



## In This Issue

Kath Mazzella p1-3  
In the spotlight p4  
Lucy Ward p4  
People Trafficking  
Update p5  
Public seminar p5  
Club news p6

Club President  
**Lyn McArthur**

(H) 9367 6984  
lynmac@primus.com.au

Area 3 Director  
**Dianne Bryant**

9245 5551  
diannebryant@swantafe.wa.edu.au

District 23 PR Chair  
**Nan Martella**

9721 7067  
martella@bigpond.net.au

### Club Meetings

Second Thursday of the  
month.

**Apologies by 8pm**

**Previous Monday**

To: Sharee Simm  
0439 923 468

### INZERT

Please send any articles  
or photos for Inzert to:

**Carole Theobald**  
theobald@powerdsl.com.au  
8 Cormorant Cross  
WILLETTON WA 6155

## Kath Mazzella Combining Advocacy and Service for Women's Health

*Marilyn Piper*

*Kath has been nominated as Zonta Club of Perth's Woman of Achievement. However since that nomination was presented to the club, Kath has been nominated as Browne's Every Woman of the Year in the category of Medicine, as well as WA Citizen of the Year in the category of Community Service. Kath understands that winning these awards will preclude her from the Zonta Award. However we wish to share her story as she truly is a woman of achievement.*

Kathleen Mazzella left school at the age of 15. She worked in office jobs for much of her early life, married and gave birth to three children. Kath worked as a full time home maker, devoting her time to the upbringing and welfare of her three children. At age 28 Kath's husband left her and the three children. Kath had re-entered the workforce to support her children. After many short term casual positions, Kath was employed by Royal Kings Park Tennis Club as the administrative Secretary. Kath continued her work for seven years.

At age 42 in 1994 Kath was diagnosed with cancer of the vulva. In the same year she underwent radical surgery that included removal of her clitoris, vulva and lymph glands, followed by six weeks of radiotherapy. Kath had previously been told eighteen months earlier by two different GPs as well as two gynaecologists that it was common to have lumps in the vulva and there was no cause for concern.

Kath had to give up her job at Kings Park Tennis Club. She was in shock, frustrated and angry at the lack of information readily available on this health issue. Kath felt an urgency to do something about it herself. As soon as she was fit enough Kath commenced her ten year campaign to make it possible for women of all ages to have access to informa-

*...she was in shock,  
frustrated and angry at  
the lack of information  
available...*



*Kath Mazzella—the consummate advocate*

tion about gynaecological/sexual health through the Gynaecological Awareness Information Network GAIN.

### Voluntary History

Kath has worked tirelessly to form the organization known as G.A.I.N Inc (Gynaecological Awareness Information Network). The organization is now known nationally and in recent times has gained the support of many health professionals. Kath has been responsible for forming the organization, obtaining funding to produce the quarterly newsletter as well as de-

veloping an impressive speaking program. She has recently received sponsorship from GlaxoSmithKline Pharmaceuticals who wish to form a working partnership with GAIN.

Kath has advocated on behalf of women at medical conferences, to Health Departments as well as to State and Federal Ministers. She has successfully achieved the accep-

tance of International Gynaecological Awareness Day, which falls on 10 September each year.

Kath has achieved outstanding media and press coverage in raising awareness of this very important health issue for women. Examples of her media coverage and articles include:

**RADIO INTERVIEWS** Radio 6PR, SBS, RTRFM, Radio National, ABC Radio WA, Ethnic Radio,

**ARTICLES - Better Health Magazine, Sydney Morning Herald, Sunday Times WA, Women's Day Vulval Vestibulitis - GAIN member, Journal Women's Imaging - Vulva Cancer - John Hopkins Hospital USA, Human Papilloma Virus Group-New York, H & R Block Cancer Centre - Kansas City, National Council Women - Taiwan, Connect - Mental Health WA, Royal College Gyn/Obs Australia/New Zealand**

**Kath has successfully achieved the acceptance of International Gynaecological Awareness Day which falls on 10th September each year.**

Kath's voluntary community work is also evidenced in her membership of the following organisations: National Council Women Aust/WA, Women's Electoral Lobby WA, Australian/ WA

Health Consumers Association, Women's Executive Forum, Western Institute of Self Help

Kath has also spread the word to Indigenous Women's groups both in Western Australia and NSW.

