weekends.

Sincerely,

*Anita Keller*

**Save the Date: WSA Holiday Party**  
Saturday, Dec. 3, 2016 at 6:00 p.m.

**Come and enjoy yourself with your friends.**  
**Uxbridge Clubhouse in Cherry Hill. Bring a**  
**friend—this is an open event.**  
**100 Uxbridge, Cherry Hill, NJ 08034**

## *Sharing is Therapeutic*

By Don Riggerbach

Have you noticed that when you're introduced as a well spouse, the person you're meeting often tells a caregiver story from his or her own experience? After *The Washington Post* published my essay on how my illness has affected my wife, we got a steady stream of messages from relatives, friends, and even a few people we didn't know. Almost every one of them included a caregiving story—so people are obviously eager for the therapeutic value of sharing.

A former co-worker, Cris Hansberry of Denver, wrote:

*"Having been the well spouse to my late husband Alan (a non-smoker who died of lung cancer 16 years ago), your article brings back memories of continuously monitoring his oxygen, helping him in the bathroom, maneuvering his wheelchair in and out of the car. Trips to the ER. Feeding him, separating his meds, making sure the dogs hadn't chewed his air hose. Parenting our two children, working full time, scheduling chaplains and social workers for home visits. Keeping family and friends updated on his condition. Holding him when he cried.*

*"Late at night, I would sit in a chair with my dog and pet her until I thought her fur would fall out.*

*"The power of love. What I did was nothing in contrast to his pain. I would do it again."*

Let people know you're a well spouse. Listen to their stories. And be sure you mention how WSA can help smooth some of the bumps in that journey.

### **50+ Expos in the D.C. Metro Area**

The Beacon Newspapers present two Expos for seniors:

**Sunday, Sept. 11, 2016, noon till 4 p.m. at the Silver Spring, MD Civic Center.** This expo will include a Boomer/Senior Resource Fair (WSA will be participating).

**Sunday, Sept. 25, 2016, noon till 4 p.m. at the Springfield, VA Town Center.**

For more info, see  
<http://www.thebeaconnewspapers.com/50-expos>

## *Presidents' Perspective*

What's going on with WSA? A lot! Our website was recently redone to make it more secure, and the Forum software was updated. Soon you'll have the historical posts back, and we're working on some privacy improvements.

Along with the Forum, WSA offers multiple opportunities to communicate with each other. The support and friendship that come when you put together two people who share common problems can't be beat! If you have a local group, consider yourself lucky, and if you don't, think about starting one! We can email you a PDF full of information to help you do that. Or you can participate in one of our many telephone support groups—targeted toward specific groups of members like formers, younger well spouses, and one for current well spouses. These are listed on the back page of *Mainstay*, and if there's a topic you'd like to see added ... if you volunteer to lead it, we'll offer it!

Connecting Caregivers is a program started last year that is providing members with yet another way to reach fellow members. Those who've opted in to allow their email addresses to be given to other members are shown on a map that is distributed monthly. You can zoom in to see who might live nearby that you could meet. A friendly chat over a cup of coffee or a glass of wine now and then can be the perfect way to get some relief from your daily caregiving pressures.

On page 10 of this issue of *Mainstay*, you'll see information about our return to an annual conference. We tried to hold regional conferences in two different locations in 2016 with no success. Our timing was not good in Houston due to the flooding, and response was simply not strong enough in either location. We have some video clips on our Facebook page, [www.facebook.com/WellSpouseAssociation](http://www.facebook.com/WellSpouseAssociation), that show some of what goes on at our conferences. It's a weekend away from caregiving that provides the opportunity to be with others who "get it!" Workshops, dinner and dancing, sightseeing and more give you the chance to get to know others just like you. We hope that the idea of well spouses converging on your town for a weekend will appeal to some of you enough that you'll volunteer to host the 2017 conference.

In the meantime, Hyannis will be the site for our 2016 mini-conference—a chance for you to get just a taste of what these get-togethers are like.

We can't emphasize enough the friendships made by meeting other well spouses in person. About one-third of attendees at conferences and respites are often those whose spouses have passed away—and they come just to see old friends and make new ones. Dorothy and I first "met" on the WSA Forum, and later at a conference in White Plains, NY. What fun to meet each other face-to-face! We are both still caring for our spouses, and the conferences allow us precious time to do whatever we want without any caregiver responsibilities. Similarly, respite weekends are casual, relaxing get-togethers. No workshops, just lots of camaraderie and taking it easy.

