

# WICS Newsletter

Widowed Information and Consultation Services

Fall 2016

## **Grief: I Want To Be Seen, I Want To Be Heard, but I Don't Need To Be Fixed**

By Jan Warner <http://www.griefspeaksout.com>

Lately I have been having experiences where people who I think understand me completely - because they are intelligent, creative, funny people - say things that make me wonder if they have ever truly heard what I say. People who have had deep grief in their life seem to often 'get it' immediately, people who haven't - not so much. The latest one was - if you have been reading my posts - you know I often wonder if I will some day want to have another relationship. When I expressed this uncertainty to someone they interpreted it as my being ready to have another man in my life. I am still wearing my wedding ring and my husband's wedding ring on the finger on which you wear wedding rings. I took them off for a while - but I like wearing them so I put them back on. I talk about Artie all the time. I explained to this wise person that no thank you, I am still wondering. I am not ready to take action because I already have a soul mate. I already have the great love of my life. He unfortunately is dead. This person couldn't hear that. That along with people who say other things that are far from what I am expressing - even people when they read my blog - have made me have doubts. (I said that - no, to be honest because I was tired, yelled it - at someone once when they said something to me so far from who I am - Don't you read my blog?!? They said Yes, they did. I don't know what they were reading.)

I always say that I am lucky to have friends who listen to me talk about Artie; who listen to me talk about my sad and lonely part. I wonder now what they say when I am not in the room. This is not a good path to take since unless I set up spy cameras I have no way of knowing. I don't want to be healed. I have more and more a full life. I am happy with my unhappiness as well as my moments of joy. I wonder if my being outspoken about grief leads people to say or think that I am stuck or living in the past. I wonder if people want me to move on even though they don't tell me that because they know I will argue with them. I wonder if people wish I would stop talking about Artie but are too polite to say so.

I guess it is a problem for all people to feel that lack of deep understanding from people who have not had a similar experience. My husband was a recovering alcoholic. He felt - and rightly so - that it was alcoholics and other addicts that could understand each other

best. I have often thought that you shouldn't work in child abuse prevention if you have never had children. It is hard to understand the joy and also difficulties of raising a child if you are an observer. Was I effective when I worked on suicide hotlines because I had attempted suicide many years ago and knew what it felt like to want to give up? Maybe as much as I talk and write those who understand me best will always be other grieving people. Should I lower my expectations?

It makes me sad. I understand the loving gift of someone wanting to help me. On the other hand, when I think I am so clear in my speech and expression it feels very strange for someone to want to help me in a way that has nothing to do with who I am. I have started to call what I believe in transformative grief. A grief that does not end - but transforms both itself and the grieving person. I am learning how to be alive with grief. That is so different from thinking that grief will some day fly out of the window and I will no longer be sad that my husband is dead. I love our love and him and wait to be together again.

I am alive and can remarry - can love again - but I don't have to. It is not as stupid as telling someone whose child has died that luckily they have other children. I can't believe people actually say that. But, they do. Why is it so difficult for some people to understand that there are people in our lives that are central to our lives? Each person is unique and takes a unique space. They cannot be replaced and it is foolish and unfeeling to think they can.

I do not want to forget Artie or to stop missing him. I wish I could live my life fully with the full understanding of those who are close me. It might be easier if I chose silence as so many do - but I am astonished when people say certain things to me and I keep explaining myself whether they can hear me or not.

My Facebook page Grief Speaks Out has, as I write this, over 56,000 likes from all around the world. It is astonishing me. It is not that I am a good writer (although I think I am) or that I choose interesting pictures - which I do. I think it is what one person said - they just wanted someone to tell them that their feelings aren't crap. I like that word - crap - because it was so direct. Grief must be a common language because people have posted ... ~continued on page 4 ~

# WICS

## Board of Directors

John Hanson                      President  
Le Habryle                      Vice President  
Holly Finkbeiner                Secretary  
Sara Acree  
Burnie Barbus  
Elaine Eggebraaten  
David McDowell  
Sue Styer  
Ann Thorpe

Consultant  
Molly Krinsky

## **WICS Contact Information**

Phone: 206-241-5650  
Email: [wicsoffice@qwestoffice.net](mailto:wicsoffice@qwestoffice.net)  
Website: [www.kcwics.org](http://www.kcwics.org).



[www.windermere Renton.com](http://www.windermere Renton.com)  
425-235-7777

WICS would like to thank  
**Windermere**  
**RE/Renton, Inc** and **The**  
**Windermere**  
**Foundation** for their  
generous donation to our  
children's program.

**PLEASE NOTE: If you are no longer interested in receiving the newsletter via USPS mail, please contact our office to be removed from the list**

## Gifts of Love



Please help us help others by sending a LOVE GIFT today. WICS relies on your donations. Your gift allows WICS to support grieving individuals and families in our community. We invite you to send a gift in memory of your loved one. You and your loved one's name will be noted in the next newsletter.

