

WSA 29<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL  
NATIONAL CONFERENCE

2017

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**Declare Your Independence**

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*OCTOBER 27-29 · PHILADELPHIA, PA*

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**SHARE**

**CONNECT**

**SUPPORT**



Welcome to the 29th Annual Conference of the Well Spouse Association! As we enter our 30th year of successful operation, our small but important organization continues to provide support to well spouses and partners all over the country.

I am pleased to be your new President and encourage you to enjoy this conference that we have prepared for you. Well Spouse conferences are a special time for everyone. They are educational with workshops and networking. They are social with new friends if you are a newcomer and old friends for those of us who have been here many times before. They are a much-needed respite from our duties and responsibilities at home.

The 2017 Conference offers many dynamic speakers, helpful workshops, good food and entertainment, as well as time for you to explore many of the exciting venues that Philadelphia has to offer. If you are interested in carpooling to various areas of the city for sightseeing, please ask a staff member at the registration table. You may want to check out the Art Museum area, which includes the Barnes and Rodin museums. Or you may choose to visit the Liberty Bell, the Constitution Center and Independence Hall all located in the historic area of Center City. Also, the new Museum of the American Revolution in the Old City area is very popular. Many of these venues require advanced purchase tickets.

Be sure to sign up for a relaxing chair massage on Friday, and don't forget to identify yourself at the WSA registration table if you are a Younger Well Spouse or Former Well Spouse member so that we can direct you to the workshops geared towards these groups.

There are many ways to be an active Well Spouse member. You can start or join a support group, participate in a telephone support group, take advantage of our new webinar series or refer a friend. New members are always welcome. Also, you can join us at a respite weekend and do something for yourself while supporting WSA.

I am pleased to announce that we have installed our new Board of Directors and Executives for the next term. Welcome to our newest members of the board, Sheldon Friedman, Mike Pollock and Nina Shapiro who begin their term this fall. Other board members include Jerry Bishop, Rosalyn Gershell, Linda Holzbaur, Jane Lupo, and Karen Struss. Joining me on the Executive Committee is Larry Bocchierre, Board Chair; Terri Corcoran, Board Secretary; and Todd Jarger, Treasurer. Jan Rabinowitz and Dorothy Saunders will generously stay on as presidents emeritus. Please consider joining us as we are a working, contributing board. We can always use your talents to help us keep our organization active and vital. Many hands make light work and that is definitely true on an all-volunteer board.

Finally, the Well Spouse Annual Conference is an opportunity to form lifelong friendships and who among us doesn't need friends? It is a time for renewal as we return to our lives as caregivers armed with the knowledge that we are not alone.

Once again - Welcome and Enjoy!  
Bob Mastrogiovanni

# WSA 2017 National Conference

## **Friday, October 27**

<b>Hotel Check-in and Conference Registration</b>	<b>3:00 p.m.</b>
<b>Chair Massages</b> <i>Lobby / Registration area</i>	<b>3:00 – 5:00 p.m.</b>
<b>Workshops</b> <i>See daily schedule</i>	<b>5:00 – 6:30 p.m.</b>
<b>Cocktail Reception</b> <i>Lobby bar</i>	<b>5:30 – 7:30 p.m.</b>
<b>Dinner and Keynote Address</b> <i>(Cash bar, 7:30-11:30)</i> <i>Liberty A</i>	<b>7:30 p.m.</b>

## **Saturday, October 28**

<b>Breakfast</b> <i>Lobby breakfast area</i>	<b>7:00 – 10:00 a.m.</b>
<b>Workshops</b> <i>See daily schedule</i>	<b>9:00 – 10:30 and 11:00 – 12:30 p.m.</b>
<b>Take-Away Craft Workshop</b> <i>Embassy Room or Atrium</i>	<b>1:00 – 3:00 p.m.</b>
<b>Afternoon Sightseeing and Recreation</b>	<b>12:30 – 5:30 p.m.</b>
<b>Cocktail Reception</b> <i>Lobby bar area</i>	<b>5:30 – 7:30 p.m.</b>
<b>Dinner Dance</b> <i>(Cash bar, 7:30-11:30)</i> <i>Colony Room, then Embassy Room</i>	<b>7:30 p.m.</b>

