

◆ SWAN newsletter ◆

Volume 2 Issue 1

February 2001

LISA JANE SOLOMON

convener

WEL

(Women's Electoral Lobby)

speaker

18 MARCH

9.30 am

RSVP

to

Val

5974 3461

or

Maureen

5974 4096

to assist with catering

(before 9 March)

Forthcoming speakers:

Ramona Koval

Susan Davies

Dr Lynette Dumble

Shirley Shakelton

STANDING OVATION FOR IRENE BOLGER 19/11/00

Irene Bolger, former leader of the Nurses' Union and now a Barrister, received a spontaneous standing ovation after her address to SWAN in November.

Forthright and honest, Irene told how experience rather than theory studied in university courses had shaped her involvement as a socialist.

Born into a "single mother situation" in Adelaide Irene lived with her Grandmother (who had already raised eleven children) until she was five.

Irene then moved to Victoria to live with her mother, stepfather and two younger sisters. Her mother and stepfather indulged in alcohol abuse, leaving little money for food and other necessities. Irene was responsible for her two younger sisters and relied on the local shop keeper to help out when things became desperate. Irene developed a keen sense of her position: she felt demeaned, patronised and ashamed - as well as being a victim of family violence.

At St Mary's school in Yarram Irene's academic potential was recognised and eventually she went as

a term boarder to a Roman Catholic College. Rules were unbelievably strict. Nevertheless, Irene found stability and the opportunity to realise her potential.

Leaving school as a naive young woman, Irene met a young man and, to her surprise and dismay, found herself pregnant.

Receiving no counselling or any form of support, Irene was packed off to a "home for unmarried mothers" in Broadmeadows. Unable to talk about her experience, it was thirty years before Irene confided in her sisters about her baby who had been adopted.

Eventually gaining a nursing bursary, Irene commenced her training at St Vincents. Tiring of the strict discipline, she moved to Queensland, working in a range of jobs. But, deciding that she was "wasting her life", returned to Victoria and completed her nursing course. On completion of her training, Irene again became pregnant and worked night shift until the birth of Nick - now 29. When Nick was six, Irene was raped by an intruder who broke into her home. (Cont'd p2)

MEET KATH HASSELL FRANKSTON CITIZEN OF THE YEAR 2000

SWAN newsletter can't claim to bring you the latest news - but we do try to keep our readers informed, albeit a bit late!

Kath Hassell, a regular SWANer was recognised by the Frankston Council for her work as a citizen of that community. And we can understand why!

Besides her SWAN participation Kath finds time to contribute to the community in many ways: (See p3)

ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE

The Admin Committee met during January to discuss general business and plan the year's meetings.

Facilitator - Carole Ford

Assistant Facilitator - Val McKenna

Secretary - Maureen McPhate

Treasurer - Jane Hildebrandt

Committee members:

Barbara Lindner

Debbie Roberts

The Committee reminds
SWAN members
of the
Annual
General Meeting
in JULY

SWAN IN ACTION - NETWORKING

SWAN members have been in action over a number of issues since our last meeting. A positive aspect of SWAN membership is the networking that occurs in trying to garner support for various worthy causes. Through face to face conversations, telephone calls, emails, and faxes SWANers and/or their friends have involved themselves in the Release Heather Osland campaign; responses to the horrific treatment of a young Nigerian woman; and reaction to Alan Barron's claim in *The Age* that "Of course men dominate the top jobs". The following are samples of letters written by SWANers or their friends:

Dr R A Soule
Nigerian High Commission

Dear Dr Soule

Most countries progress along the road leading from barbarism towards civilisation. Why is Nigeria so far behind? A group of my friends who are going on a tour of Africa have just crossed Nigeria off their

visiting list. If this brutal punishment (100 lashes for a Muslim girl who became pregnant as a result of rape) is carried out, I am sure that the rest of the civilised world will act similarly.

(Name withheld on request).

The Editor
The Age

Thanks to Alan Barron (9/2) for his lucid explanation of "why men dominate the top jobs." It certainly explains why the world - politically, economically, socially and environmentally - is in crisis. The decisions are being made by competitive, obsessive, overworked men, prepared to virtually abandon their families in pursuit of power and/or money. Scary, isn't it?

Carole Ford
Dromana (SWAN facilitator)

Many of our members continue to take action for the release of Heather Osland. Val McKenna has spearheaded

much of this action - and in response to her appeals many have written, and continue to write, to members of parliament asking for favorable consideration of Heather Osland's Petition for Mercy. If you want to know how YOU can help, ring Val at 5974 3461. Within the next week we hope to organise a candlelight vigil in support of Heather's release.

The Hon
Steve Bracks
Premier.

Dear Mr Premier

I write to ask that Heather Osland's Petition for Mercy be granted.

As a long-time member of the Coalition for Gun Control I gained insights into the dreadful effects that prolonged domestic violence has on its victims. Sustained brutalisation begets desperate and brutal acts. Heather Osland's circumstances were extenuating in the full sense. (Name withheld)

**REMEMBER to
RSVP
by
FEBRUARY 22
to
Denise Hassett
for
International
Women's Day Supper
5977 0957**

IRENE BOLGER...continued

As a result of her experiences Irene developed, and retains, a great empathy for women who have suffered pain and suffering resulting from domestic violence and/or rape. In the early years of being a parent, Irene thought about independence and social issues. She became interested in politics and joined the Labor

Party. She took part in the Vietnam demonstrations and protests relating to the Whitlam sacking and mixed with people who "talked about feminism."

After her high-profile part in the Nurses' strike she left the Union for a number of reasons. Unable to get a job she let her registration lapse.

In her inimitable style Irene Bolger faced the challenge - returned to university and studied law. She is now a Barrister and says that being a woman barrister amongst men can be alienating and lonely - but she continues to hold fast and face the challenges - successfully - we might add! Thanks to Maureen for notes.

SWANers ARE HAPPY ABOUT...and unhappy about...

