





## From the President's Desk

Nancy Allison

- I will start this letter with the sad news of the death of the long-time and truly loved Treasurer of AANHR. Ralph Erwin succumbed to cancer on July 5<sup>th</sup>. Those of us who were close to him knew what a battle he fought. Nancy Johnson has taken on the duties of Treasurer. Please note the memorial to Ralph on facing page.
- I recently read an article that posed the question “why are people put in long term care facilities?” The answer was ADL (activity of daily living) and cognitive impairments. That means they are not able to perform simple routine activities such as feeding themselves, dressing, bathing, and toileting, and may not remember such things as their name or what day it is. The statistics in many states, including Arkansas, indicate that more than one million persons institutionalized at sometime during the year had no ADL or cognitive impairment. In these cases the nursing home offers services far beyond what the patient needs. This results in the spending of millions of personal and Medicaid dollars for institutional care when that individual can be cared for in another less costly setting.
- In the most recent Arkansas Legislative session Rep. Sandra Prater introduced a Long Term Care Options Counseling bill. This bill provides that **everyone** should be made aware of non-institutional options that are available. **Everyone** should have access to information about different types of home health, community based, and assisted living options. Individuals should be in the setting that provides the level of care they require. This new Options Counseling bill provides that you may ask the Dept. of Human Services for counseling prior to or after admission to a long term care facility. When this goes into effect in January, the Options Counseling legislation will require nursing homes to notify DHS of all admissions regardless of funding source.
- **Help us publicize this coming valuable service to be provided by the Dept. of Health and Human Services. As soon as we have the 800 number we will publicize it in this newsletter.**
- **The options counseling will be available starting in January of 2008.**

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NATIONAL NURSING HOME RESIDENTS RIGHTS WEEK 2007

Giving Voice to Quality Care  
Affirming Residents' Rights In Long-Term Care Facilities  
*Residents' Rights Education*

Monday, October 1, 2007  
Arkansas State Capitol  
Front Steps 11:00 a.m.

**Please Join Us!**

Arkansas Advocate for Nursing Home Residents  
[www.aanhr.org](http://www.aanhr.org)

## Ralph Thomas Erwin III 1939 - 2007

Ralph Erwin, dedicated Treasurer of AANHR for many years, died on July 5, 2007, at Baptist Hospital in Little Rock, following a courageous battle with cancer.

Ralph loved his family, his many friends, and his church: New Life Church in Maumelle. He shared a great passion for life with those around him and so often took on responsibilities to make a difference in the lives of others, when this was needed.

He gave back to the community in significant ways through tutoring students at local schools, and served as a strong advocate for seniors through his work with Arkansas Advocates for Nursing Home Residents.



He was a devoted Board member and Treasurer for over a decade, determined to provide a voice for Arkansans marginalized due to illness, injury or age and forced to live in institutions; as well as involvement in political action on behalf of seniors.

Ralph's love of life and his contagious smile and sense of humor made him a joy to be with and he will be deeply missed. (\*reprinted with permission from the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, 6B, July 8, 2007.)

### Treasure Lost :

Little Rock area residents who love the thrill of the hunt in garage and estate sales will remember Ralph Erwin, if not by name, then by description. For years, he and his wife Sue ran Estate Sales, Inc. out of an old wood frame Craftsman-style yellow house on Cross Street off Markham.

The Erwins set their sales apart by holding them for nearly two weeks, gradually reducing the prices daily by a percentage until "everything's free".

Ralph, a bear of a man, ran the check-out line, often giving change in \$2 bills and Susan B. Anthony dollars.

Preceded in death by Sue, Ralph passed away July 5. His obituary revealed there was much more to the 68-year-old than his estate sales. He was a member of Central High's class of 1957, active in community organizations, a volunteer who tutored students and an advocate for senior citizens and nursing home residents. (\*reprinted with permission from *Paper Trails, AR Democrat-Gazette*, Linda Cauillouet)

*"Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy."*  
Proverbs 31:8 NIV

## Arkansas' Ombudsmen Program Leads Nation

By Anne H. Wasson

*(excerpted from Aging Arkansas, August 2007)*

When Kathie Gately took over Arkansas' long-term care ombudsman program in September 2003, she quickly realized she needed more eyes and ears in Arkansas' nursing homes. Arkansas had 237 skilled nursing facilities and only eight ombudsmen. Gately knew her resources could never meet her advocacy goals for residents of skilled nursing facilities (SNF), assisted living facilities (ALF) and residential care facilities (RCF), formerly called boarding homes. With limited government funding, Gately was left with few options for expansion.

Her solution was to energize the volunteer ombudsman aspect of the program. She had this authority in the federal Older Americans Act (OAA) that, since 1978, has required ombudsmen in every state with authority to act on behalf of residents. Arkansas statutes back up this authority.

Long-term care ombudsmen work with nursing homes and residents to investigate and resolve problems and ensure that good care is provided. They educate residents and their families about their rights in an institution. This advocacy work is especially important for residents without family members to be their advocate. Many are frail or gravely ill and cannot resolve problems on their own.

Gately developed a training, recruitment and support structure that has grown the program, in less than three years, to 200 certified ombudsmen. Last year, Gately increased the number of volunteer ombudsmen by 850%. She says with more ombudsmen going into the state's long-term care facilities, the number of cases has increased dramatically. Arkansas has one of the best ratios of ombudsmen to nursing home residents. Arkansas' program now rivals the much larger and wealthier states of California and New York who have used volunteers from the beginning.