It's our goal to increase the number of local support groups across the country as well as increase attendance at respites and our annual conference. Think seriously about how you can help yourself and other well spouses by becoming a more active member!

—*Jan & Dorothy*

**WSA Members: *Mainstay* Needs You!**  
***Mainstay* is a publication by and for our members. Please share your stories, poetry, humor, artwork, or any expression of your caregiving experience.**

**Send to:**  
**[mainstay@wellspouse.org](mailto:mainstay@wellspouse.org)**

### Remember to Shop with AmazonSmile

Support WSA when you shop, at no cost to you. AmazonSmile donates 0.5% of the purchase price from your eligible purchases to WSA. Simply go to [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com) and select Well Spouse® Association as the recipient charity before you begin shopping. Your selection will be remembered for all future purchases on this site. Eligible products are marked "Eligible for AmazonSmile donation."

## *The Nursing Home Discussion*

By Bob Mastrogiovanni

My wife and I were talking the other day, and we spoke of a couple we knew. My wife said, "She made him promise to never put her in a nursing home and then he did." I said, "We never should make promises we can't keep. He could no longer care for her at home and probably had to do it." I went on with, "We never know what can happen to you or to me which could land either of us in a nursing home."

I want to keep my spouse at home as long as possible. I believe I can give better care and more love, which she needs in bunches and would not get in an institution. But no one can know what will happen in the future. This is an individual decision that I have seen many Well Spouses struggle with over the years. It also doesn't mean that if you choose a nursing home option that you are not as loving as me or anyone else. Everyone knows their own situation better than anyone else, and no one should judge the decision you make for you and your spouse. Many times family and others have lots to say about your decision.

One well spouse I knew was forced to be up every two hours to suction out the spouse's breathing equipment and could not sleep and had to work to support them. She felt forced to put him in a nursing home. Another told me the doctor advised it because she could not lift or move her spouse for toileting or bathing or anything. Another told me her spouse was violent and abusive. Another told me she felt it was time because she had done it too long. One told me after he put his spouse in the nursing home and supported her, she gave him divorce papers. She gave him this "gift" so he could move on. He vowed to continue to support her, and they did divorce and he did move on.

I am told there is a lot of guilt and anxiety on the part of the well spouse who places the ill spouse in a nursing home. This is a gut-wrenching experience. The feeling of abandonment plays on the well spouse as well as the ill spouse. Many visit every day at first and then learn that a balance needs to be reached. What about children and others in the family and their feelings? Also, nursing homes are very expensive, and the issue of how to

pay for it looms large over most people. The quality of care provided is also one of the primary concerns.

I guess this is not intended to be a piece about me. I think we should have a discussion about these tough decisions and their effect on the entire family. *Mainstay* should address the issues that affect so much of our lives, and perhaps others could contribute to this discussion as well. I know that I, for one, would like to hear what other well spouses have to say on this issue. Thank you.

### **Respite Retreat for Family Caregivers of Loved Ones with Paralysis or MS**

**FRIDAY, SEPT. 30 - SUNDAY, OCT. 2, 2016**  
**CHUBB Conference Center**  
**309 Manor Road, Lafayette Hill, PA**

**Nancy's House will be running a retreat for family caregivers of loved ones living with paralysis or MS. This retreat is made possible by a Quality of Life grant from The Dana and Christopher Reeve Foundation.**

**Ten family caregivers will have two undisturbed nights of sleep. A variety of meditation and stress management techniques will be taught, and full one-hour massages and individual counseling sessions are available. Support groups will be held after dinner each night.**

**Guest fees are on a sliding scale, based on ability to pay—from \$75 to \$200. That fee includes your private room, all meals and snacks, all services and materials.**

**For further information, contact Elissa at [elissa@nancys-house.org](mailto:elissa@nancys-house.org) or call 215-888-4596.**

**We Refer, LLC**

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## 2016 WSA Mini-Conference Schedule

*Hyannis MA                      October 21-23, 2016*

### Friday, 10/21:

**5:30-6:45 p.m.** Welcome Reception (Ballroom).

**7:00 p.m.** Dinner at **Hearth & Kettle Restaurant**.

### Saturday, 10/22:

**7:00-9:00 a.m.** Breakfast in the hotel's restaurant.

**9:15-10:15 a.m.** Choose from:

**Men's Group** with Jerry Bishop, WSA member and Support Group Leader: "Guys can fix anything ..."

**Women's Group** with Edie Brozanski & Dina Gerasia, WSA members.

The Women's Support Group is a touchstone where we come to hear and be heard by those who understand, sharing our struggles in a safe environment. We'll also discuss ways we can better take care of ourselves as caregivers, in order to reduce stress.