SWANers will be happy to hear that the Committee undertaking the Social Audit hopes to present its report at the February meeting. Members have worked hard at this demanding task and we await with interest the results of their research.

SWANers who are part of the Organising Committee for the STW Forum were very happy indeed to hear that Robyn Williams had confirmed that he will be the keynote speaker at the Public Forum on April 1 at the Mornington Peninsula Shire Offices. Other community members presenting workshops or an address at the Forum include Jane

Hildebrant; Mary Stemp; Kath Hassell; Dr Brian Cuming; and The Venerable Ken Parker.

 Many SWANers are most UNHAPPY that Heather Osland has not been released from prison. Despite thousands of signatures on petitions and countless letters we hear nothing and see no action. We urge all SWAN members to continue their efforts to have Heather released. If you wish to know more about Heather Osland and the reasons on which her Petition for Mercy is based, visit the Release Heather Osland website. (Choose any search engine and type in Heather Osland.)

We are all very happy to hear that SWAN facilitator, Carole Ford, has completed and submitted her PhD thesis. Well done, Carole!

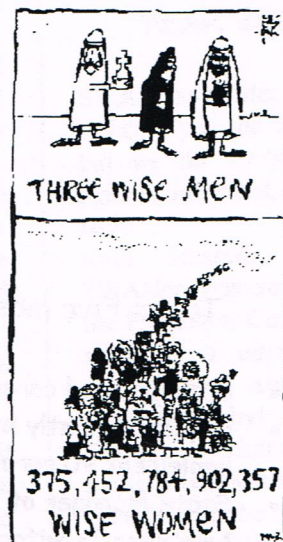
We were happy to hear some "good news" from FairWear. They report in their newsletter that as a result of their actions in bombarding the State Government with letters, faxes and emails it has

acknowledged FairWear's concerns regarding the legislation relating to the Industrial Task Force report. The government has given an undertaking that within 12 months it will "...introduce specific legislation which will focus greater responsibility on retailers and manufacturers to ensure compliance."

STW
 (Sharing the Wisdom)
 initiated by
SWAN
PUBLIC FORUM
1 APRIL
 Mornington Peninsula Shire Offices
ROBYN WILLIAMS
 (ABC Science Show)
KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Ring Debbie
 9787 6840
 for bookings

Limited seating



We thought we would share this Christmas card received by a SWAN member!

Kath Hassell...continued

Kath is a member of the St Vincent de Paul Conference. This organisation extends a helping hand to those in need. It aims to "get people back on track" - empowering them to help themselves.

Frankston Foreshore Committee and Frankston Beach Association also benefit from Kath's contributions.

Action Sweetwater Creek is another of Kath's environmental interest groups. Kath Hassell will also conduct a workshop at Sharing the Wisdom's Public Forum on April 1 this year at the Mornington Peninsula Shire Offices.

Added to these demanding activities, Kath is also the

SHARE TABLE

Bring information about YOUR issue to share

editor of a Probus Newsletter and has found time to speak on Community Radio and to attend SWAN meetings!

Congratulations, Kath on your reign as Frankston Citizen of the Year and thank you on behalf of the communities that benefit from your unstinting efforts!

SWAN MEETING

SUNDAY

18 MARCH 2001

9.30am

SPEAKER

LISA JANE SOLOMON

Convenor Women's Electoral Lobby (Vic)

Topic: Five most important issues for Victorian women in the new millennium

- Distinguished career in both State/Federal Governments.
- Employed jointly by WA and Federal Governments as the Project Manager to develop and implement 90 rural and remote child care centres in WA
- State Manager of Housing and Community Services for the Federal Government in the Northern Territory
- Has served on the Boards of three different State Councils of Social Service
- Has served as State Convenor in two states for the Women's Electoral Lobby
- Inaugural chairperson of the Government-funded Community Housing Research Organisation

9.30 am

MT MARTHA HOUSE

**The Esplanade and Dominion Rd
Mt Martha**

Cost \$5.00

**To assist with catering
please ring**

**Val at
5974 3461**

or

**Maureen at
5974 4096**

Before March 9

Thank you!

◆ SWAN newsletter ◆

Volume 2, Issue 2

April 20, 2001

20 MAY

NEXT MEETING

SWAN

AT

MT MARTHA
COMMUNITY
HOUSE
9.30AM

SPEAKER:

SARA COWARD

WORKS IN PRIVATE
OFFICE OF
MINISTER
LYNNE KOSKY

FORMER MAYOR OF
CITY OF
MARIBYRNONG

LOCAL GOVERNMENT
COUNCILLOR

**ADVERTISED
SPEAKER,
RAMONA
KOVAL HAS
CANCELLED
DUE TO
UNEXPECTED
INTERSTATE
COMMITMENTS.**

Convenor Victorian WEL addresses SWAN

SWAN deserved congratulations for undertaking their social audit, Lisa Jane Powell said in her opening comments to the well-attended first meeting for 2001. Getting women on the agenda did not require "experts", but rather an inclusive non-hierarchical approach such as the research methods used by the SWAN Social Audit Committee.

Lisa Jane Powell, convenor of Victorian WEL (Women's Electoral Lobby) has a most impressive CV, having a distinguished career in both State and Federal Government positions relating to social justice and equity.

Lisa said she saw herself as

a "cause" person but had concluded that making a "noise" on your own was less effective than working with an organised group such as WEL who ensures women's voices are heard. Even so, as convenor of



Vivienne Nicholson and Robyn Williams at the successful STW Forum - see right

W E L , Victoria, Lisa is aware of the diminished opportunity for women to be heard in the places where decisions are made.

For example, after Council amalgamations in the 1990s women and ethnic groups were the losers in terms of representation. After 1996/7 only 129 women councillors remained - hence the importance of increasing the number of women in local government.

(See latest figures - page 3)

STW FORUM SUCCESSFUL

Hailed as a "watershed in shire/community" relations, the STW (Sharing the Wisdom) inaugural public forum was deemed a highly successful community initiative.

