

## Widowed Persons Outreach – Helping and Healing

Elia McComie, President  
Presidents

Stephen Paddack and Ken Gordon, Vice  
Presidents

Mary Sivertsen, Secretary  
Marti Bailey, Coordinator

Janet Bullinger, Treasurer  
Diane Brown, Contributing Writer

*Widowed Persons Outreach – Helping and Healing - is a free community service  
Sponsored by Sibley Hospital, IONA Senior Services, Capital Caring,  
William Wendt Center for Loss and Healing, and Joseph Gawler's Sons, Inc.*

Sibley Memorial Hospital  
5255 Loughboro Road, NW Washington, DC 20016  
Phone: 202-537-4942  
E-mail address: Marti Bailey: [mbaile35@jhmi.edu](mailto:mbaile35@jhmi.edu)

---

### September/October 2014 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

<b>Bereavement Support Group – Meets in Med. Bldg. CR-5</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>September 24</b>
<b>Next Steps Luncheon postponed to October 9 due to Rosh Hashanah</b>		
<b>Register for the 6-week support group</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>October 2</b>
<b>Laugh Café at Sibley, Private Dining Room 3</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>October 2</b>
<b>Six Week Bereavement Group begins</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>October 7</b>
<b>Bereavement Support Group (ongoing)</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>October 8</b>
<b>Next Steps Luncheon at Alfio's la Trattoria</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>October 9</b>
<b>WPO Volunteer Meeting/Training</b>	<b>Monday</b>	<b>October 13</b>
<b>Avalon Theatre Super Senior Cinema</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>October 16</b>
<b>Conference registration deadline</b>	<b>Friday</b>	<b>October 17</b>
<b>Resilience: Rebounding after Loss Conference</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>October 21</b>
<b>Bereavement Support Group (ongoing) at MMUMC</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>October 22</b>
<b>WPO Volunteer Meeting/Training</b>	<b>Monday</b>	<b>November 10</b>
<b>Bereavement Support Group (ongoing) at MMUMC</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>November 12</b>

---

### WELCOMING LISA JOY BAKER!

As many of you know, Julie Butler left us in mid-April to take a fantastic opportunity. I am pleased to report that Lisa Joy Baker joined our staff at the Sibley Senior

Association on July 29 as our Community Program Coordinator. Lisa has been working her administrative magic in hospitals for much of her career, having worked at Suburban, Holy Cross, and now Sibley. We are thrilled to have her and she has already made such a huge impact. Her hobbies are writing, attending movies and concerts. Her favorite color is green and her favorite flower is the timeless rose. Welcome, Lisa Joy!

## **WELCOMING ANNE GOSLING, Ph.D.**

I am pleased to announce that Anne Gosling, Ph.D. has joined our department as the Sibley Senior Association Support Group Manager. She came to us most recently from setting up a staff care center for USAID and prior to that she worked in a South African women's shelter in the Peace Corps. Her extensive clinical and group experience prepared the way for these last two positions. She is also a trained meditation facilitator and yoga instructor! Her hobbies include outdoor or water activities, biking, and being with friends and family. She loves gentle colors and flowers that come from bulbs (like tulips and freesia).

## **MEMBER NEWS**

We welcome your input! Have you gone on a trip, visited family, done or accomplished something of note? Are you especially proud of something that you or your family member has done? This is a place where we will write your updates. Send your information in to Marti Bailey at [mbaile35@jhmi.edu](mailto:mbaile35@jhmi.edu) and put WPO Member News in the Subject Line. If you do not use a computer, feel free to mail me your contribution to Marti Bailey WPO Member News, Sibley Senior Association, 5255 Loughboro Road NW, Washington, DC 20016, or call and we will take your notes by phone.

**REMEMBERING OUR FRIENDS** – On August 27<sup>th</sup>, we lost a person very dear to WPO, **Peg Masi**. Over twenty two years ago, Peg was one of the original founders of Widowed Persons Outreach. She was an IONA Senior Services board member, a twenty five year Sibley Volunteer, a 60 year member of Annunciation Church and she was named a Super Senior of 2011. Peg provided sound advice and remained active on the board until very recently.

Peg was also the Social Coordinator of WPO for over 18 years. She was known for her hospitality and for her "pizazz." Her belief was that though grief is a time of great sorrow, there is also room for laughter and camaraderie. "I recommend volunteering to everyone," says Peg. "I have learned two very important things: First, volunteering not only has helped others, but it also has helped and enriched me. And second, when you volunteer, you learn that you have talents that you might not have known you had."