Workplace "Matching Gift" programs can increase your donation. Check to see if your employer will match your gift.

**All Love Gift Donations are tax deductible**

## Some Recent Testimonials From Our WICS Members:



- "Without WICS it would have taken much longer to deal with my grief. I would not be nearly as far along in my healing process as I am. Thank you very much for your help and understanding."
- "Thanks to WICS and my brother-in-law for bringing me to WICS. It has helped me with my grief."
- "WICS allows me to be with other people that really understand. We can relate to each other."
- "WICS is a place to meet people who are sharing your experience."
- "WICS - I am so grateful to be here with people that are dealing with the same things as myself. Good consoling and good sharing."

A Testimonial about our Seabeck Retreat:

- "It's the one place I can go for grief relief."

## 2016-17 EVENTS

**Mark Your Calendars and Save the Dates**

 **December 4, 2016**  
**BUS TRIP to LEAVENWORTH AND**   
**ANNUAL HOLIDAY TREE LIGHTING**

See page 5 for Information & Registration!

## **SPRING AUCTION**

**March 11, 2017**

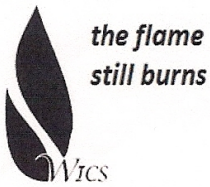
More Information in Next Newsletter!



**SEABECK RETREAT**  
**June 2-4, 2017**



More Information in Next Newsletter!



# Support Group Meetings

*For all widowed men and women who would like to share their concerns and experiences and discuss coping skills.*

**BALLARD: 7 p.m. Tuesdays**

5433 Leary Ave NW - Ballard Landmark Assisted Living (mtg room near front desk)  
Contact: **Doug** 206.441.9490 or **Pat** 206-367-1669

**BELLEVUE: 7 p.m. Mondays**

10420 S.E. 11th St. - Pilgrim Lutheran Church (Corner 11th St. & Bellevue Way)  
Contact: **Kathy** 425.653.7209 (best to call M, W, F during the day) or email at:  
[clancyKa@comcast.net](mailto:clancyKa@comcast.net)

**COVINGTON: 7 p.m. Tuesdays**

25810— 156th Ave SE - St. John the Baptist Catholic Church  
Contact: **Le** 253.630.0324 or email at: [saraacree@comcast.net](mailto:saraacree@comcast.net)

**FEDERAL WAY:** Currently, this group is not having meetings, but are looking for a new place and time. They are continuing to give support, information and connection.

Contact: **Molly K.** 253.839.4560

**KIRKLAND:** Currently, this group is not having meetings. But, they are offering support, information and connection.

Contact: **Holly** via email: [hfinkbeiner@gmail.com](mailto:hfinkbeiner@gmail.com)

**RENTON: 12:30 p.m. Wednesdays**

211 Burnett North, Renton Senior Center  
Contact: **Burnie** 425.255.1888 or email at: [burnie@comcast.net](mailto:burnie@comcast.net)

WICS invites you to send a gift in memory of your loved one. We rely on your donations. Your gift allows us to continue supporting grieving families in our community.

**Please help us help others by sending a LOVE GIFT today.**

**All donations are tax deductible.**

*Workplace "Matching Gift" programs can increase your donation.*

*Check to see if your employer will match your gift.*

### Gifts of Love

Amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ From: \_\_\_\_\_

In Memory of: \_\_\_\_\_

Message: \_\_\_\_\_

Send Acknowledgement to (name): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Return to: WICS, P.O. Box 66896, Seattle, WA 98166**

... in German, in Arabic, in Spanish and in Japanese. Unlike my blog, more people read my Facebook page in Egypt , Pakistan, Bangladesh, Kenya, Vietnam and Mexico than in the United States.

This is what I want. I want people to know that after 4 years for me - six months for some - 21 years for others - time doesn't matter. Our feelings aren't crap. They don't need to be fixed or healed. There is no disease to treat. There was a quote by the actor Gregory Peck. He said in an interview that many years after his son died he doesn't miss him every day - he misses him every hour of every day. We see our beloved dead in every blade of grass, we feel them in every breath we take. They are a part of us.

Grief is not a disease to be cured, or a mental disorder to be medicated. That doesn't mean that we shouldn't seek therapy if we need it, or take medication if it helps. I did a lot of that. Still do if I need it. Grief is not depression – but, if it has depression as a side effect, then we should treat that depression.

When we find our uneasy balance - when we see that

we are living and loving and grieving all at the same time - when we move in rhythms of being stuck and unstuck - I would like people to honor that in us. I want people to know that we have learned to be okay without being okay.

Having beloved dead is not easy. It can be made easier with understanding, with listening, with acceptance. I have many new relationships and many old ones (though some have disappeared). I am lucky to have loving people in my life. None of them are Artie - nor could they be. That is my loneliness. It is part of me.