The Forum had its genesis in SWAN. After an address by Vivienne Nicholson in which she suggested the formation of a body or group to overview environmental issues and developments on the Mornington Peninsula a meeting was convened for interested community members.

An organising committee developed the idea of a public forum as a means of "sharing the wisdom" of various community environmental groups. A "living document" recording the shared wisdom of the Forum would be a major outcome.

The keynote speaker was Robyn Williams from the
(Continued page 2)

REMINDER

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

SUNDAY 15 JULY 2001

Nomination forms for administrative committee available at May meeting

SWANS in action

Since our last newsletter, SWANers have continued active in their pursuit of "making a difference". Val McKenna had this to say to *Age readers*:

Ignoring domestic violence is a gender-based assault on human rights. Phil Cleary (*Opinion*, 1/2) highlights this bias in the case of the battered wife Heather Osland, sentenced to 15 years jail despite her son striking the blow that killed her husband. Val McKenna, Mt Martha.



International Women's Day

SWANer Barbara Rimington shared some pertinent reflections with the audience attending the International

Women's Day celebrations during March:

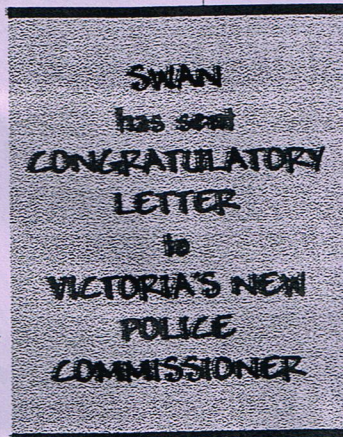
A snapshot of the news in the past couple of weeks revealed:

- The first Aboriginal woman (Carol Martin) elected to an Australian Parliament - the new Labor MP for the seat of Kimberly.
- The Australian Sex Discrimination Commissioner, Susan Halliday, reported being the only Commissioner to be leaving office with a weaker Sex Discrimination Act than existed when she started, together with Australia announcing it would not sign the international Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), leaving us without the protection of new international law.
- In Italy a man was granted a divorce after 50 years of marriage, because of his wife's poor

mention was made of his skills - or lack of them.

- In Australia, 40% of women aged in their 20s today will never marry, and a third will never have children.
- In China legislation is being passed to outlaw beating one's wife.
- Currently, an American woman is in Australia promulgating her book "The surrendered wife", recommending that women acquiesce on every level to their husbands.
- Over 2 million girls suffer genital mutilation each year.
- While 80% of refugees are women and children, most people granted asylum are men.

Plenty of food for thought, here, Barbara!



STW Forum...continued

ABC Science Show. He was preceded by a panel of speakers focussing on various aspects of the Mornington Peninsula environment.

Workshops were conducted by local community members and included Mary Stemp, Jane Hildebrant, Vanessa Petrie, Craig Forster, Barbara Rimington, Peter Carroll, Judy

Miller, Henry Kelsall, Peter Harris, Barbara Hamilton-Arnold and Sally Mitchell.

Other presentations were given by The Venerable Ken Parker and Dr Brian Cumming while Councillor Judith Coucaud Graley conducted the plenary session and Vivienne Nicholson chaired the Forum.

110 people attended, providing important written contributions for incorporation into the Living Document now being developed. This document, to be distributed throughout the community, is a further step towards safeguarding the unique environments of the Mornington Peninsula.

SWANers ARE HAPPY and UNHAPPY about...

SWANers along with many members of the community are sorry that Judith Couacaud Graley's term as mayor of Mornington Peninsula Shire has ended. We are very happy, however, about the quality of her term in office. We found Judith's approach to be inclusive, open and responsible. Judith herself has said that she found the

experience provided her with the opportunity of serving others and a time of personal growth. At the March meeting Judith thanked members for their support and "contribution to the well being of the communities on the Peninsula."

Women supporting the release of Heather Osland are unhappy about the continued silence of the Bracks' government regarding her release. In correspondence parliamentarians have said that the government will

make a decision "as soon as possible". They said this in 1998! How long does it take? Surely any decision is better than no decision! To keep Heather Osland in continued suspense over her future is nothing less than mental cruelty - again she becomes the victim!

SWANers can be happy about the progress of the Women's Participation in Local Government Coalition, active since 1997 and so far implementing three phases. The first phase included the production and distribution of *The Victorian Local Government Women's Charter* and *A Gender Agenda* - a kit for women wanting to stand for local government or wanting to assist others to stand.

Phase 2 encouraged and supported women candidates in the March 2000 elections. Outcomes included an overall increase in the participation rate of women elected to local government from 24.4% in 1997 to 26.8% in 2000. Of the 150 women participating in

Phase 2, fifty ran for election and twentyfive succeeded. Nine of the eleven male only councils had women elected.

For more information
Email: vlga@vlga.org.au

A regular and long-standing SWANer, May Kentish, collected 5000 textbooks to assist the restocking of Fiji's depleted school shelves.

May acknowledges the assistance and generosity of all those who responded to her requests for books.

The Fiji Association of Women Graduates made the request for books through the International Federation of University Women in Geneva, to the Australian Federation of University Women. May is the Australian federation's Peace Committee chairwoman. May said that "Most of the textbooks [in Fiji] had been burnt or destroyed in the conflict." May also said that "it had been a real community effort."

Congratulations on a fine effort, May!

SHARE TABLE

Bring material relating to matters/issues in which YOU are interested to share with others

SOCIAL AUDIT REPORT

Jane Hildebrant reported on the progress of the Social Audit. The research model Participatory Action Research (PAR) used by the audit group is a genuinely democratic process, non-hierarchical, collaborative, introspective and reflective, Jane said.

The researchers have experienced a good response

with participants genuinely pleased to have someone interested in their concerns.

Jane noted that making contact with disadvantaged people is not easy, for precisely the reason that they are "shut out" of the normal channels of communication with our decision-makers." The Social Audit group

recommends an investigation into current public consultation strategies, their effectiveness and what improvements can be made to increase involvement of truly disadvantaged/disempowered individuals.

