

HEARTLAND NEWS



**NEBRASKA HEARTLAND FEW CHAPTER
(FEDERALLY EMPLOYED WOMEN)**



NEWSLETTER

P. O. Box 83373
Lincoln, Nebraska 68501-3373

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www.geocities.com/neheartlandfew

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Happy Holidays! We had a rewarding experience in December when we visited Milder Manor and played Bingo with the residents for our Christmas activity. Chapter members and Manor residents had a fun time playing Bingo and we had plenty of prizes for everyone. I think all that participated felt that this was an activity we should try again in the future.

It's time to start a new year. Have you thought about how we can make a better chapter in 2008? I would love to hear your thoughts at our January Chapter Board meeting. We may be able to make some changes right away as we start the next calendar year and possibly hold off on some changes until we get our new leadership installed in June.

I wish all of you a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. I hope you are all enjoying a wonderful holiday season...

DECEMBER MEETING

On December 13th, we met at Milder Manor and played BINGO with several residents. We each brought a couple of items for prizes. We displayed these and then the winner was able to select his/her prize. By the end, everyone had BINGO'd at least once so that was a good thing. A nice evening, except for the slippery roads, was had by all. In attendance were Joyce Latrom, Margaret Hitz, Doris Carpenter, Pam Makovicka, Bonnie Nitsch-Demuth, Denise Wald, Stacy Modelski, and Sue Petracek. Also attending and much help were Stacy's and Denise's sons, Grant and Scott, respectively.

Submitted by Sue Petracek

The Heartland FEW visit to Milder Manor was very meaningful to me. Both my parents had to be in a nursing home. I began thinking of Mom and Dad when I entered that door. They loved visitors and they liked to play bingo. I would say "Mom where did you get that cute reflector in your window?" She would proudly say I won it playing bingo. At the door of Milder Manor in a wheel chair was this little lady and I immediately recognized her. She was a clerk at the Ben Franklins store in University Place. She only had one arm, but could quickly take your bills and neatly tuck them under her shoulder and flip out change from the cash register. She was so happy I remembered her from the store. My Bingo table of three ladies started smiling as soon as Grant Modelski and Scott Wald passed out the chips. My partner said, "you smell so good, do you have

perfume on?" This was 7 pm in the evening, it put a smile on my face. Thanks Sue Petracek and Sherry Weis to think of this kind of a giving activity at a Nursing Home. I think it should be an annual event

Submitted by Margaret Hitz

WOMEN TRAVELERS

If you're going on your own, here are some common-sense things to remember, gleaned from personal experience and a variety of on-line sources:

Research your destination and the safety thereof, and book your hotels in advance. Make sure the hotel is in a good neighborhood.

Check that your travel documents are in order and keep extra copies handy. Store copies in your e-mail account that can be accessed from anywhere.

Pack light as you will have to carry it all yourself. Keep money in a secure and hidden waist-pouch.

Dress conservatively - some cultures require this and, whether you think this fair or not, be mindful of local customs - you're going on a visit not on a make-over mission - so, as they say, in Rome, don't be a smart Greek. You will also prevent a lot of unwanted attention and harassment.

If you have a penchant for expensive jewelry, squash this penchant for the trip duration. Forgo even expensive-looking jewelry. The kind of petty thief I'm inferring here is a petty thief because he's not smart to begin with - and he's not likely to be able to tell the difference between the real thing and the fake. I've heard of cases where, having discovered it was fake later, the man actually returned and hit the person he had robbed - for having cheated him!

Wear sensible shoes. Not just for running away from Robin Hood, but also that will be kinder to your feet if you're going to be doing a lot of walking.

Carry a whistle with you. It's great for drawing

attention to yourself - whether the situation warrants it or not.

Keep someone regularly informed about your whereabouts, and also keep a mobile phone with you, along with the phone numbers of local police-stations, hospitals, railway and bus services, your embassy.

Don't travel alone at night. No point in being unnecessarily brave.

Try to seat next to another woman while traveling on public transport, and, if asking for directions, ask a woman or a man with children.