I wish for you people in your life that understand and accept you as you really are. I wish that the others would get hearing aids or have the Wizard of Oz give them a new heart or whatever it is they need to know that grief speaks out because it wants to be heard. Whatever you are feeling is normal. I wish - as always - for you to have happy and sad moments both - for you to experience the full component of emotions that you have been given. I wish you love. xo



## The Holidays Are Coming

Dorothy Hanley



“The holidays are coming” ... words to strike fear into the heart of every person newly alone. There are special days year ‘round to contend with. There are some things you can do to make it easier... here are a few ideas.

First, it isn't necessary to always smile. Don't spend these days with gritted teeth holding back the tears. No one is always happy and any understanding person will realize you need to recognize your feelings on special days.

Some people spend these days as always, with family... some go away...with friends or even alone. Many plan to be with other single people, especially those who have had the same experience and are caring and understanding.

Are you cooking dinner for the family? Think about changing the menu...doing things differently changes the feeling of the day... start your own traditions.

Don't sit back and just let it happen. Make plans... think about what would really appeal to you...and do something about it. Actually make reservations, or call a friend to invite him/her to join in an activity.

One year a very kind and lovely WICS member opened her home on Thanksgiving to any in WICS who wanted to come. It was a potluck and wasn't the traditional dinner, but that was no matter ... there was companionship and warmth.

Just do what you can to make these times as comfortable as possible for yourself ... you deserve it!

### Subscriber Form

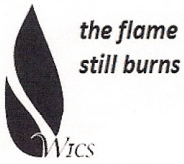
Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Return to: WICS P.O. Box 66896 Seattle, WA 98166

Subscription: \$25 per year



# WICS CELEBRATES the HOLIDAYS

## **BUS TRIP to LEAVENWORTH HOLIDAY LIGHTING FESTIVAL**



Over 80,000 people have received services from WICS since it began in 1974. In celebration of our 42 years we invite all WICS, WICS WEDS and their FAMILIES and FRIENDS to join us for a day and evening of seeing the sights and lights of Leavenworth.

### Sunday, December 4, 2016

Meet at **8:45am – 9:00pm** (estimated time of return)

Spend the day in Leavenworth shopping, having lunch, seeing the sights. Lighting Ceremony at 5:00pm. ~ Dinner at King Ludwigs following the ceremony.

Meet at 8:45am at:

**Albertson's  
Eastgate Parking Lot  
15100 SE 38th St  
Bellevue, WA 98006  
Bus leaves at 9:00am sharp!**

**COST: Transportation & Gratuity Only**  
(Transportation provided by MTR Western Bus Company)

**\$50 - Adults**

**\$25 - Children 7-18 (No charge 6 & under)  
~ Meals not included. ~**

(Lunch on your own. Dinner reservations for the entire group at King Ludwig's Restaurant – cost is not included. Bus leaves for home following dinner.)

### Limited Seating ~ Register early!!

Reservations close when 57 seats are reserved by payment to the WICS office.

For more information contact:

**WICS Office at 206-241-5650 or e-mail [wicsoffice@qwestoffice.net](mailto:wicsoffice@qwestoffice.net)**

#### Registration for Bus Trip to Leavenworth - December 4, 2016

**Please** Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
**PRINT** Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
**Clearly** City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Methods of Payment : Cash, Check or Money Order

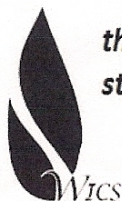
**(Please make payable to "WICS")**

\_\_\_\_ Adult tickets @ \$50 each      \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_ Age 7-18 tickets @ \$25 each      \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_ Age 6 and under tickets      ( No Charge)  
**Total Enclosed**      \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I am not able to attend, but here is my Donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Mail This Form and Your Payment to: **WICS PO Box 66896 Seattle, WA 98166 206-241-5650**

**WICS**  
PO Box 66896  
Seattle, WA 98166



*the flame  
still burns*

**Fall 2016**

**NON-PROFIT ORG**  
**U.S. Postage Paid**  
**Seattle, WA**  
**Permit #1014**

***1974 - 2016***  
***Celebrating***  
***42 Years of***  
***Community***  
***Service***

**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

***Bus Trip to Leavenworth***  
***December 4, 2016***

Register Now ~ Reg. Form on pg 5

~ ~ ~

***Spring Auction***

***March 11, 2017***

More information in next newsletter

## **Widowed Information and Consultation Services (WICS)**

- WICS is non-sectarian and is not affiliated with any other agency.
- WICS is a program that offers group support to men and women who are coping with the death of their spouse or partner. Since its beginning in 1974, WICS has served more than 80,000 men and women.
- The most frequent inquiries at WICS are for clarification of the grief process, such as “Are my feelings normal?” or “Am I losing my mind?” and also seeking help for dealing with loneliness.
- When a widowed person telephones or visits a WICS support group, he or she can be sure to find other widowed people who will listen and understand. A warm and supportive atmosphere is provided for those who call on the service.

Phone: **206-241-5650**

Website: [www.kcwics.org](http://www.kcwics.org)

Email: [wicsoffice@qwestoffice.net](mailto:wicsoffice@qwestoffice.net)