



The Tree Unites the Branches; The Branches Bear the Fruit

The ORANJ TREE

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



I live at Fellowship Village, where it is our custom to display a red rose when a resident passes. Red roses symbolize love.

ORANJ recently lost two vigorous, active leaders: Ellen Handler and Helen Vukasin (see the article on the second page of this *ORANJ Tree*). I have worked with Ellen and Helen for three years and grieve their loss. All the members of the Executive Committee and everyone who has worked with these women are saddened. In their memory, we can and should dedicate our

remaining days to continuing the work that they started.

ORANJ needs volunteers to fill its mission. Surveys, communications and advocacy are at the core of ORANJ efforts. For example, we produce an annual Occupancy Report for all the CCRCs in ORANJ. The Bill of Rights for Independent Living is posted and followed at all member locations. Links are maintained to related organizations: NaCCRA and LeadingAge (New Jersey and National).

This year we are celebrating the 25th anniversary of ORANJ. ORANJ was founded by Walter Neidhard, a resident of Applewood. On May 8, 1991 the presidents of seven CCRC residents' associations met in Applewood to join together into the Organization of Residents' Associations of New Jersey. All 13 existing CCRCs were invited but only 7 attended the first meeting. The second meeting, held at Medford Leas in August, 1991, was attended by 12 CCRCs. Today, there are 25 member CCRCs. The 26th will be Lantern Hill (located in New Providence), which will be in full operation later this year.

The central purpose remains working cooperatively for the well-being of senior citizens. Across the state, issues and challenges faced are similar. In working together, senior citizens multiply insight, strength and influence for change and improvement.

Ron Whalin, President

Plenary Meeting - April 20 at Applewood

Executive Committee

RON WHALIN, *Fellowship Village*,
President & VP Northwest Region

ROBERT GEBERTH, *Applewood*,
Vice President, Central Region

DAVID HIBBERSON, *Harrogate*,
Vice President, Southeast Region

BARBARA TROUGHT, *Medford Leas*,
Vice President, Southwest Region

TED BROCK, *Harrogate*,
Treasurer

MAGGIE HEINEMAN, *Medford Leas*,
Secretary & Communications

GARY BALDWIN, *Seabrook*
Bylaws Committee

FRANK HONN, *Cranes Mill*
Finance Committee

ALICE CROZIER
Health Committee

GENE WACHSPRESS, *Meadow Lakes*
Legislative Committee

Members

Applewood, Freehold

Arbor Glen, Bridgewater

The Atrium at Navesink Harbor,
Red Bank

Bristol Glen, Newton

Cadbury at Cherry Hill, Cherry Hill

Cedar Crest, Pompton Plains

Crane's Mill, West Caldwell

Crestwood Manor, Whiting

The Evergreens, Moorestown

Fellowship Village, Basking Ridge

The Fountains at Cedar Parke, Atco

Franciscan Oaks, Denville

Friends Village, Woodstown

Fritz Reuter, North Bergen

Harrogate, Lakewood

House of the Good Shepherd,

Hackettstown

Lions Gate, Voorhees

Meadow Lakes, East Windsor

Medford Leas, Medford

Monroe Village, Monroe Township

The Pines at Whiting, Whiting

Seabrook, Tinton Falls

Stonebridge at Montgomery,

Skillman

Wiley Christian

Retirement Community, Marlton

Winchester Gardens, Maplewood

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SMART, RESPONSIBLE, EASY TO WORK WITH

Ellen Handler and Helen Vukasin each moved into their CCRCs with decades of organizational experience and a desire to make a difference. They are both remembered by colleagues in ORANJ and at their CCRCs for their willingness to take on work that needed to be done and also for the soft-spoken manner in which they could speak with conviction and influence a discussion.



Ellen moved to Winchester Gardens in 2002 and soon after became cofounder and managing editor of the *Community Chronicle*. She started attending ORANJ meetings, and then became chair of the Communications Committee when Gary Baldwin was president. She became editor of *The ORANJ*

Tree in the fall of 2009, and served as president of ORANJ from 2011 to 2013. Ellen then resumed her post as editor of this publication, completing the January issue shortly before her death on January 6.