*A full copy of Jane's report will be tabled at May meeting.

ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE

Facilitator: Carole Ford
Assistant Facilitator: Val McKenna
Secretary: Maureen McPhate
Treasurer: Jane Hildebrant
Committee Members:
Barbara Lindner
Debbie Roberts

The Committee met during April to plan for May meeting and the Annual General Meeting.

SWAN MEETING

SUNDAY

20 MAY 2001

9.30am

SPEAKER

SARA COWARD

- Works in private office of Minister Lynne Kosky
- Liaises with the Dept. of Education, Employment and Training
- Former mayor of the City of Maribyrnong
- Currently Councillor - the City of Maribyrnong

**TOPIC: LIVING IN A MULTICULTURAL COMMUNITY - A
WESTERN SUBURBS PERSPECTIVE**

9.30 am

MT MARTHA HOUSE

The Esplanade and Dominion Rd
Mt Martha

Cost \$5.00

To assist with catering
please ring

Val at
5974 3461

or

Maureen at
5974 4096

Before May 14

Thank you!

◆ SWAN newsletter ◆

Volume 2, Issue 3

July 1, 2001

15 JULY

NEXT MEETING

SWAN

AT

**MT MARTHA
COMMUNITY**

**HOUSE
9.30AM**

SPEAKER:

**SUSAN DAVIES
(IND. MP)**

FORMER TEACHER

**ONE OF THREE
INDEPENDENTS**

**WHO
ENABLED**

**A
CHANGE OF
GOVERNMENT**

**AT THE LAST
STATE ELECTION**

CELEBRATE

**5 YEARS
OF
SWAN**

NOVEMBER 18

SEE PAGE 2

"empathy helps" says Sara Coward

Many people in our communities are disempowered and marginalised despite contributing rates and taxes like everybody else. There are various reasons for this, according to Sara Coward, in her address to SWANers at the May meeting.

Rather than "blame" victims of circumstance, we should try to put ourselves in their shoes and seek understanding in looking for solutions to social issues.

Sara Coward, presently working in the private office of Minister Lynne Kosky; former mayor of the City of Maribyrnong; and now a local government councillor also made further significant points in her talk about living in a western suburb multicultural community including:

- Communities with a diverse population are not always sufficiently prepared for coping

with problems that arise from cultural diversity where there is high unemployment. Many of the services previously available to immigrants have been cut!

There is an urgent need to look at the way Australia deals with "illegal immigrants". Sara referred to the "disgrace of Maribyrnong" - the "crime" committed by these people was "getting somewhere better to live." Contributions from SWANers regarding their own experiences as immigrants, or in their work with programs relating to immigration widened Sara's talk into an interesting and lively debate.

Sara suggested some sort of cultural exchange or link-up between Footscray and the Mornington Peninsula would be a worthwhile initiative.

Sara raised import issues for our consideration.

the GYUTO MONKS of TIBET

During "share" time, Keran Wogan provided information about a forthcoming "Journey to Happiness" retreat conducted by the Gyuto Monks of Tibet.

The Gyuto Monks have been visiting Australia since 1994 providing Australians with the chance to experience first-hand the ancient and unique rituals and traditions practiced by Gyuto Monks since the establishment of their order over 500 years ago.

The Monks now make annual visits to Australia, touring through communities all over the country.

If you would like more information about the retreat or other visits by the Gyuto Monks you can contact Keran Wogan at:

28 Somerset Dve
MT MARTHA 3934

**Retreat: 3 - 5 August 2001
Mornington**

SHORT ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

prior to ordinary meeting

SUNDAY 15 JULY 2001

if you require a form please ring Debbie at 9787 6840

**YOU CAN NOMINATE FOR A NON-CORE COMMITTEE POSITION
FOR A PERIOD OF 3, 6 OR 12 MONTHS**

~ BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS ~ CHIEF COMMISSIONER OF POLICE CHRISTINE NIXON TO TALK TO SWAN!

Members of SWAN administrative committee are extremely happy to announce that Chief Commissioner of Victorian Police, Christine Nixon, has accepted our invitation to speak at the November meeting.

Not yet in the Commissioner's position for twelve months, Ms Nixon has made a very positive impression on Victorians.

As you would have noted in the last issue of our newsletter, SWAN conveyed its congratulations on her appointment, concluding the letter with an invitation to visit SWAN on the Mornington Peninsula some time in the near future.

We were surprised and delighted that she found a slot in her diary to accept. Shirley Shakelton, already booked to speak at the November meeting, graciously changed her date to the first meeting for next year.

We believe that Commissioner

Nixon will prove a stimulating and interesting speaker. We couldn't ask for a more appropriate guest for the meeting we had planned to celebrate five years of SWAN activity on the Mornington Peninsula.

Ms Nixon should prove to be a very popular speaker and therefore we are expecting a very positive response. If YOU wish to attend the November meeting, we urge you to let us have your "expression of interest" by phone - payment for this occasion will be before the event - but more details about that later!

We have booked the former council offices in Mornington which will seat about 100 people. If the response is overwhelming, then perhaps we will have to look for somewhere even bigger!

Commissioner Nixon has a very impressive CV. She commenced duty in her present position on 23 April this year, after service with the New South Wales Police Force from 1972, during which time she attained the rank of Assistant Commissioner.

She has an extensive range of experience, having served as an Assistant Commissioner in charge of various regions of NSW; the Human Resources Department, Development and Training Department, Specialist Skills and the Criminal Investigation Branch. SWAN looks forward to the Commissioner's visit to the Peninsula in November!

ring
Val
5974 3461
or
Maureen
5974 4096

to register
for
5th birthday meeting
LIMITED PLACES!

SOCIAL AUDIT REPORT LAUNCH

Judith Couacaud-Graley, former Mornington Peninsula Shire mayor and founding-member of SWAN will launch the Social Audit Committee's report at the July meeting.