All of this voluntary work has been conducted from Kath's home in Morley much of it at her own expense. She has maintained casual part time employment to support herself, but allow maximum time to achieve her goals for GAIN. King Edward Memorial Hospital has donated the use of a room opposite the hospital as the headquarters of GAIN so that woman can easily access the service, information and counseling.

Kath has literally handed the keys over to other committee members to run with the baton. This will allow Kath more time for speaking engagements and work at a national level.

More recently Kath has made contact with Rhonda Walker, Zonta District 23 Governor, who she met in Melbourne at the Cervical Health Conference last year. She reacquainted with Rhonda this year on another visit to Melbourne to seek Zonta's participation in International Gynaecological Awareness Day.

Rhonda has published the day 10 September in the most recent District Newsletter for all District 23 Clubs to observe.

*Kath's speaking engagements for 2005 have included: Sexual Health conference - Bunbury - Guest speaker - over 60 local GP's; Invited to speak - Dr Jane Thompson for Cancer Rally Fundraiser W Australia; Sponsored to visit Glaxsmithkline Pharmaceuticals - Melbourne to see how GAIN can work together with them to assist in raising a higher profile of gynaecological conditions throughout Australia; Lobbied Victorian Women's Trust to celebrate National Gynaecological Day; Langford Aboriginal Women's Health Retreat-Speech; Peter Cowan Writers Group - Edith Cowan University - Book Launch; SBS Radio - Gynaecological Cancer & Ethnic women - Radio Interview; Physiotherapy Assoc. - Speech; Western Australian Secretary National Council of Women*

GAIN membership extends to most states in Australia. Victoria is currently negotiating to form its own local GAIN Inc. Kath's work has touched the lives of many hundred's of women in the community and her continuing commitment to this voluntary organization is to be commended.

For more information about GAIN Inc visit [www.gynsupport.com](http://www.gynsupport.com)

**The Spirit of GAIN: "Healing is not only prescribing medicine and therapies but working together and sharing in a spirit of joy and cooperation." Patch Adams**



The quarterly newsletter 'Gynaemight' is available on GAIN's web site



# Bumps that need biopsies

EMMA YOUNG

Kath Mazzella was 39 when she was told her Pap smear showed abnormal changes and she needed laser treatment of her cervix.

When a lump appeared in her vulva 18 months later, her doctor told her not to worry – lumps were common in this region.

After another 18 months involving consultations with two other GPs and two gynaecologists, Mazzella was diagnosed with vulval cancer.

“They told me I had to see a gynaecologist-oncologist, which I’d never heard of in my life before,” she says. “Then they took out my clitoris, labia and lymph glands and sent me home.”

Campaigns on the need for regular pap smears to test for cervical cancer have been overwhelmingly successful in saving women’s lives, but vulval cancer is much less well known. That’s partly because it’s relatively rare, with only a few hundred new diagnoses in Australia each year, but it’s also because of the location of the cancer itself, says Dr Kendra Sundquist, an expert in sexual and reproductive health and manager of the Supportive Care Development Unit at the Cancer Council of NSW.

“Women don’t necessarily look very closely at their genital area. And even in our sexually liberated society, women are very reluctant to expose their genitals, particularly to health professionals,” she says.

However, a reluctance to speak to a doctor about changes to the vulva is only one part of the problem. In the precancerous stages, the symptoms can resemble less serious diseases.

In fact, vulval cancer is caused by a strain of the human papilloma virus – the virus that causes genital warts, and which can also cause cervical cancer. But there is no screening test for vulval cancer – many women are treated for months or years for thrush, candida or other infections before a biopsy is taken and the cancer diagnosed.