We also lost our dear friend, **Vija Karklins**, early in September to pancreatic cancer. A refined and lovely lady, Vija was a member of and a regular donor to Widowed

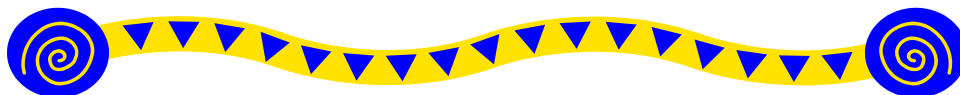
Persons Outreach since 2010 and was beloved by her friends and family. Before retirement, she held many important positions in the Smithsonian Institution Library, including Interim Director. We shall miss her.

**WPO DONATIONS** – Now is the time to think of donating to Widowed Persons Outreach. You may honor or give a donation in memory of someone special. WPO helps newly bereaved spouses on the journey of loss by providing bereavement support, educational activities, one-on-one mentors and social events. Donations to WPO help us continue our work. Call Marti Bailey for information on how to do this at (202) 660-5658.

### **VOLUNTEERING FOR WPO**

If you have been helped by Widowed Persons Outreach, and have been widowed at least two years, consider becoming an Outreach Volunteer. You can help in so many ways: being a one-on-one mentor volunteer, submitting articles for the newsletter, helping out with special WPO events, volunteering in the WPO Office, the bereavement support group, and more. You will meet many wonderful people in Widowed Person Outreach as you continue your life's journey. The first step is to give Marti Bailey a call at (202) 660-5658. She will explain the process, which includes becoming a Sibley volunteer.

Reservations are now being taken for the next Volunteer Training.



**ONGOING BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUP** – An on-going bereavement support group for people who have been bereaved two years or less meets on the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month. Registration is required. For more information, please call (202) 537-4942.

**NEXT STEPS** – Next Steps is a group intended to address the needs of members following the second anniversary of bereavement.

Next Steps includes activities like drop-in support/sharing meetings, small group social functions (at member homes), occasional luncheons, and educational seminars. Due to the lack of paid full-time staff, these activities will be self-organized. That is, each activity will be organized by one or two volunteers. The goal is to arrange one or two such activities each month.

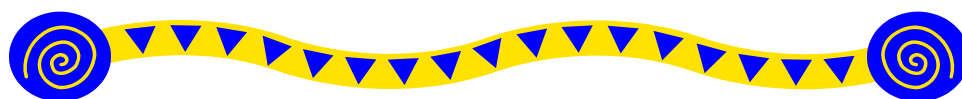
***How do you know if you are ready for Next Steps?***

It's either been more than two years since your bereavement or you feel you have mostly processed the beginning of the bereavement journey. We all recognize that people recover from grief in different ways and at different times.

**Hosting Next Steps:** Would you like to be a one-time host or hostess of Next Steps? It is all up to you. It does not have to be at your home and you don't have to pay for it. Or if you love entertaining, you may choose that option! The point is: it is up to you when you decide to plan a Next Steps event. It can be movies, theatre, museum, comedy club, or you can host a few people in your home. If you have room for only eight people, then that would be the total available for that event. You are in control. It's wide open.

We would like to schedule at least one event per month and it is so much easier if we share the load. If you are willing to help come up with a plan for a single event, call Marti Bailey at 202-364-7602.

Because of timing and convenience, communications about events will often be via e-mail, so WPO members who would like to participate should *make sure Marti Bailey has your current e-mail address*. If you would like to be included but do not have email, please make sure to let Lisa Baker know by calling 202-364-7602.

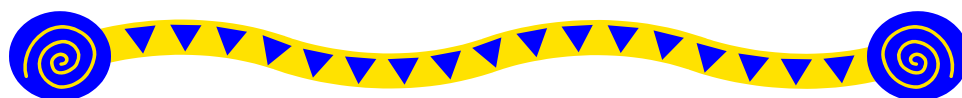


## Six Week Support Group Sign Ups

Six-week support group for those who have been bereaved two years or less begins October 7, 2014. Led by Bunty Ketcham and Jane Lincoln, it will meet every other week on Tuesday from 2 – 3:30 p.m. in Sibley Renaissance, Floor 1, Conference Room 1. Registration is required. Please call Lisa Joy Baker at 202-364-7602 to register.

### Meeting Dates:

October 7 and 21  
November 4 and 18  
December 2 and 16



## Putting Mistakes Behind You

By Judy Tatelbaum, reprinted with permission

Everyone makes mistakes – some huge, some insignificant, some forgettable, and some unforgettable. To err is human. Yet we are often most intractable in forgiving and forgetting mistakes we have made. Equally difficult is rising above and forgiving mistakes others made with us. Yet our mistakes are often stepping-stones to our maturity. Some benefits of mistakes are:

1. They challenge us to learn and grow.
2. They challenge us to appreciate that we are all imperfect.
3. They challenge us to make amends.
4. They challenge us to stop judging ourselves and forgive.