We have reported the progress of the Social Audit over the months in our newsletter and at meetings from time to time. As Jane Hildebrand expressed

it, the report has involved a great deal of work and commitment, but the results have been well worthwhile.

Congratulations to those members of SWAN who devoted their time and efforts to the audit processes, investigations and the development of the report.

Copies of the Audit Report will be available at the launch at the July meeting.

**Another SWAN in Action
initiative successfully
concluded!**

The Admin. Committee discussed the need for an increase in meeting fees to cover costs. We hope you agree that an increase of \$2.50 (to \$7.50) is reasonable!

the starlings now come only in spring...

Jane Hildebrant has permitted us to share with SWAN newsletter readers part of her extremely informative, but delightfully written paper she presented at the STW Forum. The paper appears in full in the Forum report now being prepared...

As the trees began to grow and some shrubs were going well, I began to notice some amazing changes. I noticed squadrons of blue wrens darting here and there around the house, Fantails chattering on the muckheap, yellow Robins flitting between the young trees. In the Autumn, I was delighted to spot a Flame Robin on the fence. Grey Heron and White Egret cruised in from time to time. Once, I had two black Swans on our very small dam for two days. Black and white Ibis and the less common Straw-necked Ibis would sometimes

graze for days, seeking out insects under new mown grass. Magpies and Wattlebirds chased away the feral birds. The feral numbers began to reduce even though they are still on neighbouring properties. The starlings now only come in Spring, and, if I could block all their nesting places, I could reduce them further. The Pigeon numbers have been considerably reduced, thanks also to a pair of Goshawks and a Grey Falcon that regularly perches in my peach tree in Winter. The tiny Spotted Pardelote, Honeyeaters, Crested Pigeons, and this year, for the very first time, the chorus of Kookaburras right outside my bedroom window. Four or five years ago, instead of the single pair of green Rosella that occasionally flitted across the drive from the old stand of Sugar Gums, several pairs would appear and just as quickly disappear. Not long ago, the Eastern Rosellas, discovered by Almond and Plum trees. I have counted at least twenty-seven different native bird species on my

property, two snake species, skink and a variety of frogs, not to mention countless invertebrates....Flowering trees and plants are nature's supermarket so I selected trees for their flowers that provide food for native birds and insects and create colour.

....I have planted a fernery outside my kitchen window which the Blue Wrens use for courting. There are also quite a number of interesting spiders who have built their webs between the fern fronds. I have my own observatory without having to leave the house!

....When I built a small wall out of uncemented bricks, the skinks started to multiply. Now, I find them everywhere even at the backdoor step where I have a magnificent Kangaroo Paw - a perfect home for skinks and the Wattlebirds love its flowers. Lately, I fished a skink out of a water trough in one of the paddocks quite a distance from the house. For several minutes he clasped my hand while regaining his composure before jumping to freedom!

ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE

Facilitator: Carole Ford
Assistant Facilitator: Val McKenna
Secretary: Maureen McPhate
Treasurer: Jane Hildebrant
Committee Members:
Barbara Lindner
Debbie Roberts

The Committee met during June to plan for July meeting, the Annual General Meeting and celebratory meeting.

SHARE TABLE

Bring material relating to matters/issues in which YOU are interested to share with others

STILL NO WORD ON HEATHER!

Organisers of the Mercy for Heather Osland campaign have mailed out postcards to be forwarded to the Premier of our state.

A few copies will be available at the July meeting. If you wish to take action, now, however, you can write to the Release Heather Osland Group at:

PO Box 1375,
North Fitzroy, 3068.

Or, you can find information on the web site:
www.vicnet.net.au/~rhog/

Or Email:
releaseheather@netscape.net



SWAN MEETING

SUNDAY 15 JULY

at

9.30am

SUSAN DAVIES

(Independent MP Victorian State Government)

preceded
by short

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

(Nominations received for all positions - but further nominations accepted)

also

LAUNCH
by

Judith Couacaud-Graley

of

SWAN SOCIAL AUDIT REPORT

RSVP
by

12 JULY
for catering purposes

RING

VAL 5974 3461
DEBBIE 9787 6840
thank you!

MT MARTHA HOUSE

The Esplanade and Dominion Rd

MT MARTHA

cost \$5.00

(Increase in cost as from September)

◆ SWAN newsletter ◆

Volume 2, Issue 4

September 1, 2001

16
SEPTEMBER
NEXT MEETING
SWAN
AT
MT MARTHA
COMMUNITY
HOUSE
9.30AM
SPEAKER
DR
LYNETTE
DUMBLE
CONVENOR
WORLD
SISTERHOOD
28 YEARS
SENIOR
RESEARCH
FELLOW IN
DEPT OF
SURGERY
ROYAL
MELBOURNE
HOSPITAL
(UNI. OF MELB.)

CELEBRATE
5 YEARS
SWAN
NOVEMBER 18

Susan Davies & the puffer fish!

In thanking Susan Davies for sharing her parliamentary and political insights with SWANers at the July meeting, Patsy Carpenter said the anxiety she was experiencing was not due to the task of publicly thanking Susan, which was a pleasure. Rather, it was the visual image of sitting opposite Jeff Kennett during post election negotiations to determine who would form Victoria's new government! Susan had referred to this situation as being opposite a 'puffer fish' — implying therefore that the creature was capable of being deflated!

Susan gave an honest and forthright address during which she stressed the importance of continual self-evaluation in how she was 'performing' as a representative for her constituents and whether or not she had maintained the values that had propelled her towards politics.

Susan made a number of other significant points. She rejected the claim, for example, that Independents cannot make a difference. The value in Independents standing for election is that it puts pressure on the major parties to choose quality candidates. Essentially,

Independents are saying to the major parties — "if you don't get your act together to ensure that we have intelligent, honest people on both sides, then you will get people [independents] like us [standing]'. Furthermore, Independents are a constant reminder to the major parties that they need to listen to their constituents because they do not appear to be aware of the needs of the communities they represent. Susan played a crucial role in the restoration of the Korumburra railway line, for example, but no-one knows!

congratulations to Carole Ford

SWAN facilitator Carole Ford, has been notified that her PhD thesis submitted some months ago, has been successful. Carole will officially become Dr Carole Ford at the conferring of degrees at Deakin University in October.