“Vulval cancer is not easy to diagnose,” says Sundquist. “But the message is that if there’s a lesion, it needs to be biopsied, so it’s detected in the precancerous stage, before it progresses.”

Treatment involves either laser removal of tissue or surgical removal, depending on the

stage and level of tissue invasion of the precancerous or cancerous changes.

Vulval cancers are often diagnosed at a late stage, and the surgery required to remove them can be extensive. For women diagnosed with vulval cancer, it’s vital that they see a gynaecologist-oncologist – a specialist in gynaecological cancers.

Sundquist says: “Women who see gynaecologists tend to have much more radical surgery. But these days, gynaecologist-oncologists are usually much more conservative – compared with the old days, where they would cut out the clitoris, labia and all the lymph glands, with disastrous consequences for women.”

The psychological impact of surgery on the vulva, even if it is relatively minor surgery for an early-stage cancer, is devastating, says Mazzella, who is now 45. “I figure the vulva is the most cherished part of a woman, even overriding a breast,” she says.

The surgery can also cause problems with sexual functioning and, if the lymph glands have been removed, a build-up of fluids in the thighs, making mobility difficult.

After Mazzella had her surgery, she looked for other women in a similar position to talk to – and found none. Eventually, she placed an ad in *Woman’s Day*, and received 38 replies from women all over Australia, many of whom had never discussed their surgery before.

Mazzella then set up the Perth-based Gynaecological Awareness Information Network, which seeks to educate women of the need to be aware of any changes and how to get the best available treatment.

In 2001, 95 women were diagnosed with vulval cancer in NSW, and 25 died. Early detection could have saved many of these lives.

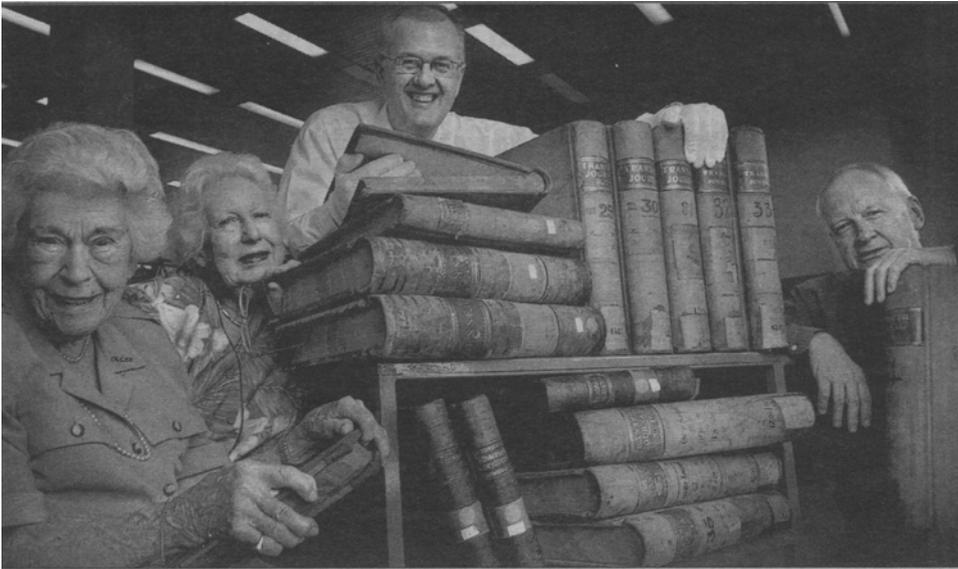
Part of the problem in getting the information out about this type of cancer is the need to overcome what Mazzella sees as a general level of distaste for the word “vulva”.

When she asked the New York director of the play *The Vagina Monologues* why they were selling chocolate vulvas in the foyer and calling them vaginas, “she replied that women were not up to using the word ‘vulva,’” says Mazzella.