**10:30-11:45 a.m.** Choose from:

**Well Spouse Grief** with Laszlo Trazkovich, M.D., WSA member and Support Group Leader. Grief is not only experienced when a loved one dies; well spouses live with grief throughout their caregiving years. We will explore the concept of ambiguous loss and how that causes a unique type of prolonged grieving.

**Well Spouse Financial Issues** with Nurse/Elder Care Attorney Cathleen Summers, founder of Bay State Elder Law firm. We should all be thinking about our financial futures. Ms. Summers will explain the process of preparing to apply for Medicaid.

*\*\* Lunch is on your own. Afternoon free for sightseeing, sleeping, shopping ... Enjoy! \*\**

**6:00 -11:00 p.m.** Happy Hour, Dinner, 50/50 Raffle and Dance (Ballroom).

### Sunday, 10/23:

**7:00-9:00 a.m.** Breakfast in the restaurant.

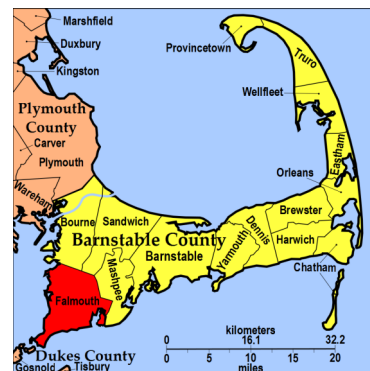
**9:30-10:45 a.m.** Choose from:

**Former Well Spouses** with Roger Mann, WSA member.

Introductions. Our journey to becoming a former well spouse. Dealing with loss. "The silence is deafening." There's life after. Get out there!

**Workshop TBD.**

**11:00 a.m.** Closing Ceremony.



# Conference Registration Form

*Shipping up to Cape Cod!*

**October 21-23, 2016**

## Well Spouse® Association Mini Conference

**Heritage House Hotel, 259 Main ST., Hyannis, MA, 02601  
800-352-7189**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ (Cell preferred)

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Is this your first WSA Conference? Circle Yes No

State: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse's Main Illness/Disability \_\_\_\_\_

Do you attend a local WSA Support Group? Circle Yes No Group Leader Name \_\_\_\_\_

Circle Caregiver Status: Current Caregiver Spouse Deceased Separated/Divorced Spouse in Nursing Home Remarried

Circle Your Age Range: 25-35 36-45 46-55 56-65 66+ Forum Username: \_\_\_\_\_

### **REGISTRATION FEES: \$60.00**

The **Full Conference Package** includes: Choice of workshops, Saturday Dinner & Dance, and Sunday closing ceremony.

Check Enclosed (Please make checks payable to Well Spouse Association or WSA)

Credit Card Credit Card No. \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_ Security Code No. \_\_\_\_\_

Name as shown on card \_\_\_\_\_ Billing Address (if different from above) \_\_\_\_\_

Friday night dinner is not included.  Check if you plan to join us at the Hearth & Kettle restaurant.

**Saturday Dinner:** (choose one)  Rosemary Chicken Breast  Baked Haddock, Buttered Herb Crumb Topping  
 Vegetarian

**\*\*\*HOTEL COSTS ARE NOT INCLUDED IN THE REGISTRATION FEE\*\*\***

**Please make your own room reservations directly with the hotel by Sept. 30, 2016 for WSA discounted rate.**

Rooms include free breakfast and free parking. Please book early to assure the discounted rate.

**RESERVATIONS:** Heritage House Hotel, 259 Main St., Hyannis, MA 02601

Tel: 800-352-7189 gm@heritagehousehotel.com

Bus transport is available from local airports to the terminal across the street.

**Ask for Well Spouse block.** Room rates are \$100 (plus 11% tax) for either King or 2 double beds. Special rate will be available until Sept. 30 or until room block is depleted. Rate is available on Thursday night also.

I would like to share a room. Roommates can be sought via the WSA forum, or by calling the office.

Mail registration form to : 2016 WSA Conference, 63 West Main St., Suite H, Freehold, NJ 07728.

All conference changes and cancellations must be received by October 7, 2016. Refunds will be issued after the conference.