Carole's thesis was by research in the area of women and citizenship — The myth of the woman-friendly state. During her studies Carole was awarded a pro-vice-chancellor scholarship. Well done Carole!

SOCIAL AUDIT LAUNCH

SWAN founding member and former Mornington Peninsula Shire Mayor — Councillor Judith Coucaud-Graley — launched the Social Audit document, *A blueprint for community consultation*, at the July meeting.

Judith said the audit report was a 'terrific document, well worth reading — and buying'. Unlike many reports, Judith continued, this document provides readers with a real feeling for the people themselves — it taps into the reality of the participants. Discussions/interviews and

research was carried out in the comfortable and secure surrounding of the participants' homes or familiar locations.

There was much in the document, Judith claimed, of significant interest to local council. Major issues raised included matters relating to transport and housing.

Judith congratulated all those who participated in the audit. The report would go to the Community Health & Wellbeing Committee.

Copies available at SWAN meeting — \$5.00.

In the news...

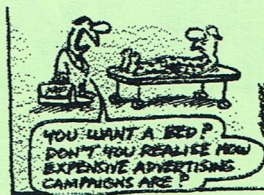
Val McKenna and Debbie Roberts both had letters printed in the daily papers during the month.

The Editor

Dear Sir

How could we afford tax cuts when hospitals, schools, universities and nursing homes all desperately need money? The cuts should come from government advertising, which is running at a cost of \$20 million a month.

Val McKenna
Mt Martha.



Crime and punishment

Phil Cleary's comments in John Silvester's 'Public enemy: the life and violent crimes of Peter Keogh' (*Agenda*, 29/7) were deeply moving. He has shown courage, over the years, in speaking out against the inequalities women experience under criminal law in Victoria. The killer of Mr Cleary's sister — who 'took a taxi, a hunting knife and a disguise to the kindergarten' where his victim worked — was sentenced to eight years. He served three years and 11 months in jail. Heather Osland, on the other hand, received 14 years for killing her husband even though she did not strike the fatal blow. She remains incarcerated, having already served five years of her sentence.

You are right, Phil Cleary, to be disgusted with a legal system that could find 'an ambush killer not guilty'. Many in the community are equally offended

at the injustice of Heather Osland's sentence and the reluctance of those 'with power' to make a decision about her release on compassionate grounds.

Debbie Roberts
Mt Eliza.

The Editor

The Herald-Sun

For 13 years Heather Osland was a victim of a violent, abusive husband. She saved her life by acting in the only way left to her. How can anyone who has not experienced this kind of violence

understand how it can break a woman emotionally, mentally, spiritually and physically? Heather is now part of a campaign to get justice. She hopes her jail term will not be in vain, that the laws will be changed and that her petition of mercy will be granted. A battered wife who hits back has little hope of justice under our present system.
V. McKenna, Mt Martha)

CELEBRATE

5 years of
SWAN
NOVEMBER 18
speaker:
chief commissioner
Victoria police
CHRISTINE NIXON
book now!

Barbara Lindner's volunteer work recognised

A special function will be held at Government House to celebrate the Year of the Volunteer.

Barbara Lindner, Administrative Committee member (SWAN) has been selected to represent the Mornington Peninsula Regional Gallery in recognition of her long and valuable contribution.

Barbara first became involved with the Gallery from the time of its inception in 1970. She has contributed in many capacities including Friends Membership secretary, caterer, vice-president and president.

Our heartiest congratulations to Barbara who well-deserves the thanks and acknowledgement of the wider community for her sustained efforts over such a long period.

We at SWAN also appreciate Barbara's contribution to our Administrative Committee.

Another document launch!

Sharing the Wisdom (STW) will launch its 'Living Document' at an afternoon function at the Mornington Peninsula Shire Offices, Besgrove St, Rosebud on Sunday 9 September at 2pm. The STW Forum was the result of an address given by Vivienne Nicholson to SWAN last year. Anyone who attended the Forum on 1 April this year and who has

not received an invitation please contact Debbie or Patsy. A limited number of reports will be available on the day but orders will be taken. Tricia Caswell, CEO Global Sustainability RMIT University will formally launch the document.

Patsy 5983 5757
Debbie 9787 6840

audit recommendations

For those who do not have access to a copy of the Social Audit undertaken by the audit SWAN sub-committee including Jenny Hally, Chris Blakey, Carole Ford, Ann Scally, Kath Van der Weerden, and Jane Hildebrant, below are the ten recommendations made in the report.

BOOKINGS FOR NOVEMBER CELEBRATION

Maureen
5974 4096
Val
5974 3461

1. Conduct further study into the best ways to make contact with disadvantaged/disempowered people in our community and investigate ways of increasing their involvement and access to key decision-makers in public consultation processes.
2. Develop a framework for effective community development strategies and projects that accommodate the complexity of community needs.
3. The Mornington Peninsula Shire Council needs to review its processes and practices, especially in relation to

planning and environment issues, and the handling of complaints.

4. The Mornington Peninsula Shire Council needs to show greater support for community concerns regarding environmental protection and strengthen its capacity to enforce its planning regulations to control inappropriate development and conserve the natural environment of the Peninsula.
5. The community, through government, needs to develop ways of valuing the role of mothers in our community.
6. The community, through government, needs to develop ways of recognising the work of volunteers and their role in community development.
7. Both local and state government should provide family/child friendly public facilities, such as convenient baby-changing areas, reserved parking spaces for cars with prams, and public transport that accommodates prams.
8. The state government should increase the supply and availability of affordable housing for single parent

families. They should develop a rental 'report card' that records 'good rental' behaviour that can be used as a reference when seeking rental housing, to prevent responsible renters from being discriminated against by Real Estate Agencies.