“It’s like calling a penis a scrotum, it’s living in a world of false pretences. We need to have another look at how we perceive our own gynaecology and gynaecological health.”

Example of one of the many articles about Kath’s work. From *Sydney Morning Herald*, 25/3/2004, page 2.

## In the spotlight ...



There's no hiding Margaret!

This photograph accompanied an article in the West Australian on April 11th that celebrated the 60th anniversary of the appointment of the State's first archivist, Mollie Lukis.

There have only been four State Archivists, with our own Margaret Medcalf being the second. By 1971, Ms Lukis had built a department of four staff and 2.14 km of records, initially working under archives board chairman James Sykes Battye. Today, the office has 20 staff and holds 15km of

*Chroniclers: Archivist Mollie Lukis, left, and successors Margaret Medcalf, Tony Caravella and Chris Coggin. Picture: Nic Ellis. West Australian April 11, p13.*

*Thanks to Lennie McCall for forwarding the article.*

### Lucy Ward talks about her painting Wandjinas and Sugarbag.

*Lucy Ward's art is featured on page 70 of the Autumn 2005 edition of Scoop's Insite magazine. Our club had the privilege of camping with Lucy on the Gibb River (picture below)—it's great to see her colourful artwork in print.*

"Most Wandjinas live around permanent water and where there is water there is shade, bush tucker and life. That is why I put water-holes, wild rivers and sugarbag



(bush-honey) with my Wandjina paintings.

Sugarbag or bush honey is a favourite food for bush people. In my time in the bush we used to mix honey with the flesh from boab nuts. It tastes nice and is good medicine for colds.

There are two kinds of sugarbag: Tree sugarbag and ground sugarbag. One kind of honeybee likes to make its home in trees and the other one lives in little holes in the ground and cliff walls."

*Thanks to Marlene O'Meara for forwarding the article.*



## Update on People Trafficking

*Last year, many members attended the seminar on people trafficking held at Curtin University. Many thanks to Marilyn Piper for forwarding this article from the Zonta Club of Geelong that provides an update of Georgina Costello's work in this area.*

May certainly seems to have been the month for being on the move. Kitty and I had a very early start on Thursday May 17<sup>th</sup> to attend the Melbourne CBD Club's breakfast meeting. It was certainly worth the 5:00 am rise (in the dark) to hear the guest speaker and barrister Georgina Costello expose the legal and moral complexities of "worldwide people trafficking".

This form of slavery extends to underpaid migrant labour, sweatshop factory workers, males and females, but most commonly women and girls virtually kidnapped into the sex industry. Georgina has just returned from her overseas research project on the subject.

Italy and the US are the two countries leading the way in awareness and policies regarding this insidious practice.

The US government now submits an annual trafficking report and contributes aid to underdeveloped countries to help combat the scourge. There have been thousands of arrests in Italy and hundreds in the US, but not one in Australia.

### Seven recommendations for Australia:

1. Coordinate anti-trafficking working groups at Federal and State level;
2. Raise awareness among the general public;
3. Provide a hotline for victims to call;
4. Change visa document legislation to revise categories;
5. Fund anti-trafficking innovation and good research;
6. Screen possible trafficked victims;
7. Educate social workers and lawyers and introduce specific anti-trafficking laws.

Twenty million dollars worth of funding for "Project Respect" has gone to the Federal police and other government organizations, but has not extended to appropriate victim support. Laws have to be introduced to specifically target traffickers.

In Australia, none of these strategies is yet effectively in place in any coordinated way. The concerns I have with these points are that, in most cases, women and girls who are trafficked do not have the English language to be able to ask for help, nor do they have any freedom to seek help. They are often imprisoned after all their papers have been confiscated (by the traffickers) and watched carefully when allowed out into the community. They become enslaved in the sex industry and either turn to drugs or are supplied with narcotics to create even greater dependence on their abusers.

Georgina has been invited to be a guest speaker at the International Convention in Melbourne in 2006, so we look forward to hearing of the progress made towards the eradication of this abhorrent practice.

