



Eastern Mass Chapter Newsletter

The Voice of Midlife and Older Women

Volume 3, Number 2

June 2008

Wishing you a good summer! We will continue to be in touch with action alerts. Please join us on Tuesday, September 9 at UMass Boston for our next chapter meeting when we will plan discussions/events to inform and support mid-life and older women in the coming year. Details in the Calendar below.

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Paid Sick Leave Act



Thanks to everyone's efforts, the Paid Sick Leave Bill (Senate Bill 1071/House Bill 1803) passed favorably out of the Labor and Workforce Development Committee a few weeks ago, was sent to the Senate Ways and Means Committee, and then referred to the Committee on Senate Ethics and Rules where it now resides. We want the bill to move forward out of the Committee and be brought to a full vote in the Senate as soon as possible. That would allow it to move to the House and hopefully be voted on favorably before July 31st when the legislative session ends.

The bill is so important for public health. Only 15% of all service workers (child care workers, home health providers, and hotel and restaurant employees) have paid sick days. By not requiring employers to allow their employees to earn paid sick days, Massachusetts is risking the public's health.

It's not too late to contact the senator of your district. You can find your senator by town at http://www.mass.gov/legis/city_town.htm. Ask your Senator to contact Senate President Therese Murray to request a full vote on the Paid Sick Leave Bill as soon as possible. And ask your Senator to contact Ben Downing Chair of the Senate Ethics and Rules Committee to release the bill for a full vote in the Senate. If you have any contact with a Senator on [the Ethics and Rules Committee](#), communicate with that Senator as well. Your contact can really make a difference!

Joan Ditzion
Eastern Mass liaison to the Paid Sick Leave Coalition

'Granny D' Featured at Eastern Mass OWL Spring Event



Eastern Mass OWL's annual Spring Event, held on May 1 on the UMass Boston campus, featured Doris 'Granny D' Haddock and a showing of the 2007 independent film *Run Granny Run*. The film recounts her spirited, publicly funded campaign at age 94 for the U.S. Senate from New Hampshire, running against the incumbent, Republican Judd Gregg.

Following a showing of the 73-minute film, Granny D addressed brief remarks to the audience. She wore a colorful silk wrapper, a

bequest from her late friend, the columnist Molly Ivins. On her head was her trademark wide-brim straw hat, set off with a colorful band, a turkey feather, and a large 'Run Granny Run' button.

In her remarks, she made it clear that, at age 98, her work on behalf of public financing of election campaigns continues. She spoke of her optimism about the issue as more states adopt public financing and reduce the influence of big-money interests in American politics.

Before her 2004 run for the U.S. Senate (she won 34% of the vote), Granny D was best known for her 14-month, 3,200-mile walk across country, which she began in 1989, weeks before her 89th birthday. This odyssey is recounted in her wise and charming memoir, *Granny D: Walking across America in My 90th Year*.

The May 1 event was co-sponsored and supported by several groups and organizations, including Central Mass OWL, Greater Boston OWL, the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, the Gerontology Institute, and Our Bodies Ourselves.

Copies of the *Run Granny Run* DVD may be ordered through her web site: www.grannyd.com.

Elizabeth Johns

From the Chair



It has been an exciting Spring for Eastern Mass OWL. We welcomed Doris "Granny D" Haddock to a successful and thought provoking showing of "Run Granny Run". And our organization helped to raise support for the Paid Sick Leave Bill, which we hope will become law in Massachusetts. Stay tuned for continued updates about this legislation. I have enjoyed being part of the executive committee over the last couple of years and know that we continue to be a growing and active chapter of OWL. As many of you are aware, I am stepping down as chair of the chapter in order to devote more time to the completion of my dissertation. A change in leadership always means a transitional period, however I am certain the chapter will move forward with the aid of confident and dedicated women. I hope that new and founding chapter members alike will gather at our next meeting on September 9, 2008.

Kim Johnson

News from National OWL



This year OWL has continued to push for Medicare for All with mother's day cards to Congressional representatives. Building on last year's Mother's Day report "Give 'em Health" we have been collecting postcards to senators and representatives. Please sign your card and send it in. Local chapters are also collecting signatures to support the call for universal health care. If you would like to collect signatures, please email me at ellen.bruce@umb.edu and I will send you some.

May is also Older American's Mental Health Month. On May 15th, OWL co-sponsored with the American Association for Geriatric Psychiatry, the American Psychological Association, and the National Association of Social Workers an event co-hosted by Senators Snowe (R-ME) and Mikulski (D-MD). More information on our activities and educational materials can be found at the [mental health week](#) area on our website. This year we also began, with support from the AARP foundation, an OWL Benefits Outreach Project. The Project uses the

BenefitsCheckUp program to help women identify what programs they might be eligible for, gives them factsheets and applications, and links them to local agencies who can help them with questions or problems. Chapters in Arizona, California, and Texas have begun assisting women. We hope to extend this project to other states in order to help more women.

Finally, OWL has reintroduced the Field Advocate, a newsletter connecting chapters from around the country. In the Spring 2008 issue you will see a smattering of activities by other chapters. This is a vehicle we can use to keep in touch with each other and build on each others' successes.

Remember to use owlnational.maati.com every time you shop on line to support our work for women, families, and all older people.* Thank you and have a great summer.

*Ellen A. Bruce, President
National Board of OWL*

**Editor's Addendum:* You can Support OWL while you shop on line, at no additional cost to you. Go to the website link above (<http://owlnational.maati.com/>) before you start shopping online, then click on the desired store's webpage. When you make a purchase during that session, a portion of what you spend will go directly to OWL. You can donate to OWL through the online purchases you are already making. Some stores donate more than 10% of each dollar spent. Many popular stores/companies have signed up for this program, including Amazon.com, Macy's, 1-800-Flowers, 1-800-Contacts, Apple, Drugstore.com, eBay, hotels.com, office depot, orbitz, Staples, Target, travelocity, etc.

Calendar



June 9, 2008 - *Women, Wages & Work Conference*, 8:00am to 5:00pm, UMass Boston Campus Center; To register and for more information, go to the [Center for Women and Public Policy](#) at UMass Boston's McCormack Graduate School of Policy Studies. This will be a day of exciting speakers and strategy sessions: to close the wage gap; to advocate for family friendly benefits, retirement security, and work/life balance; and to examine how to get women what they need in child

care and job training.

June 12, 2008, 6 - 8:30 PM, *Protecting Your Retirement Investments*, the last session in a lecture and discussion series, "How can I Afford Retirement?" at the Boston Public Library (appropriate for people who are nearing retirement or recently retired). Free and open to the public, pre-registration is requested by phone at 617-859-2241 or by [email](#). For more information, visit the website at affordretirement.bpl.org

September 9, 2008 - Next Eastern Mass OWL chapter meeting at UMass Boston, 3rd floor of the Wheatley Bldg (sundome) from 12 Noon to 1 p.m.

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