## POSTINGS: An Online Discussion on the WSA Forum

—Compiled and edited by Dorothy Saunders

### An Act of Kindness

The other day I had posted an article on Facebook that I had seen in the WSA FB group about how "Caregiving Sucks." Today I received a box from Amazon and it turned out to be a book called *A Promise Kept* about a well spouse caring for his wife. The book came from a friend of mine whom I'd connected with on Facebook a couple of years ago, but probably hadn't seen or spoken to since the fourth grade! We had gone to school together for a couple of years; his family moved away but we had reconnected through Facebook where a lot of our classmates are connected. He included a note saying he's been a caregiver as well. It was such a random act of kindness and thoughtfulness. I was floored. It made my day to know that someone else was thinking about me and understood me—i.e., what this group provides us on a regular basis. I'll be sure to tell him about our group too! **T22**

What a lovely gift and gesture! **TTBS**

I had never looked at Etsy before ... wow, one could really do some damage to their credit card. I ordered a small vintage brass penguin that was less than \$20 with shipping. I didn't realize it was coming from Poland until the seller asked if I would let them know when it arrived. This little inexpensive item was so beautifully wrapped in a little burlap bag, shredded fancy stuff in a pretty box with a ribbon and handwritten note. The couple who sent it looked darling. I can't explain how it cheered me. **SCIW**

Serendipity! What a great friend, T22! 😊 I hope you get to thank your friend in person someday soon! My neighbors are keeping my lawn mowed, all of a sudden. I am so overwhelmed with gratitude. **TL**

Unexpected acts of kindness give our spirits such a lift. Yes, there are caring, goodhearted people out there, noticing us! I'm smiling just reading about these thoughtful gestures. **DS**

We were at a concert by "Port Chuck"—a band made up of the members of the show *General Hospital*. It was in a converted theater with the handicapped seats in the rear, perfect for a theatre, but terrible for a concert where everyone is standing 90% of the time. I complained to one of the "roadies" that all Deb could see was the back of people's a\$\$es. He said he'd see what he could do. A few moments later he returned, took Deb's wheelchair and told me to follow him. He put her center stage in the music control panel box 5 feet from the stage, and told me to sit in the left wing of the stage so I could watch her. Best seats EVER! Luv that guy wherever he is! **LB**

After last winter's blizzard, three of our neighbors arrived with snow blowers and shovels to remove two feet of snow from our driveway and sidewalk. We have a large corner lot, so this was not a job finished quickly. It's so gratifying to see people come forward when assistance is clearly needed. **DS**

### ONE OF THE PRIVILEGES WE LOSE IS MODESTY

What Atlas holds  
is holdable.  
Round, solid.  
Fits on his shoulder.  
What Atlas holds  
is self-contained  
Clean  
dry  
and connected.  
What Atlas holds  
he merely holds  
does not  
wipe  
up.

—From **THE SITTING-DOWN HUG** by Marion Deutsche Cohen

*Marion is the author of the books Still the End and Dirty Details, about her caregiving experiences.*



## *Rock Hall, MD Respite*

Recap by Bob Mastrogiovanni

We gathered at the Haven Harbor Marina and Inn on Friday, July 8, for a meet and greet before dinner. That time was the perfect opportunity to present Al Kozin with WSA's Lifetime Achievement Award for his dedication and service to WSA as webmaster. Al has served for several years, spending countless hours keeping our old website running. With security and efficiency our main concerns, Al worked tirelessly on the new website which we now enjoy. Al was presented with his award plaque, plus an honorarium from WSA's Board of Directors.

Then we were off to Baywolf for a good meal (fabulous blackened grouper!) and conversation which lasted well into the evening. When we returned to the inn, we broke out the 1,000-piece jigsaw puzzle, a tradition at Rock Hall.

Conversation along with work on the puzzle went on long after I retired. I did some relaxing reading before I went to sleep.

After Saturday breakfast, it was time for on-your-own activities. Al and I took a short drive to the National Wildlife Refuge on Eastern Neck



*Bob Mastrogiovanni (left)  
and Al Kozin (right)*

Island. It was quite beautiful, and we saw lots of eagles and an egret. I then went to the pool and read some more, and stopped by Durdings Ice Cream Shop for a Sundae, even though it was Saturday. Dinner would wait until after our sailing with Captain Mark on the Crab Royale. It was a 90-minute sail along the Chesapeake Bay during a gorgeous sunset. Then we docked at Waterman's for a late dinner. I, of course, had to have crab cakes, which were great. We enjoyed ourselves with good food and good company.

Sunday morning I was up early, so I read on the dock as I watched the sun rise over the Marina. I had an early breakfast with two newcomers whom I was delighted to meet, and then I had to leave for home.