## Wellbeing—is it the colour green?

Free Public Lecture Thursday, June 23, 2005 at 6.00 p.m.

Dr Norman Swan (pictured), multi-award winning producer and presenter of the ABC's Health Report will speak about what wellbeing means and what determines it.

He will then chair a panel of 6 to discuss the latest research results ...which may surprise you!

Part of the "Sustainable Subiaco" Speaker Series sponsored by the Centre for Water Research at the University of Western Australia and the City of Subiaco.

At the University Club Theatre Auditorium, 1st Floor, University Club, Entrance Number 1, Hackett Drive  
Bus numbers 102,103,107,25 and 24

Call or email today to reserve your seat as numbers are limited:

Cindy Siano, City of Subiaco  
CindyS@subiaco.wa.gov.au  
Telephone 9237 9271

or  
Caroline Wood, Centre for Water Research, UWA  
wood@cwr.uwa.edu.au  
Telephone 6488 2466



For more information about the Centre for Water Research visit their website:  
<http://www.cwr.uwa.edu.au>

And for the latest news at CWR see Splashback:  
<http://www.cwr.uwa.edu.au/news/splashback/>

## Future Zontian?



Roslyn Budd has recently returned from a trip to Adelaide to meet her first grandchild, gorgeous Caelyn Rhiannon Lally, who was born on 14th March. Congratulations to the family! On her return from Adelaide Roslyn was struck down with an infection that led to bronchitis and pneumonia—we all wish you a speedy recovery Roslyn and look forward to seeing you at the July meeting. Roslyn's granddaughter will be making her first visit to Perth in July.

## Diary Dates

### 9th June 2005—Dinner Meeting

The next dinner meeting will be held at St Catherine's College, UWA. 6.30 for 7pm start. Apologies to Sharee by Monday 6th June 2005.

### 23rd June 2005—Public Lecture 6pm

Wellbeing—is it the colour green? Dr Norman Swan will discuss this issue with a panel at the University Club Auditorium, UWA. Bookings to Caroline Wood 6488 2466.

### 10th September 2005—Great Gynae Day Out

International Gynaecological Awareness Day. Make a note in your diaries.

### 1st-3rd October 2005—District Conference, Glenelg South Australia.

The conference theme is Zonta Action through Partnership (ZAP). Conference will be held at the Stamford Grand Glenelg Hotel.

### 24-29 June 2006—International Convention, Melbourne

Georgina Costello will be among the speakers for this not-to-be-missed event. Make a note in your diary now!

## Meetings



L-R Karen Groves, Judy Tennant, Marg Giles, Lennie McCall, Margaret Medcalf, Jean Oldham and Yvonne Roberts catch up after the May meeting.

The May meeting of the Zonta Club of Perth was held at the University Club, UWA. It was a time for consolidation, with incoming President Lyn McArthur announcing this year's committees and facilitating discussion to identify particular areas of focus members would like to see addressed in the new year.

Lyn was delighted to announce that three new members will be

inducted at the June meeting.

- Barbara Wilson
- Anne-Marie McNaughton
- Virginia Shotter.

**Please note that the June meeting will be held at the last of our 'trial venues' :**

**St Catherine's College, UWA.**

### WANT TO KNOW

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN  
OUR CLUB?

VISIT OUR WEB SITE AT  
[www.zontaperth.org.au](http://www.zontaperth.org.au)

Email: [zontaperth@yahoo.com.au](mailto:zontaperth@yahoo.com.au)

## Many thanks

Carole and David Theobald would like to thank all club members for their kindness after their recent car accident.

"We are very, very lucky to be alive. I'm badly bruised, but no fractures. David has a fractured sternum and wrist. The people in the other car are OK. We are very grateful to the volunteers of the ambulances, fire brigade and SES at Harvey. They did a fantastic job. Car's a write off—but we're not! Everyone's been so lovely to us and so helpful. It helps us to heal, knowing that so many people care about us" said Carole.