9. The state government should provide greater access to affordable legal services.
10. The state government should provide an efficient, integrated, user-friendly public transport system on the Mornington Peninsula.

(A *Blueprint for community consultation*, p.32)

September meeting a 'must'

If your diary is already booked for 16 September — then cancel everything and come to the SWAN meeting.

Dr Lynette Dumble is an amazing woman: a brilliant speaker; a committed feminist; and a brilliant academic and medical career behind her.

Dr Dumble was, for 28 years, the Senior Research fellow in surgery at the Royal Melbourne Hospital (University of Melbourne). Hear how she 'blew the whistle' and consequently lost her position. Dr Dumble also was Visiting Professor of Surgery at the University of Texas, Houston.

Dr Dumble has serious concerns for women and the rate at which they are 'disappearing'. How? Lynette Dumble will tell you how on Sunday 16 September.

Dr Dumble is a speaker YOU SHOULD NOT MISS!

conference—Women & Human Rights

SWAN members Carole Ford, Aleyne Lacy, Val McKenna, Maureen McPhate and Debbie Roberts will attend a conference on Women & Human Rights on Saturday, 25 August.

The conference, to be held at the Janet Clarke Hall University of Melbourne, was organised by the International Commission of Jurists,

Australian Section (Victoria). Chaired by the Hon Justice Bernard Bongiorno, keynote and other speakers include: Hon Dr Elizabeth Evatt, Dr Jane Hendtlass, Penny Armitage (Commissioner for Corrections) and Helen Barnacle (psychologist, writer and former prisoner). We hope to tape some proceedings to share!

SWAN MEETING

SUNDAY 16 SEPTEMBER
AT
9.30AM

SPEAKER

DR LYNETTE DUMBLE

CONVENOR WORLD SISTERHOOD
28 YEARS SENIOR RESEARCH FELLOW
IN
DEPT OF SURGERY,
MELBOURNE HOSPITAL (UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE)
VISITING PROFESSOR OF SURGERY AT
UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS, HOUSTON.

TOPIC
WOMEN IN PERIL FROM WOMB TO TOMB

DR DUMBLE PRESENTS CHALLENGING QUESTIONS ABOUT THE DISAPPEARANCE
OF WOMEN
THE TIME WILL COME, SHE CLAIMS, WHEN BOYS WILL ASK 'WHERE ARE OUR SISTERS?'
GLOBALISATION HAS HAD A DEVASTATING EFFECT ON WOMEN.
WOMEN, GIRLS AND INFANTS ARE STOLEN FROM POORER COUNTRIES – THEIR
DESTINATION? PROVISION OF HUMAN PARTS FOR
PEOPLE IN RICHER COUNTRIES

RSVP
BY
12 SEPTEMBER
FOR CATERING PURPOSES

RING

VAL
5974 3461

MAUREEN
5974 4096

MT MARTHA HOUSE

THE ESPLANADE
AND
DOMINION RD

MT MARTHA

COST: \$7.00

(RE-NEGOTIATED COST)

◆ SWAN newsletter ◆

Southern Women's Action Network Inc.
Reg.No.A0038144Z

Volume 2, Issue ~~4~~ 5

October 15, 2001

November meeting
final one for year
2001

First meeting 2002
17 MARCH

ADMINISTRATIVE
COMMITTEE

Carole Ford
Maureen McPhate
Barbara Lindner
Val McKenna
Jane Hildebrant
Alleyne Lacey
Debbie Roberts

Committee
meetings are open
to all members. If
you would like to
attend ring:

Maureen: 5974 4096
Val: 5974 3461
Debbie: 9787 6840

CHRISTINE NIXON advises — seize opportunities

The ability to recognise and seize opportunities is important, Chief Commissioner of Victoria Police, Christine Nixon, told an audience recently. Many SWANers do just that when they become involved in community issues and development.

The Commissioner also related how her father had observed when she was a young woman that 'she'd never make a hurdler.' While she may have been a little hurt

and offended at the time, Christine Nixon said it was important to learn about our limitations. Nevertheless, there are ways of learning how to get out of our 'cages' and to free ourselves of 'restricting mindsets.'

In speaking about leadership, Christine Nixon mentioned a wide range of public figures whose ideas on leadership had influenced her. They

included modern management experts like Peter Drucker to more ancient thinkers and writers like Plato and Machiavelli. Her own experience in the police force, however, was the main source of her personal 'beliefs'. Leaders need to believe, she continued, 'that what they want to do is possible.'

Another lesson she has learned about leadership is not to take personally the

...the capacity to recognise and seize opportunities is important.

things that happen as part of the job. She might have added that this advice applies to all of us!

Commissioner Nixon commands a force of some 11,600 staff and is responsible for a budget of \$1 billion. She is academically well-qualified with a Masters degree from Harvard, USA.

(Source: *Going Public* Institute of Public Administration Australia.)

'full house' at September meeting

Only five days after the terrorist attacks on America, a capacity SWAN meeting commenced with a time of silence. Maureen McPhate led the meeting to remember all innocent victims of violence throughout the world and in all situations.

Dr Lynette Dumble, world convenor of the World Sisterhood, gave an impassioned talk about women's experiences in different places and different situations.

She referred to women under the Taliban in Afghanistan; women asylum seekers; women in prisons; and the suffering of children throughout the world.

Lynette's talk ranged over many issues and material eliciting some impassioned responses from her audience. Everyone present was moved by the response of a young first-time SWAN attendee to Lynette's address.

18 NOVEMBER CELEBRATION MEETING
PLEASE NOTE VENUE:
MORNINGTON PENINSULA SHIRE OFFICES
2 QUEEN STREET MORNINGTON
(see last page for details)
BOOK NOW!

SOME FACTS ABOUT WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

As at 23 April this year out of a total of 594 councillors in Victoria only 165 or 27.7% were female!