## **Sunday, October 29**

<b>Breakfast</b> <i>Lobby breakfast area</i>	<b>7:00 – 10:00 a.m.</b>
<b>Workshops</b> <i>See daily schedule</i>	<b>9:00 – 10:30 a.m.</b>
<b>Hotel Check-Out</b>	<b>11:00 a.m.</b>
<b>Closing Ceremonies</b>	<b>11:30 a.m.</b>

## **WSA 2017 National Conference**

***Friday, October 27***

### **Workshops**

#### **Writing What We Feel**

***Marion D. Cohen - 5:00 – 6:30 p.m., Conference Room 154***

Journal writing -- whether daily or occasionally -- is creative, honest writing, as honest as the writer can or wants to be. It means writing what we truly feel, as opposed to what we *should* feel, or think we should feel, or believe others think we should feel. For us well spouses, it can even put us in touch with our ill spouses, and perhaps vice versa. This workshop will give us time and space for such writing. I'll read a few writing prompts to get us started, if need be. After writing, those who want to can share what we've written. Poetry is welcome.

#### **Palliative Care in the Home: What are the benefits?**

***Katherine Major and Julia L. Schott - 5:00 – 6:30 p.m., Atrium – Chef's Table area***

Katherine and Julia will provide an overview of Palliative Care, Home Health, and the latest trends as it relates to caring for a person with a serious illness. Open discussion and questions welcome in this informal session.

#### **Well Spouse Support Group Leaders**

***Donna McQuade, Larry Bocchiere and Jerry Bishop - 5:00 – 6:30 p.m., Atrium followed by Officer's Room***

An informal meeting of current SGLs and anyone who is interested in starting a group. We will discuss potential SGL topics and strategies for conducting the group effectively, as well as how to recruit new group members. Handouts will be available for future use.

### **Dinner and Entertainment**

#### **Keynote Address – Self Care for the Well Spouse**

***Elissa Lewin - 7:30, dinner presentation, Liberty A***

Well-Spouse Association and Nancy's House share, in their missions, supporting caregivers and advocating the importance of taking care of yourself. Elissa will speak to the importance -- and challenges -- of that self-care.

#### **What's So Funny About Love and Marriage?**

***Karen McGreer - After dinner entertainment, Liberty A***

Karen will perform a short presentation of jazz and Broadway tunes from the American songbook and share personal observations on the ironies of love and marriage.

## ***Saturday, October 28***

### ***The Things You Cannot Say***

***Elissa Lewin - 9:00 – 10:30 a.m., Embassy Room***

We all have those thoughts and feelings that we keep from our loved one who is ill. This workshop will allow you to give voice to those words, in a safe and judgment-free environment, to explore the feelings behind the words, and to find the support you need as you continue in your role as a Well Spouse.

### ***Former Well Spouses***

***Beth Crosby and Fern Zeigler - 9:00 – 10:30 a.m., Colony Room***

Beth and Fern have compiled a thought-provoking list of questions to stimulate a meaningful discussion for workshop participants. Subjects range from our unique grief processes to how being a well spouse has changed us, and more.

### ***Former Well Spouses Panel***

***Rona Auster, Marion Cohen, Beth Crosby, Jim Russell - 11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m., Atrium***

A continued discussion in an informal setting facilitated by those who have been there before.

### ***Honey and Stones: Dealing Effectively with Difficult People and Situations***

***Jane Meier Hamilton - 11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m., Colony Room***

Well spouses who have to deal with difficult ill spouses, family members and professionals generally employ one of two approaches. Some keep trying to be nice, believing that 'You get more bees with honey than vinegar.' Some don't even try reaching out for help, believing 'You can't squeeze blood from a stone.' In this workshop, Jane will present a middle path between 'honey' and 'stones,' discussing means of asserting yourself to maximum effectiveness.