Trust your intuition about people, but it's wiser not to tell strangers you're alone or divulge travel plans or personal information. If you feel uneasy about somebody, don't stick around to test your intuition. Even if it seems rude, you're better safe than sorry.

Think twice too before asking a total stranger to take your photo - they could very well run away with your precious camera. Never take food/drinks from strangers - it might be drugged. And even if it's not there's the remote possibility of ending up with the Delhi-belly or Montezuma's Curse.

And now take a pinch of salt and don't become paranoid. While it is always a good idea to remain vigilant, you will realize as you travel that the world is really a far better and friendlier place than is generally assumed. There are plenty of good folk out there that will reach out to you in friendship, transcending the barriers of nationality and race. People who have nothing themselves will joyously offer you something - a part of their life as you pass along their way. It is enough to restore anybody's faith in humanity.

Submitted by Stacy Modelski

JAPAN'S THREE-DAY NEW YEAR HOLIDAY

The three-day New Year holiday is a very special time in Japan, a time of solemn prayers and joyous greetings. While New Year's Day is a holiday in many parts of the world, the

occasion has a unique significance to the Japanese, who take the opportunity to begin anew many aspects of their lives. Most businesses shut down from January 1 to January 3, and families typically gather to spend the days together.

New Year is regarded in Japan as an auspicious occasion. As such, it is filled with traditional activities which, it is hoped, will result in a more successful year. The people particularly observe the age-old Japanese custom of not carrying-over any debts or tasks from the old year to the new. As the end of the year approaches, therefore, businessmen busily wind up their affairs of the old year. They try to pay all their obligations by New Year's Eve. Even non-businessmen try to clear the slate by the end of the year.

Homemakers all over the nation work extra hard preparing for the holiday. They must prepare many special foods, clean the house even more rigorously than usual, and make decorations for the holiday season. In Japan the cleaning is called Susuharai, or soot-sweeping. Both inside and outside the house, the stains, physical and spiritual, of the past year are rubbed out in order to purify the home and make it fresh for the New Year.

Then, on New Year's Eve, a pine decoration known as Kadomatsu is set up on both sides of the front entrance. Some homes have elaborate Kadomatsu with bamboo added to the pine, as well as plum branches. The Kadomatsu is thought to welcome good luck into the house. Another, equally-important decoration is the Shimenawa, a sacred rope made of straw on which zigzag strips of paper have been hung. This is placed above the front entrance in order to prevent "evil spirits" from entering the house.



Many special dishes are prepared for the holiday season. Since the holiday itself is a time of rest from housework, the foods are such as to free the housewife from her regular chores. An important food at New Year is Omochi, steamed rice that has been pounded and formed into cakes. This is eaten either grilled on a brazier or in a soup, known as

Ozoni. Vegetable dishes are also popular during the New Year holiday, partly because they are easy to prepare and easy to store. Food shops generally remain closed throughout the holiday period, so it is necessary to stock on all items.

Offerings are made to the household gods on a small table. The offerings usually consist of Omochi, dried persimmons, dried chestnuts, pine seeds, black peas, sardines, herring roe, a Cray fish, a sea-bream, some dried cuttlefish, Mochibana, or flowers made of rice and straw, mandarin oranges, and many other items varying from district to district.

Preparations for the holiday are all completed by New Year's Eve. By then, all businesses and nearly all stores are closed, and a strange calm settles over both city and countryside. During the three-day holiday period, known as Shogatsu Sanganichi, everyone except those who run amusement enterprises or are responsible for essential services, such as transportation, have a period of vacation. For many people, the year-end holiday actually begins around December 29, when all public offices begin their vacations. Others end their work either on the 30th or early on the 31st. In recent years, therefore, more people have been taking advantage of the long holiday to travel to the countryside for skiing and skating, or for relaxing at hot spring resorts.

On New Year's Eve, most people spend their time with their families. Sons and daughters who have moved to the city return to their parents' homes in the country if this is at all possible. That way the entire family greets the New Year together. Many families pass the evening watching special television programs. Others visit shrines and temples where they pray by the light of bonfires.