If you haven't been to a WSA respite yet, or it's been a while since you took time off from your caregiving duties, please contact our coordinator Donna Amato and come out to one of these. Or you can plan to attend the respite/conference in Hyanis, MA this October. You deserve this kind of respite, and only *you* can give yourself this gift.

### Upcoming Respite Weekends

Bucks County, PA—September 16-18, 2016   Weisel Hostel, Quakertown, PA

A back-to-nature respite in the county founded by William Penn in the 18th century, featuring original churches, buildings, farms, and covered bridges. Quakertown and New Hope are nearby. The hostel is a 100+-year-old country estate in the tranquil setting of Nockamixon State Park. It has a full kitchen and a large living room with fireplace where we can relax or play games. It sleeps 18, in bunk beds, with separate rooms for men and women. We visit local restaurants for dinners.

For more details, email [respite@wellspouse.org](mailto:respite@wellspouse.org)

San Diego, CA—November 4-6, 2016

Friday night happy hour; Saturday night dinner; horseback riding; beach hiking at Torrey Pines State Park; quiet time; Balboa Park ... half planned, half open—you decide. Contact **Barbara G. Brown (nednicky)** at [1613bridge@gmail.com](mailto:1613bridge@gmail.com), and include your (real) name, WS Forum name, email address, where you will be coming from, and your contact (cell) number. You can also PM Quarterhorsemom (QHM) via the Forum with the same info.

## *Looking Ahead to WSA's 2017 National Conference*

We'll be returning to an annual national conference in 2017... **IF** a member or a group of our members graciously volunteers to plan it. You're no doubt wondering what that entails, so here's a summary:

- The preferred location is a city close to a major airport and interstate highways, with appealing sight-seeing attractions.
- The preferred hotel is one which is moderately priced, can provide meeting rooms and catered dinners, and offers free/low cost parking and/or free breakfast. Fairly easy access to sightseeing attractions is desirable. (Previous conference chairs will give guidance as to how to find and negotiate the best hotel deal.)
- The conference planners are responsible for selecting workshop topics and finding workshop presenters.
- The traditional date is the 3<sup>rd</sup> weekend in October, but if a hotel offers us a great deal for another Oct. weekend, we're willing to be flexible.

This is a very rewarding endeavor—to see members gather in person for camaraderie and support during what can be a transformative weekend, and know that you were instrumental in creating the event is truly gratifying.

The adage “Many hands make light work” applies here. If you have Well Spouse friends whom you can count on to be team players, please recruit them to volunteer with you.

Lastly, *no event planning experience is necessary!* Past conference chairs learned by doing and you can too! (They are available to share their knowledge with succeeding conference chairs.) Also, you don't need to reside in the selected city; so much info is available on websites these days that almost all of the planning can be done from your home.

Please consider this meaningful opportunity. For more info, contact [president@wellspouse.org](mailto:president@wellspouse.org).

Thank you,

***Dorothy & Jan***  
***WSA Co-Presidents***

### ***Meet WSA Board of Directors Member: Lawrence (LarryB) Bocchiere III***

WSA saved me from despair in 2008. Deb had been in and out of hospitals, nursing homes, and rehab for four months, and it was Thanksgiving. I was at my wit's end. Googling support for caregivers, I came upon WSA and my life immediately changed for the better. Instant understanding and instant friends for life. I attended a local Support Group and determined to help others as I had been helped.

I took early retirement (I was Postmaster in Southport, CT) in 2006 to be Deb's primary care-

giver. After a 17-year illness and 46 wonderful years together, Deb was freed from her illness in 2013. She taught me a lot about courage and love.

I now work part-time and enjoy our four wonderful grandchildren. Life finds a way. I met a wonderful lady, widowed at a young age. We were married in July and we hope to travel a lot. (I've driven the country extensively coast-to-coast but still have four states to visit!)



**Let Me Count The Ways...**

Did you know there are many ways you can help WSA? You can...

- ◆ Pay your dues
- ◆ Donate to the Coffee House Fund
- ◆ Join the Maggie Strong Legacy Society
- ◆ Shop through iGive.com
- ◆ Shop through Amazon Smile
- ◆ Buy gift cards through the Scrip program
- ◆ VOLUNTEER:
  - \* Start a support group
  - \* Write a letter to your hometown newspaper
  - \* Serve on a committee
  - \* Plan a respite event
  - \* Spread the word about WSA

**VOLUNTEER ADVERTISING MANAGER**

WSA needs an advertising manager to solicit new advertisers for our website and for *Mainstay*. We offer many very reasonably priced ad options, and we need to get the word out to companies relevant to our members.

