

Leona was the second AAUW president of the Baker branch and a member continuously since. A named grant was made in her honor several years ago. Her pet project was the book sale and many years Orville carted the books for us in his little pickup. As I worked with them I could see the demand and need for a bookstore in Baker so when I told Leona my plans to open a store she wanted to be a part of it. Maybe some of you remember the construction paper bookmarks she made that we used in the store the first year. She was getting shaky even then but she handcrafted these bookmarks using her beautiful calligraphy.

Ten years ago Alice Warnock was being installed as Worthy Matron of Eastern Star and she asked Leona to hand-letter some plaques for her officers, using the theme HELPING HANDS. Leona made these using a poem by Toyohiko Kagawa. I'd like to read the poem because it certainly describes Leona and the way she used her hands as long as she was able.

And the thought

was this

That a secret plan

Is hid in my hand

That my hand is big

Big

Because of this plan that God

Who dwells in my hand

KNOWS this secret plan

Of the things He will do for the world

Using my hand.

About six years ago two book study groups were started through the Crossroads and AAUW. Ours was called the Literary Lunch Bunch and at first we met at Crossroads. When Leona became unable to manage the stairs she asked us to meet at her little cottage which eight to ten of us have done once a month for several years. Margaret Pihfer would see we had coffee and a sweet treat.

One of the books we studied a year ago was the AQUARIAN CONSPIRACY and Leona became so excited about this study of personal and social transformation in the 80s she asked if we couldn't continue a more detailed exploration of Marilyn Ferguson's theories. The past year Laura Hayse, Shannon Sullivan, and Catherine Zimmerman have been going to Leona's every other week to learn more about the human potential for social change.

The last meeting was only a few days before Leona's illness struck. Her mind was always alert and she gave us valuable background and often quoted long passages from the authors we studied. We were all fortunate to drink at her well of wisdom as we shared our love of good books and good reading.

The library has always been very dear to Leona's heart. The beautiful building we have now is a far cry from the crowded rooms where Leona worked so many years at the old Carnegie Library building Gus Aschim, Library board member from Unity and long time friend of Leona, would usually spend the night at Leona's when she came to board meetings and kept Leona informed about the progress of the library.

EULOGY FOR LEONA FLEETWOOD
October 20, 1983

We are here to eulogize Leona, a very special person. She was a particularly good friend of mine as I know she was for most of you gathered here today. She touched each of our lives in some loving way. It was always fun to be in her company. I want to tell some of the ways the spirit of Leona Fleetwood will live on in Baker

After graduating magna cum laude from Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri, which she attended on a full scholarship, she came west to teach school at Warren, Idaho. While visiting her illustrious uncle, Mr. Simeon Childs Richardson, last mayor of Greenhorn, she took a job teaching at the Bonanza Mine. During the long winters she would ski to the mine Monday mornings and stay at the school all week, skiing home on Friday night. In later years Greenhorn was always the favorite area for the Fleetwoods to spend summer weekends. Both Orville and Leona had a deep knowledge of mining. Miles Potter was a good friend in his book OREGON'S GOLDEN YEARS he thanks them for their helpful research of the area's mines

Leona's love of books led her to attend library school in Los Angeles and she worked there for a time. But she had decided early Baker County was heaven on earth and soon returned here to become children's librarian and later head librarian.

To my children and hundreds of other Baker children she will always be remembered as the "puppet lady". She handmade her puppet lovingly constructing them down to the last detail. Her scripts were of her invention, but never memorized. She would weave the tale according to the audience of the day, often mentioning some child in the crowd who needed a little extra attention. These shows were given on Saturday mornings on the stage in the basement of the Carnegie library building where the children's library was located. Usually she played to a standing room only crowd.

Leona and Orville were active in the "SAVE THE NAT" movement Leona was very pleased to see the development of the museum. A few years ago I helped her pack her puppets and Onie Crandall was able to Leona's story about her puppets on tape. We will have the puppets exhibited at the museum eventually.

These past years that Leona has been confined to her home some of her happier moments were afternoons when the neighborhood children stopped on their way home from school to say hello. Friday were treat days and she always had something special for them. Children at heart, she enjoyed these treat days as much as the other children

Leona could always be counted for a generous contribution to any worthy cause. She liked to say "Others have money for stocking up but my money is for rolling over". Community Concerts, Girl Scouts, Alcohol and Drug Council, American Field Service, Oregon Trail Regional Museum and the library were all supported by Leona.

Her favorite project was the Crossroads Arts Center. She always liked to give credit for the idea to the Cultural Arts Committee of AAUW but Leona did most of the leg work herself. She acted in several of the first plays, DARK OF THE MOON, SAVE ME A PLACE AT FOREST LAWN, and AUNTIE MAME. She ~~always~~²⁻¹⁻⁵⁰ acted in several children's plays AAUW presented.

Through the years there weren't many performances she missed. Just recently at one of the last performances she attended she was coaxed into going upstairs for refreshments. Ray Jones and three friends picked her wheelchair up, Leona and all, and carried her up the stairs. Leona was laughing all the way. John Brown met her at the head of the stairs and said, "Oh my, what a person will do to make an entrance!"

When Johannah called me Tuesday morning to tell me it was all over for Leona she said "I can just see Orville and Leona square Dancing through heaven together."

In 1948 the South Baker PTA led by Bill and Wibby Patterson organized the POWDER RIVER PROMENADERS and the Fleetwoods were charter members. Soon there were two more square dance clubs, the Crazy Eights and the Sashayers. Most of us belonged to just one of the clubs, but Orville and Leona didn't play favorites. They belonged to all three so they could dance every Saturday night and often in between. They made their Christmas cards every year and often the card depicted a square dancing couple in some holiday antic.

Leona would be so glad Clint Bellows is going to sing today. After he performed at one of the Crossroads Cabarets she told me how much she had always admired his beautiful voice and said she could remember him as a little boy singing, singing, singing wherever he was.

Leona was never affiliated with any organized church. She did live a life of love and concern for others. Her goodness was typified by her belief that there were only two proper reasons to pray. One was to say "Thank you, God" and the other was "Thy will be done."

So may we say Thank you God, for giving us Leona and may we accept our loss with Thy Will be Done.

Betty Kuhl
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