The family waits up to hear the Joya-no-Kane, or midnight tooling of the temple bells. At the stroke of midnight on New Year's Eve, the entire nation listens to the tolling of the Tsuru-Gane, the great bells or gongs at Japan's Buddhist temples. While it is bell-shaped, the Tsuru-gane is struck on the outside by a large wooden hammer suspended by ropes, so it may be thought of as a gong. At Chion-in Temple in Kyoto, many visitors are drawn every New Year's Eve to watch the tolling of one of the largest bells in the world. It weighs 74 tons. The Joya-no-Kane consists of 108 solemn tolls on the temple bells. According to Buddhism, man has 108 sins and that, by hearing the bells toll that number, he can be relieved of all of them.

Thus the New Year begins in Japan. Family members traditionally spend New Year's morning briefly worshipping at home at miniature Buddhist and Shinto altars. The people use the day for making resolutions which they intend to keep for the coming year. A well-known Japanese proverb says: "New Year's is the key to unlock the year".

The family exchanges greeting for the holiday. Afterward, children are presented by their parents with Otoshi-Dama, New Year's gifts, usually in the form of money placed in special little envelopes. Later, relatives and close friends bring Otoshi-dama when they visit. The sum is larger than

the usual allowance and children are free to spend it as they wish. Children look forward to New Year's largely because they know they will receive Otoshi-dama and because they will be able to dress in their most beautiful clothes.

The three-day holiday is a time to visit shrines and temples to make pledges for the coming year and to pray for good luck. The main shrines and temples in Japan are specially decorated for the occasion and are often crowded with worshippers and visitors, all in their finest Kimono or Western clothes. The scene is at once bustling, solemn and colorful.

The custom of Nenshi, or paying calls on friends and relatives to greet them on the New Year, is very popular. During these visits, Otoso, a thick, sweet rice wine, is often served.

Sending Nengajo, or New Year's cards, is a very popular custom especially for distant friends and acquaintances. The cards are similar, perhaps, to Christmas cards in the West except that they are usually in the form of postcards. The tradition of sending these is very strong, and the mailmen make every effort to deliver all the cards on the morning of New Year's Day itself.

About two weeks before the holiday, post offices begin accepting bundles of Nengajo for New Year's Day. The cards are then sorted and tied in bundles for each household, and readied for delivery. Then on the morning of New Year's Day, mailmen make deliveries to each house. It is a great joy to receive and read greetings from friends, near and far, on that morning.

In addition to its social purposes, O-Shogatsu, or the New Year, is a time of renewal and as such it is marked by numerous ceremonies. By tradition, for example, storekeepers on the second day of the New Year have a ceremony known as Hatsuni, when the first merchandise of the year is delivered and stocked. Another traditional event on January 2 is Kaizome, or the ceremony of the first calligraphic writing drawn with a brush. Yet another tradition is that Hatsu-Yume, or first dream. The commencement of things is celebrated on January 2.

On the third day of the holiday, which is the last day of the official holiday-period, even though some rituals continue for several days, an ancient ritual known as Genshisai is performed at the Imperial Court. The rare dance and music art form known as Gagaku is performed at the Imperial Court on this day.

While the holiday is a time of ritual, it is also a time of relaxation; children enjoy Tako-age, or kite-flying. The blustery winter winds are usually perfect for lifting the large, colorful kites off the ground. For girls, a popular sport at this time is Hane-tsuki, known in the West as battledore and shuttlecock. A century ago, girls in colorful Kimono could be seen everywhere playing this game at New Year's, but it is now less popular than before. Still, the Battledore Market in Tokyo is thronged with people during December who

come to shop for battledores or just browse among the brightly painted paddles containing images of Samurai and ladies.

Karuta, a kind of card game, is also popular during the New Year holiday. The players spread out cards on which pictures and poems, or characters and proverbs, or flowers and months, are illustrated. The object of the game is to pick the correct cards first. In one game, a reader reads the first part of poem while the players search for the card on which the last part is written. As can be seen, Karuta is stimulating, educational and competitive.