After moving to Crane's Mill in 2014, Ellen became close friends with Alice Crozier, chair of the ORANJ Health Committee. Readers of this publication are well aware of Ellen's contributions to our organization. Alice's email, excerpted below, tells us more about the woman we have lost.

"Ellen came to the US from Germany at age 11 in 1940. Because she spoke no English she was at first put in classes for slow learners, but that situation did not last long. She did a BA at Vassar and a PhD in sociology at the University of Chicago, but she did not teach for very long because her family intervened. She was happy to stay home with her three children and was, as we her ORANJ colleagues can well imagine, increasingly active in the community of Champaign-Urbana, where she and Paul lived for many years. He was in the Physics Department at the University of Illinois. Soon after his death Ellen moved to Winchester Gardens in Maplewood, NJ at the urging of her two sons, who live in the area.

"Like several other Holocaust survivors that I have known, Ellen felt that she needed to do something valuable with her life. It should not be wasted on trivialities or selfish pursuits. Having been spared when so many others were not, she owed it to them and herself that her life would be put to good use. Her work for ORANJ can be seen in this light, as one of the many ways she engaged her great intelligence and energy to benefit other people.



"Ellen liked strenuous outdoor activities, such as hiking and mountain-climbing. Small of stature, she had a fierce will and determination to do difficult things. She did not take well to old age and sitting around, unable to walk comfortably, or use her hands, or even seeing well enough to drive car. Resignation was not her thing."



Helen Vukasin passed away on January 16. She was the delegate representing ORANJ at the national meetings of AAHSA (now LeadingAge) and the National Continuing Care Residents Association (NaCCRA). She continued in this role after becoming vice president for the SW region of ORANJ in 2012. Helen

was an extremely active leader on both campuses of Medford Leas as a writer, artist, and organizer. She was the first president of the Residents Association on the Lumberton campus, served on the Medford Leas Residents Association (MLRA) twice, chaired a number of committees, and for the last several years provided continuity to the MLRA as the appointed recording secretary.

From 1979 to 1989 Helen worked with an ecumenical coalition of 40 Christian agencies supporting community development in third-world countries. She initiated an environment and development program which focused on raising consciousness among agencies abroad about village-level environmental problems. She produced a series of five books on the subject and coordinated workshops in Latin America, the Caribbean, Southeast Asia, and Africa. After retirement in 1989, Helen moved to Zimbabwe, where she worked with local organizations that were training farmers in improved agricultural practices and addressing gender issues.

For many years she served on the board of managers of Mohonk Consultations and became chair of the board in 1995. Her short history of this environmental organization is online at <http://mohonk-consultations.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Lets-Talk-It-Over-A-Short-History-of-Mohonk-Consultations.pdf>

THE WORK OF ORANJ

The “About ORANJ” dropdown menu on our website has a link to the [Leaders Page](#) which gives names and short bios of members of the Executive Committee (EC).

Maggie Heineman, Communications Chair, has become editor of *The ORANJ Tree*. Barbara Trought has succeeded Helen Vukasin as Vice President for the SW region of ORANJ. A year ago Alice Crozier took on the job of Health Committee Chair and Ann Campbell became webmaster when Adam Gaus moved away.

There are now three EC jobs that should be filled: NW Region VP, NE Region VP, and Secretary. Adam’s departure left the NW region without a VP, and the positions of NW Region VP and Secretary need to be filled because they are temporarily being covered by Ron Whalin and Maggie.

We encourage attendance at EC meetings as a way for residents to consider whether working for ORANJ is something they want to do.



Soon after moving into Medford Leas, Barbara Trought was elected to the Residents Association Council. A year later she stepped into the presidency.

“Thanks to Helen Vukasin and other residents active in ORANJ,” Barbara says she began – and continues – an

all-important connection to those throughout the state who are working on behalf of CCRC residents.