### ***Intimacy and Relationships***

***Jeanne Hopgood-Jones, Elissa Lewin and Fern Zeigler - 11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m., Embassy Room***

We invite you to join a panel discussion on sex and intimacy within and outside of the marriage. We hope to facilitate open discussion in a safe and non-judgmental environment regarding issues around negotiating sex and intimacy.

### ***Take-Away Craft Workshop – Show Off Your Creativity***

***Johanna Karr and Carol Hryvniak, 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m., Embassy Room or Atrium***

Relax, talk with friends, listen to music, and put your own twist on a choice of free craft projects: 1) a punch/scream pillow for those times you need it, or 2) a twine-wrapped and decorated seasonal candle to remind you of the light that you are. It's fun to make something with your own hands, and we can all use a little more fun!

## ***Sunday, October 29***

### **Younger Well Spouses**

***Gabriele Ortiz and Corrie Skuya - 9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m., Conference Room 154***

Open discussion will focus on the unique challenges faced by younger Well Spouses in today's fast-paced world. Topics will include the difficulties of maintaining social ties, financial stability, parenting, self-nurturing, and marriage within the Well Spouse/Ill Spouse dynamic. In a society where the younger generation is considered 'up and coming', how do we cope with our losses and uncertainty?

### **Women's Group**

***9:00 a.m.– 10:30 a.m., Embassy Room***

A round table discussion for topics unique to the women's caregiving experience led by and for women who are current caregivers.

### **Men's Group**

***9:00 a.m.– 10:30 a.m., Colony Room***

An open discussion for men who are current caregivers designed to provide an opportunity for them to express themselves in an open and judgement-free environment.

### **Closing**

***11:30 a.m.– 12:00 p.m., Embassy Room***

Rona Auster, a long-time leader and past president, will lead the group in a farewell ceremony.

## Meet Our Speakers

**Marion D. Cohen** was a well spouse for 26 years and hasn't forgotten it. Her first husband had MS and died in 2003. She is the author of two memoirs and three poetry books, all of which chronicle the many aspects of being a well spouse, as well as the mother of four "well children". *Dirty Details: The Days and Nights of a Well Spouse* was published in 1996 and the sequel *Still the End: Memoir of a Nursing Home Wife* was released in 2013. She is also a mathematician and math teacher at Arcadia University in Glenside, PA. She is happily remarried and continually grateful and incredulous.

**Beth Crosby** has a Master of Arts of Teaching (MAT) degree with endorsements in Guidance & Counseling and Learning Disabilities. She was involved in all levels of education in a variety of positions for over 30 years. For the past 4 years, she has worked as the Homes of Hope Coordinator with families that are homeless. She and Fern Zeigler (see below) were both Well Spouse Board members, coordinated the Silver Lining Project with the Well Spouse Foundation and have facilitated other workshops together. Beth was a Well Spouse for over 20 years.

**Jeanae Hopgood-Jones**, PhD(c), MFT, M.Ed, is a trained couple and family therapist with a concentration on couple and sex therapy. She is a Doctoral Candidate in the Center for Human Sexuality Studies at Widener University and is currently working on her dissertation. She holds a master's degree in marriage & family therapy (MFT) and a 2nd master's (M.Ed.) in Human Sexuality Education from Widener. She is a member of WOCSHN (Women of Color Sexual Health Network), AAMFT (American Association of Marriage and Family Therapists), ABSC (Association of Black Sexologists & Clinicians) and the Black Scholars in Human Sexuality (Widener chapter). In addition, she is also the Chair of HSEDSO (Human Sexuality Education Student Organization) and a member of Gamma Eta Rho - the Human Sexuality Honor Society. She is also one of the "SexPerts" on the sexuality app, Juicebox.