On January 4, most people return to work. The holiday has refreshed them and prepared them to tackle the tasks and goals of another year. The New Year's atmosphere hangs on several days, because many ceremonies continue to take place until Setsubun, in early February.

Jan. 6 is the dezomeshiki or day when the fire brigade goes back into formation after the holiday celebration. The acrobatic performances atop ladders and demon stations staged by Tokyo's firemen at the Palace plaza are a delight to behold. Costumes of firemen of the Middle-Ages are worn for the occasion.

The Kadomatsu, or pine tree decorations gracing the entrance of each household, are removed on the night of Jan. 14. The 2 weeks during which the kadomatsu decorates the doors is called matsunouchi, or inside the pine. The recent tendency in Tokyo is to remove the trees on Jan. 7.

Jan. 7 is also the day for eating nanakusa-gayu or gruel cooked with seven varieties of herbs.

On Jan. 11, the kagami-mochi or two tiered rice cake that were placed in the alcove of the living room and kitchen are cut up and eaten. This custom, called kagami biraki was originated by the samurai class.

Dondoyaki or ombeyaki, an ancient Chinese custom which takes place on the night of Jan. 14, is an occasion for much merrymaking, especially for the children. On this night, kadomatsu, shimekazari and other New Year decorations are gathered from the households and burned in a huge bonfire. The participants sing songs, roast rice cakes and indulge in fortune telling.

On Jan. 15, or Small New Year, azuki-qayu (gruel cooked with red beans) is eaten to drive away evil spirit and illness for the coming year.

This day is also a national holiday called Seijin no Hi or Adults Day and dedicated to young men and women who reached the age of 20.

On Jan. 18, the annual outakai-hajime, or poetry party is held at Court. Poems on a given theme selected from the entries submitted by the public are read aloud on this occasion.

Visits to Shinto shrines are important in the lives of the Japanese people. They not only make periodical visits to their Ujigami or district shrines, but they also make special trips to pay respects to distant shrines. But of all such visits to shrines, the most important is Hatsumairi or First Visit which is made on New Year's Day.

The New Year's Day symbolizes the birth of the nation and thus on the first day of the year, the people are particularly inclined to worship.

The Japanese people love to make special visits to distant, famous shrines. Trains leaving various parts of the country late on New Year's Eve are usually crowded with persons who intend to make visits early in the morning of New Year's Day.

Local Ujigami shrines have large numbers of visitors as soon as the 108 bells are sounded to usher in the New Year.

At many local shrines, special charms to protect the happiness of worshippers are issued in the New Year season. The aim of Hatsumairi is to pray for a bright and happy year. The beginning of the year is quite significant to the Japanese people who believe that one year begins on New Year's Day and ends on the following New Year's Eve, and that each year is a separate unit.

This belief respecting the beginning of the year, and the association with the birth of the Nation, are factors that made Hatsumairi popular and significant in the country.

Submitted by Pam Makovicka

YOUR NAME IN PRINT

If you haven't been highlighted in our Member Highlight section, please complete and return the attached Interesting Facts Form at the end of this newsletter. If you'd like to include a photo of yourself, your family, your pets, etc., we'll include that in upcoming newsletters as well.

Completed forms can be returned to Jenny Pfeiffer at jennylcarlson@hotmail.com or Mary Brown, Membership Chair at no_3_8_gmbud@yahoo.com.

MEMBERSHIP MEETING MINUTES

Heartland FEW Chapter Board Meeting
Wednesday, December 5, 2007 at 5:00 PM
Eiseley Library

Present:

Stacy Modelski, Stacy Mattson, Marcy Michel, Pam Makovicka, Julie Breuer, and Joan Chopp.

Meeting was called to order at 5:00 PM.