For more info, or to volunteer, please contact **Larry@wellspouse.org**.

**Well Spouse® Association**

**Mailing Address:** 63 West Main St., Suite H, Freehold, NJ 07728-2140

**Phone:** 800-838-0879 or 732-577-8899

**FAX:** 732-577-8644

**Internet:** www.wellspouse.org

**Email:** info@wellspouse.org

**Membership Services:** Contact the main office at **members@wellspouse.org** or call and leave a message.

**MAINSTAY:** Mail your comments and questions to us at WSA Mainstay, 63 West Main St., Suite H, Freehold, NJ 07728 or send email to **mainstay@wellspouse.org**

**Support Group Information:** Contact **support@wellspouse.org** or leave a message at the main office.

*“When one is sick... two need help™”*

**WSA Membership Dues and Donations**

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip + 4 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_  
 Preferred Username for Website \_\_\_\_\_  
 Spouse's illness/ disability? \_\_\_\_\_  
 STATUS?  Current Caregiver  Spouse deceased  
            Spouse in nursing home  Separated/Divorced  
 Children:  under 18  over 18  No children  
 Your Age:  20-35  36-45  46-55  56-65  66+  
 I am interested in starting/leading a WSA support group.  
 Opt-In to Connecting Caregivers Program (see website for details).

**Well Spouse® Membership:**

- One Year..... \$30
- Two Year..... \$55
- (Outside US rates: \$35/yr. and \$60/2 yrs.)

**Supporting Membership:**

- Friend of WSA..... \$30
- Friend of WSA/Respite..... \$15
- Professional/ Non-Profit..... \$50
- For-Profit Corporations..... \$100

**Additional Contribution**..... \_\_\_\_\_

**ANNUAL APPEAL**..... \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL PAID**.....

No well spouse is denied membership due to financial hardship. If you cannot afford full membership dues at this time, please enclose whatever amount you can afford. (\$5 minimum)

Mail check payable to **Well Spouse® Association** to WSA, 63 West Main St., Suite H, Freehold, NJ 07728-2140

Membership Type:  New  Renewal  New Address/ Phone/ Email  
 Gift Membership \*\*fill out above for recipient w/your contact info on the back.  
 Annual membership includes a subscription to *Mainstay*, all WSA mailings, and participation in regional support groups (where available), workshops, respite weekends, and conferences. Your dues also help underwrite the operating cost of our online website and other support programs.

**IMPORTANT REMINDER  
FOR MAINSTAY**

If you are currently receiving a hard copy of *Mainstay*, you will continue to have it mailed to you. If you wish to change to having it electronically mailed to you, please notify the office, as this will save WSA printing and mailing expenses. If you are receiving *Mainstay* electronically and would like to receive a hard copy, or if your email address changes, please call the office at 800-838-0879 or email us at [members@wellspouse.org](mailto:members@wellspouse.org) or [info@wellspouse.org](mailto:info@wellspouse.org).

**WSA MEMBERS:**

We are asking members who update their profiles on the WSA website to also notify the WSA office at [info@wellspouse.org](mailto:info@wellspouse.org), so that the office records can be updated as well.

Thank you!

**NOTE:** Please consult a physician or an attorney before taking action on any medical or legal information contained in any *Mainstay* article. The views expressed by our writers are their own and do not necessarily reflect the views of WSA.

**Telephone Support Groups**

**Current Well Spouse Telephone Support Group:** One weekend afternoon every month. Contact [currentwstsg@wellspouse.org](mailto:currentwstsg@wellspouse.org).

**Former Well Spouse Telephone Support Group**  
1st Friday every month, 9 pm ET. Contact [formerwstsg1@wellspouse.org](mailto:formerwstsg1@wellspouse.org).

**Separate Lives Telephone Support Group:** 1st Monday every month, 9 pm ET. Contact [separatwstsg@wellspouse.org](mailto:separatwstsg@wellspouse.org).

**Younger Well Spouse Telephone Support Group:** last Monday of every month, 9 pm ET. Contact [youngerwstsg@wellspouse.org](mailto:youngerwstsg@wellspouse.org).

**“Surviving the Healthcare System” Telephone Support Group:** Meets monthly; day and time are variable. Contact Sue at 914-924-5421.



**M**AINSTAY

WELL SPOUSE® ASSOCIATION  
63 West Main Street, Suite H  
Freehold, NJ 07728

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