Not all mistakes turn out badly. My father, who always seemed so sure of himself, once told me of a serious mistake he made as a physician. He was terrified and ashamed at the time, but eventually found a way to rectify it. From then on, he was a more compassionate teacher with medical students and staff. I cannot remember what I had done to provoke his telling me that story, but to this day it has helped me accept my own mistakes.

What once felt like the worst mistake I ever made – marrying the wrong man and then getting divorced eight months later – turned out to be a major leap in my life. Prior to asking for a divorce, I was consumed with shame and fear of reprisals. Mine would be the first divorce in my family. I saw myself as some kind of pariah.

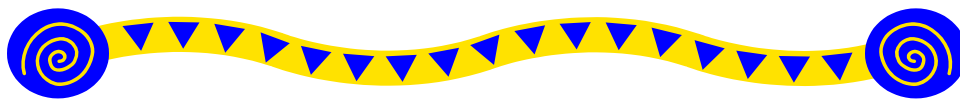
Actually leaving that marriage was the first time in my life that I took a stand for myself. No longer a compliant girl doing the “right” thing, I felt a new strength and confidence. I was no longer influenced by what others might think.

We all make many mistakes throughout life. The secret is to find it in your heart to accept your mistakes and forgive yourself each time. Look back now on your life, and pick one mistake you have made. If you are flooded with memories of mistakes, just pick one and examine it. Did you learn anything from this experience? Notice that. Have you forgiven yourself? If not, forgive yourself now and let it go. Put it in the past where it belongs.

If you cannot let it go, ask yourself: What am I getting out of continuing to blame or shame myself about this event? Who or what am I making wrong? Am I doing this to make myself right? Perhaps this kind of reflection will help you find compassion and understanding to move past the mistake.

If you cannot do it alone, share it with a therapist or some other compassionate listener. If sharing with another is too difficult, try having a dialogue in writing between you and the mistake to see if you can release yourself from it. No one else's

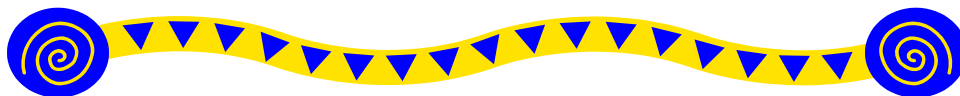
acceptance, appreciation, and love matters more than your own. Forgiving yourself can change your life. Forgiving yourself for your mistakes is an act of great love for yourself.



Thank you for your kind donations.  
Your help is what keeps Widowed Persons Outreach going!

Nancy K. Riker

In honor of Six Week Support Groups



RECOMMENDED READING:  
*Grief Observed* by C. S. Lewis

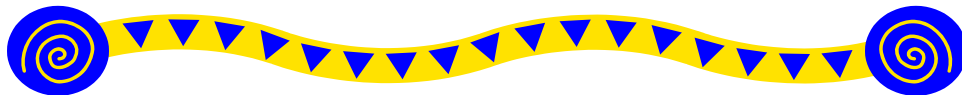
This book by British writer C.S. Lewis is a deeply moving, unflinchingly honest account of his bereavement after the death of his wife, poet Joy Davidman Gresham. You may remember the 1990s movie *Shadowlands*, on which Lewis's story is based: Lewis, an emotionally constricted professor at Oxford, has his well-ordered world turned topsy-turvy—in the best way—when gregarious Bronx-born Joy Gresham literally bursts into his life. She's come all the way from the States, with a young son in tow, to tell him how much she admires his work and that she is a soul mate. Indeed she was—these two very outwardly different people fall in love and become an unlikely couple. For the shy middle-aged Lewis, his short marriage to Joy brought him an unimaginable happiness he'd never expected to experience.

We find out in this slim (76 pages) volume that he married Joy knowing she had terminal cancer. Still, their time together was the pinnacle of his life. His grief after her death had elements of any widowed person's grief, including those married many years. In the book's foreword, author Madeleine L'Engle writes of his loss: "He had been invited to the great feast of marriage and the banquet was rudely snatched before he had done more than sample the hors d'oeuvres."