- Reading and Approval of Minutes:
Julie Breuer motioned to approve the minutes from November's chapter board meeting. Pam Makovicka seconded the motion. All members present approved the minutes.
- Treasurer's Report: Julie Breuer reported that the checking is currently at \$2,624.72. Julie shared copies of most recent bank statement with the board.
- Officer Reports:
President: Will report throughout the meeting.
Vice President: No report at this time.
Secretary: No report at this time.
Corresponding Secretary: No report at this time.
Nominations & Elections: No report at this time.
Past President: No report at this time.
- Committee Chair Reports:
Awards: No report at this time.
Compliance: No report at this time.
Diversity: No report at this time.
Finance: No report at this time.
Legislative: No report at this time. Stacy Modelski will ask Bonnie Nitsch-Demuth if she has been receiving legislative updates; Stacy has not seen an update for a few months.
Membership: No report at this time.
Newsletter Publisher: Stacy Modelski reported that Jenny Pfeiffer would like to work on our December newsletter over the upcoming weekend. Please email articles to her at jennylcarlson@hotmail.com by close of business Friday.
Program: Stacy Modelski reported that Jill Lewis is a new member. Mary was able to order supplies since the website was back up. The chapter currently has 42 members and if your address or phone number has changed please notify Mary Brown. Membership renewals will be sent out in February.
Public Relations: No report at this time.
Retreat: No report at this time.
- Upcoming Events:
December 5th – Chapter Board Meeting and BlueCross BlueShield Presentation (Kim Hauptman)
December 13th – Membership Meeting – Christmas Party (Sue and Sherry) – at Milder Manor, 6:30 PM.
January 2nd – Chapter Board Meeting. Stacy Modelski proposed to utilize January's meeting to focus on where the chapter's future is at. Currently, it appears that members are extremely busy and Stacy Modelski is worried the chapter will fail. Stacy Modelski thought if the board had pizza at the meeting there may be more involvement. Pam

Makovicka motioned to have the chapter pay for pizza at the January 2nd meeting. Stacy Mattson seconded the motion. All members present approved the motion. Stacy Modelski is looking for a different location for that meeting. Pam Makovicka suggested alternating meetings and not hold two meetings a month. One month would be a board meeting and then the next month would be a membership meeting and so on.

January 13th – Membership Meeting – Compliance (Pam Makovicka) – Need Details.

- Old Business:

Policy and Procedures Manual: Stacy Modelski
Stacy Modelski, Julie and Denise have volunteered to update the policy and procedures manual. The policy and procedure manual should also indicate record of retention on meeting minutes, newsletters etc. Denise Wald is currently working on a scholarship policy and Michele Williamson is working on a travel/meeting policy.

Jump Drive for Chapter: Stacy Modelski
Stacy discussed purchasing some “jump drives” for the chapter. (These are also called memory sticks, thumbnail drives, USB storage drives, etc.) For those officers and committee chairs that would like a jump drive to use please make your purchase and submit receipts to get reimbursed. Please use your judgment for price and size of drive when making your purchase. Please purchase before we transfer officers in June.

Cookbook Project: Stacy Modelski

There are just a six cookbooks remaining.

Parliamentary Procedure: Stacy Modelski

The Region conducted their meeting in Parliamentary Procedure. Stacy asked the group if they would be interested to use Parliamentary Procedure in our chapter board meetings. Stacy also has a “cheat sheet” that would be easy to follow to conduct our meetings in this format. Doris Carpenter is a pro at parliamentary procedure and has offered her assistance.

NTP Chapter Scholarship: Stacy Modelski

Waiting for a formal report from Doris Carpenter.

Fall Regional Meeting: Stacy Modelski

Waiting for a formal report from Linda Laird.

Biannual Audit: Stacy Modelski

National FEW suggests an annual audit. Our local bylaws are written to have a biannual audit. Since the bylaws have recently been updated the biannual audit (every six months) will remain. This is something we should look at changing the next time the bylaws are rewritten (the intended word for the bylaws was biennial). Denise Wald volunteered to conduct our audit; Stacy Modelski will ask Denise if she is almost ready for that task.

Budget Approved: Stacy Modelski

The 2007-2008 budget was approved at last month’s membership meeting on November 15, 2007.

Younkers Community Day Sale: Stacy Modelski
Younkers Fundraiser was held on November 10, 2007. At this time FEW has made a profit of \$330.00. Stacy is still waiting to hear from Denise Wald if additional coupon booklets were sold.