Barbara speaks enthusiastically and with great conviction about ORANJ’s successful drive toward public law that asserts residents’ right to be elected to CCRC governing boards and to require quarterly interactions between residents and governing boards. She declares, “This is a great achievement. I look forward to serving as ORANJ leads New Jersey residents associations in implementing the law.”

Asked about challenges for CCRCs, she asks, “Will the CCRC concept disappear because of changing economic realities of today?” Not hesitating, she continues, “Current residents are stakeholders. We can influence the decisions being made by administrators. Will we succeed? We can certainly try.”

Barbara’s lifelong interest in governance developed through student government offices in both high school and Douglass College. An English major and

certification for secondary school teaching led to a brief career. Career gave way to her choosing homemaking, parenting two sons, and nonpartisan and partisan political activities.

Through the nonpartisan League of Women Voters, Barbara focused on every aspect of citizen participation in representative government. Her skills while moderating candidate events gave voters and those who would represent them public spaces where differing views were respected and protected.

Currently Barbara is a Pinelands Preservation Alliance Trustee, a volunteer driver for TenderCare, and an Elder in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).



Alice Crozier was professor of American Literature, first at Smith College and then at Rutgers until her retirement in 2000.

Alice writes: “My interest in ORANJ came from Ellen Handler, who told me I really should find out about this outfit and took me to my first Execu-

tive Committee meeting. The main reason I stay with ORANJ is that, since moving into a CCRC in January of 2014, I have become very interested in old people and our issues. For one thing, we are big business – there is a lot of money to be made on us whether by doctors and hospitals, insurance companies, makers of mobility devices, the list goes on. We need to learn more about the ways others profit from our infirmities. Also, I have made many good friends at Winchester Gardens and I like to think I am working for their interests.

“Since becoming chair of the ORANJ Health Care Committee I have learned that there is not much regulation of CCRCs on the books. Looking at state laws governing CCRCs, one finds that although nursing homes have attracted the attention of state legislators, retirement communities that are inhabited by many healthy seniors, including seniors with various handicaps who are otherwise healthy and mentally very sharp, are often ignored. Within the CCRCs, management tends to run the business and the residents look on. Many residents would like to have a greater voice in decisions that affect our lives as well as management’s bottom line.

“I am active with the League of Women Voters on both the local and state levels, and I enjoy singing with a local choral group.”

PLENARY SPEAKERS



Scott B. McBride, Deputy Chief, Economic Crimes Unit, Office of the United States Attorney in Newark, will tell us about how his organization investigates and prosecutes cases of affinity fraud, medical fraud and cyber fraud and other crimes. Another attorney in his office, Jason Annuziato, Criminal Investigator, will also speak.



Marsha Greenfield, Leading Age Vice President, will speak us about social accountability, advocacy on Medicare legislation and Leading Age legislative initiatives. Ms.

Greenfield received her Doctor of Law degree from Rutgers University. Developer of the LeadingAge legislative agenda, Ms Greenfield maintains and oversees liaison with key public officials and identifies appropriate opportunities for LeadingAge to testify before key committees of Congress.



FILE OF LIFE AND YELLOW DOT

Joe Stringfellow, Mount Laurel Emergency Medical Service Chief, is a strong advocate of the File of Life and Yellow Dot programs. He will speak at the April plenary meeting to explain the programs and encourage CCRC residents to become advocates for the programs in their own municipalities.

Both programs provide EMS personnel with medical information so that they can immediately provide appropriate medical service without the need to spend time asking questions in this time of stress for patients and friends or relatives who are with them.

File of Life information is used in the home and placed on the refrigerator with a magnet. The Yellow Dot program, for vehicle accidents, includes a photograph along with the medical information. A Yellow Dot sticker on the vehicle indicates to EMS personnel that the medical information, with photo, is available in the glove compartment. The Yellow Dot program became law in New Jersey in 2014. To date only three municipalities are using the program.

File of Life is a replacement for the Vial of Life program. Problems occurred with the small vial getting lost within the refrigerator, delaying emergency medical treatment as well as a causing moisture to collect within the vial, making the medical information illegible.