**Carol Hryvniak** is a former Well Spouse employee and kept the office running smoothly. Now she enjoys selling her beach-themed works at the Junction Boutique in Middletown, NJ and at the Brielle Day Craft Shows, also in NJ.

**Johanna Karr** wrote the monthly *Member Minute* e-newsletters during her time as a Well Spouse employee. These days, she enjoys crafting and volunteering at the Manor Assisted Living Home in Freehold, NJ.

**Elissa Lewin**, LMFT, is a licensed psychologist who works with adults, individually and as couples, using the "intersystems" model taught at Marriage Council of Philadelphia. Her areas of specialty include relationships, caregiving issues, trauma, depression, and making life changes. She uses positive psychology, behavioral/CBT interventions, EMDR and

family-of-origin exploration. The approach is personalized and she works with her clients to find the combination that works to achieve their goals.

Elissa understands that creating change takes courage. In her 30 years as a therapist, she has gained the experience to listen deeply and intently both to what is said and not said. Together, she helps clients create next steps that make sense for them to create the changes they want in life.

Elissa is also the founder and President of Nancy's House, a non-profit located in PA that provides community, self-care tools and support for family caregivers.

**Katherine Major**, MSN, RN, has worked in as a nurse for the last 23 years with experience in both the inpatient setting as well as home care. In 2007, she started her nursing leadership journey as a nurse manager at the hospital of the University of Pennsylvania. As Director of Caring Way, a home-based palliative care program from Penn Medicine, Katherine oversees the daily operations of the program including strategic planning and program development.

**Karen McGreer** is a licensed marriage and family therapist (LMFT) and certified Sex Therapist. She holds two Masters degrees, one from Temple University in Education, and one from the Family Institute of Philadelphia. She has been a Registered Nurse since 1968. Her extensive experience in nursing and physical rehabilitation led her to specialize in the emotional, relational, and sexual aspects of health care.

Karen is also a frequent speaker on sexual health, intimacy, and loving through sickness and in health. She has made several hundred media appearances, and has been a frequent guest on various local and national radio and television programs.

**Jane Meier Hamilton**, RN, MSN, comes to our conference as a former well spouse. A nurse for 40 years and family caregiver for 20, she is Founder of *Partners on the Path* ([www.PartnersonthePath.com](http://www.PartnersonthePath.com)), which provides caregiver support programs to businesses that employ, and non-profit organizations that support caregivers.

Jane is a content expert on managing caregiver stress, building resilience and preventing compassion fatigue. Her book, *The Caregiver's Guide to Self-Care*, her educational programs, and her support group model all provide practical tools that help caregivers preserve their health, well-being and capacity to care.

**Gabriele Ortiz** has been caring for her husband, who suffers from advanced MS, for 19 years. He lived at home until 2013, at which point his transition to a local long-term care facility became necessary. Gaby works in the field of ophthalmology full-time, and is a mother to four boys, ranging in age from 12 to 23. Gaby found Well Spouse Association in 2010 and has reclaimed her sanity.

**Julia L. Schott**, MSS, MLSP, LCSW, received her BA in Economics and Spanish from Bucknell University and her Master of Social Service and Master of Law and Social Policy from Bryn Mawr College. She has been practicing medical social work with a focus on palliative care since 2003. Julia has a passion for working with patients and families in their own homes and considers access to excellent symptom management and care planning through life-threatening illness to be a basic human right.

**Corrie Skuya** has been a member of Well Spouse Association for almost 9 years. Her husband was diagnosed with chronic paroxysmal hemicrania (CPH) at the age of 32. Corrie has two boys, 8 and 11 years old. She works full-time as a behavioral analyst (BCBA) for children with special needs.

**Fern Zeigler** is a licensed Marital and Family Therapist (LMFT) and has provided therapy for more than 30 years. She is currently in a group practice in Abington, PA. Fern was a Well Spouse for 17 years until her husband died in 2001. She remarried in 2013. Fern was an active member of WSA from 1991-2001. She facilitated a support group, was on the board and organized regional and national conferences.