Other Old Business:

Nothing to report at this time.

- New Business:

Change in National Dues: Stacy Modelski
Joan Chopped announced at the November 15th meeting that there may be a change in national dues. The dues would consist of \$25 national dues and \$25 chapter dues. Stacy Modelski has not received any information on the change of national dues. This may be something that is coming out with the bylaws vote; Stacy doesn’t know what we will be voting on yet. Watch for the bylaws vote information to be coming out soon from national FEW.

Science Bowl 2008: Stacy Modelski
Stacy Modelski announced that the Science Bowl will be held on January 26, 2008 for Middle School and February 2, 2008 for High School. Stacy will send out an e-mail to all members to see if anyone is interested in volunteering.

Other New Business: Stacy Modelski

Nothing to report at this time.

- Announcements: Stacy Modelski

- Bylaws Vote – Early December
Stacy did not know what the Bylaws vote will consist of but thought maybe the change in national dues.
- NTP – July 14-18, 2008 in Anaheim, CA
- NTP 2007 Tidbit
 - If you look on the FEW national website, you will see a photo of members of the Mid-Continent Region in the slide show – lots of familiar faces.

Meeting was adjourned at 5:30 pm.

Submitted by Stacy Mattson, Recording Secretary.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

Check the FEW Website for Legislative Updates:

<http://www.few.org/legislative-focus.asp>

**NEBRASKA HEARTLAND FEW
ELECTED OFFICERS**

PRESIDENT: STACY MODELSKI
VICE PRESIDENT: PAM MAKOVICKA
RECORDING SECRETARY: STACY MATTSO
CORRESPONDING SECRETARY:
MARCY MICHEL
TREASURER: JULIE BREUER
NOMINATIONS & ELECTIONS CHAIR:
JENNY PFEIFFER

**NEBRASKA HEARTLAND FEW
COMMITTEE CHAIRS**

AWARDS: JOAN CHOPP
COMPLIANCE: PAM MAKOVICKA
DIVERSITY: PAT MOLACEK
FUND RAISING: DENISE WALD
LEGISLATIVE: BONNIE NITSCH-DEMUTH
MEMBERSHIP: MARY BROWN
NEWSLETTER EDITOR: JENNY PFEIFFER
PROGRAM: SUE PETRACEK & SHERRY WEIS
PUBLIC RELATIONS: STEPHANIE BROWN
RETREAT: JOYCE LATROM
WEBMASTER: STACY MODELSKI

REGIONAL FEW WEBSITE:
www.geocities.com/few_midcont_region

Please send any comments or news items for
future newsletters to Jenny Pfeiffer at
jenny.pfeiffer@hotmail.com or call 402-525-2219.

NATIONAL FEW WEBSITE:

www.few.org
National FEW Office:
1666 K Street, N.W. Suite 440
Washington, DC 20006
Phone: (202) 898-0994

INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT NEBRASKA HEARTLAND
CHAPTER MEMBERS

NAME:

FAMILY INFORMATION:

BIRTHDATE:

BIRTHPLACE:

HOBBIES/SPECIAL INTERESTS:

CAREER:

FAVORITES:

TALENTS:

WHAT CAN YOU CONTRIBUTE TO NEBRASKA HEARTLAND CHAPTER?

SOMETHING SPECIAL YOU WANT EVERYONE TO KNOW ABOUT YOU:

PRORATED NEBRASKA HEARTLAND CHAPTER DUES

<input type="checkbox"/> March	\$15.00
<input type="checkbox"/> April	\$14.00
<input type="checkbox"/> May	\$13.00
<input type="checkbox"/> June	\$12.00
<input type="checkbox"/> July	\$11.00
<input type="checkbox"/> August	\$10.00
<input type="checkbox"/> September	\$9.00
<input type="checkbox"/> October	\$8.00
<input type="checkbox"/> November	\$7.00
<input type="checkbox"/> December	\$6.00
<input type="checkbox"/> January	\$5.00
<input type="checkbox"/> February	\$4.00

Please check the appropriate month and transfer this fee to the front page.

There are no Mid-Continent Region dues.