Lewis writes of "the invisible blanket between me and the world." When he tells himself that he'll get over his loss, "...there comes a sudden jab of red-hot memory and all this 'commonsense' vanishes." Grief, he says, is a "long valley...where any bend may

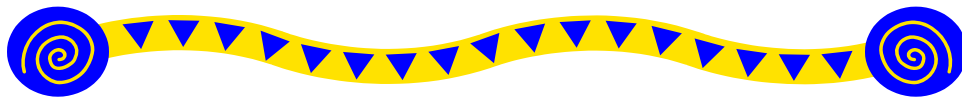
reveal a totally new landscape.” As any widowed person does he must deal with self-pity, falling into laziness, weeping jags, and railing against words meant to be helpful. Considered one of the most influential Christian writers of his generation, he grapples with questions about God and the concept of eternity. He knows his “mad midnight moments” will eventually go but fears their absence: “What then?” he asks, “flatness?” Most of all, he thinks about the richness Joy brought to their life together.

This is not a self-help book. But if you’re looking for intelligent reflection and the recognition of real, raw feelings rather than more facile attempts at consolation, this beautifully written narrative may offer a deeper kind of comfort. Lewis’s gift of language takes you where most well-meaning bereavement literature can’t. Madeleine L’Engle sums up the book’s effect: “Reading *Grief Observed* is to share not only in C.S. Lewis’s grief but in his understanding of love, and that is richness indeed.”



“Acknowledging the good that you already have in your life is the foundation for all abundance.”

Eckhart Tolle



## ***Laugh Café***

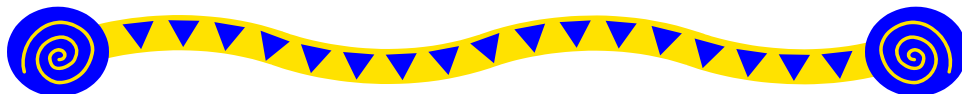
### ***First Thursday of each month***

According to the Mayo Clinic, laughter can reduce stress, stimulate your organs, relieve pain and increase your overall satisfaction in life. Join fellow members of WPO (as well as a few other people) in a participatory group where you bring your favorite jokes, humorous stories or personal tales and provoke others (and yourself) to laughter. Cost of entry: at least one joke. Bring a sack lunch or purchase one from the Sibley cafeteria. Coffee, tea, and cookies provided. Call 202-364-7602 to register.

“A day without sunshine is like, you know, **night.**”



Steve Martin



**Next Steps Luncheon  
Any member may attend!**

*Italian food with a great salad bar!*



**Thursday, October 9, 2014**

**Alfio's La Trattoria**

**Noon**

**Cost: Individual checks for your lunch order.  
Gratuity may be added.**

**Parking: Free valet parking, tip to valet not included.**

**4515 Willard Avenue  
Chevy Chase, Maryland 20815  
Phone: 301-657-9133**

**Reservations: To register, call the SSA office at 202-364-7602 by October 6, 2014.**



# Widowed Persons Outreach and Sibley Senior Association

## Present

George Bonanno, Ph.D.

Professor of Clinical Psychology, Columbia University



## Resilience: Rebounding after Loss

A pioneer researcher in the field of bereavement and trauma, his research points to psychological resilience as the core of human grief and trauma reactions. His groundbreaking book, *The Other Side of Sadness: What the New Science of Bereavement Tells Us About Life After Loss*, has made him the preeminent authority on the science of resilience. The book highlights his research findings, which show that people are more easily able to recover from the loss of a spouse or loved one than previously believed—and without going through the traditional stages of grief. Dr. Bonanno is a graduate of Hampshire College and received his doctorate from Yale University.

Join us to hear how the latest neuroscience of the brain reveals that our natural capacity for resilience after the loss of a loved one also applies to *any kind* of major loss, including the trauma of losing a job, losing mobility or a body part to cancer, overcoming sexual abuse, and coping with many other major losses. His talk will be followed by a buffet lunch allowing interactions among the speaker and attendees.

**Date:** Tuesday, October 21, 2014

**Time:** 9:30am Registration

10:00am -12:00pm – Conference, followed by lunch

**Cost:** \$35.00 (includes lunch). Pre-registration is required.

**Location:** National 4 H Youth Conference Center, 7100 Connecticut Ave, Chevy Chase MD, 20815

**Directions:** The meeting is in the main building of the 4 H Conference Center, which is on Connecticut Ave., a few blocks north of Bradley Blvd. and 8 blocks South of East-West Highway. Free parking is available in the lot on the left as you enter, or in the rear lot (with a direct entrance from the rear). The facility is handicap accessible.

**Register online:** Go to <http://www.sibley.org/community/events/>

**Register by mail:** Mail the form below to Janet Bullinger at 2813 North Glade Street NW, Washington, DC, 20016 or by calling Janet at 202-686-9777. Make check out to WPO. **The deadline is Friday, Oct. 17, 2014.**

.....Clip and

Mail.....

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_ Number attending \_\_\_\_\_