There are no female councillors in five councils. They include: Cardinia, East Gippsland, Hindmarsh, Pyrenees and Whittlesea. And, another 21 councils have only ONE female councillor!

Councils with the highest percentage of women councillors are Maribyrnong City Council (4 women, 3 men); Melbourne City Council (5 women, 4 men). These are the only councils where women councillors outnumber men. Other Councils with a high percentage of women councillors include Colac-Otway; Frankston; Greater Dandenong, Brimbank, Darebin, Knox, Macedon Ranges, Surf Coast, and Kingston.

Of the 78 councils only 18 have a female mayor! (23%). While only 12 Councils have a female Chief Executive Officer (15% of all CEOs), it's positive to see increasing numbers of women in this important community position.

Even more significantly, there are 5 councils that have both a female mayor and a female CEO. These are: Brimbank, Macedon Ranges, Mildura, Surf Coast and Yarra.

The Women's Participation in Local Government Coalitions make available publications to assist women who are considering standing for election as a local councillor: *A Gender Agenda — Kit for Women who want to stand for local government and those who want to assist others to stand*; and *Victorian Local Government Women's Charter* are both helpful.

There are future opportunities for women to put themselves forward as candidates across Victoria over the next year or two. The Shire of Melton will have elections later this year. Another 20 councils will go to election in 2001, including one that currently has no women councillors and three that have only one woman councillor. Let's hope the figures improve over this period.

Founding SWAN member, Councillor Judith Coucaud

Graley (Mornington Peninsula Shire mayor 2000-2001) made this information available to us. She said that she found the kit *Gender Agenda* particularly helpful.

There are alternatives to community participation other than being part of the formal structure of local government. In their work with the Social Audit, initiating the Sharing the Wisdom forum; and the 1999 conference 'Increasing Women's participation in Community Settings' SWAN members have encouraged and empowered women to become more actively involved in their local community.

**Weekend Retreat
women who want to
change the world —
includes meditation
BAXTER — NOV.**

23-25

**Information:
5971 1599**

DOCUMENTS AVAILABLE

**Social Audit Report —
\$5.00
STW Living Document
(Report and papers) —
\$15.00**

Heather Osland

Despite the Bracks Government refusal to release Heather Osland from prison on compassionate grounds, efforts continue for her freedom. Also, moves are underway to have criminal justice laws relating to women changed, to ensure greater gender equity. Chief Commissioner of Victoria Police, Christine

Nixon, has also ordered a review of police procedures dealing with violence against women.

The Crisis Service deals with about 30,000 domestic violence cases a year. There has been a dramatic increase in domestic violence across the state. (Source *The Age*).

**MEETING
SUPPORTERS OF
HEATHER OSLAND
GROUP
THURSDAY 25 OCTOBER
6PM
YWCA
ELIZABETH STREET
MELBOURNE
Info: 5974 3461
(Val)**

According to our records, the following have booked for the November celebratory gathering to be addressed by Chief Commissioner Victoria Police, Christine Nixon. Please let us know if you intend joining us for lunch!

Wendy Betts
Joan Bloom (lunch)
Pat Boag (lunch)
Heather Boundy (lunch)
Patsy Carpenter (lunch)
Ruth Carter
Lorraine Carter (Morning coffee/speaker)
Gloria Dean (Morning coffee/speaker)
Jo Diplock (lunch)
Sharon Donnelly
Aileen Duke
Amy Duncan (lunch)
June Fitter
Carole Ford (lunch)
Helen Frith
Diane Fuller (lunch)
Nina Gardiner
Paddy Goodman
Janice Gray (lunch)
Elaine Halle-Foote (lunch)
Kath Hassell (lunch)
Rae Higman (lunch)
Jane Hildebrant (lunch)

Alleyne Lacy (lunch)
Judith Lashin
Barbara Lindner (lunch)
Pam Mammers (lunch)
Val McKenna (lunch)
Maureen McPhate (lunch)
Jenny Montgomery
Vivienne Nicholson (lunch)
Madelaine Offer
June Pardy (lunch)
Nola Plackett (lunch)
Susanne Reid
Claire Richardson
Barbara Rimington (lunch)
Debbie Roberts (lunch)
Marion Rosetzky
Anne Scally
Janice Turnbull
Kathleen Van Der Weerden (lunch)
Fiona Walsh
Val Ward
Rose Wodetzki



As this celebratory function involves outside catering the committee would be appreciative if you would let them know if you intend staying for lunch.

BOOKINGS and FURTHER INFORMATION

MAUREEN 5974 4096

VAL 5974 3461



SWAN

Southern Women's Action Network

Celebrating 5 years
SWAN in ACTION

SUNDAY 18 NOVEMBER

Venue: Mornington Peninsula Shire Offices, 2 Queen St, MORNINGTON
9.30am

CHIEF COMMISSIONER VICTORIA POLICE CHRISTINE NIXON

- Appointed Chief Commissioner of Victoria Police 23 April 2001.
- Served as Assistant Commissioner in various regions and Departments of NSW Police prior to appointment.
- Many qualifications including Master of Public Administration Degree from Harvard, USA.
- Commands an organisation of almost 11,600 staff.
- \$1 billion dollar budget — operating out of 327 police stations throughout the state.
- Commissioner Nixon has ordered a review of police procedures dealing with violence against women. (Welfare groups across the state report sharp increases in domestic violence. The Crisis Service deals with about 30,000 domestic violence cases a year.)

9.30 am

SUNDAY 18 NOVEMBER
at
Mornington Peninsula Shire Offices
2 Queen St MORNINGTON

BOOKINGS ESSENTIAL

Morning coffee and address \$7.00

Morning coffee, address/lunch
\$10.00

BOOKINGS FOR THIS EVENT ESSENTIAL!

(Outside catering — basket lunch)

RSVP TO

MAUREEN McPHATE 5974 4096

VAL McKENNA 5974 3461

No later than TUESDAY 13 NOVEMBER