Elizabeth Eppinette of Camden has been a certified volunteer ombudsman for the Area Agency on Aging of Southwest Arkansas for two years. It was her experience caring for three family members in nursing homes that motivated her to help form Arkansas Advocates for Nursing Home Residents (AANHR), an advocacy group.

Eppinette had a particularly hard time finding good care for her mother. "After mother died there were no more tears but I knew there was still lots to be done. I promised the Lord as long as I could walk I would do whatever I could to help people in nursing homes. I pretty well know what's going on in there and recognize problems that others might not notice. The staff is so busy they may not be able to give all the attention they'd like to."

White River Area Agency on Aging Executive Director Ed Haas says, "The White River area and the residents of nursing homes have greatly benefited from the volunteer ombudsman program. Twenty-two volunteers make regular visits to nursing homes in the White River area, this is especially beneficial to the estimated 30% of nursing home residents who don't have family or regular visitors."

Long-time advocate Martha Deaver of Conway adds, "Having these advocates in the nursing homes can be a win-win situation for the nursing homes in that complaints may not be filed with OLTC (Office of Long-Term Care) if the ombudsmen are able to handle the problem. Most of the time I recommend to families to contact the ombudsman before they call OLTC to file a formal complaint."

Herb Sanderson, director of the Arkansas Division of Aging and Adult Services (DAAS), credits Gately and the state's Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) with the phenomenal success of the program. "Both paid and volunteer ombudsmen have made a dramatic difference in the lives of long-term care residents. Sanderson credits the tremendous growth to the local volunteers.

According to the DAAS, in 2006, Arkansas' ombudsmen worked on 809 cases; investigated 1,057 formal complaints; provided 1,030 units of technical assistance; and held 88 community education events. Additionally, they were involved in hundreds of facility in-service trainings, resident councils meetings and family council meetings.

Gately says the per-dollar value per-hour of volunteer time is \$18.04. She says in 2006, CVOs contributed 5,500 hours, a value of \$99,220. So far this year, 2,082 volunteer hours have been logged for a value of \$37,559.

### **Building a framework**

The structure for the regional ombudsmen and the core curriculum for the volunteer ombudsmen is set in the Older Americans Act.

--Certified volunteer ombudsman coordinators are part-time AAA employees and are responsible for recruiting and training volunteer ombudsmen and community outreach.

--Certified volunteer ombudsmen (CVO) visit a LTC facility two to four hours per week and observe and report any problems, issues or concerns. Gately encourages them to report both the positive and negative. Complaints are referred to the RO. Certification requires eight hours classroom training and a written test, followed by 12 hours of practicum in the facility to which they will be assigned. To keep their certification, they must attend quarterly in-service trainings.

CVOs cannot have any family working for or living in the facility they visit. Gately says it is crucial that CVOs have no conflicts of interest--personal, financial or professional--with the home they visit. She says they cannot be effective unless they remain objective. CVO rules of conduct say they are there to observe, listen and report problems or concerns to the RO. They cannot provide care to residents, express an opinion about the facility and cannot even accept a cup of coffee. "Distance is there to keep the volunteers objective. They are there to provide pure advocacy."

### **What motivates volunteers?**

Gately says it takes a unique individual to go into a nursing home, observe and not lose their objectivity. "They have to be able to deal with a lot." She says prospective CVOs need to have compassion for older people and disabled individuals.

Tom Shircliff of Sherwood, a CVO with CareLink, says, "My motivation is knowing I can make a difference in a senior's life. The residents recognize me as a good friend, a frequent visitor and someone who actually listens when they talk."

Judy Hughes is both the certified volunteer coordinator and the back-up ombudsman for the Area Agency on Aging of Southwest Arkansas in Magnolia. Hughes has worked in the program for three years and says, "I've worked for many years with seniors and this is the most rewarding job I've ever had."

Hughes says her volunteers like to feel needed and, "They really want to help improve quality of care. They have a lot of compassion for those living in nursing homes and get a lot of self satisfaction in helping others." Hughes says one of her CVOs kept volunteering all through his wife's illness and eventual death. "He made sure I didn't take him off the volunteer list. I believe it kept him going through that terrible time. "Without the support of the regional ombudsman and Kathie Gately, none of this would be possible," Hughes added.

### **Future plans**

Gately's immediate goal is to have at least one CVO in every nursing home. As more volunteers are certified, she wants to assign CVOs to ALFs and RCFs. She also hopes to have a back-up ombudsman in each of Arkansas' 75 counties; two ROs in every AAA; and make the volunteer coordinators full-time, if she can find the money.

*(Continued on pg. 6)*

Another aspect of spreading the word about long-term care advocacy involves getting her curriculum adopted by Harding University's nursing school. In a pilot project between the White River Area Agency on Aging, spearheaded by RO Peggy Parker and Harding University, senior nursing students will learn about the ombudsman program, receive one-on-one experience with nursing home residents and be better prepared to work with older patients upon graduation. Gately hopes to eventually expand the program to other nursing schools.

#### When To Call an Ombudsman

If you have questions or concerns about any aspect of care in a long-term care (LTC) facility, contact your local ombudsman. Any resident, their family or friends may contact an ombudsman. LTC facility administrators and staff may also contact ombudsman. The ombudsman can help to empower residents to correct the situation or solve the problem.

The services of an ombudsman are always free and any information you discuss with a certified ombudsman--paid or volunteer--is kept strictly confidential unless you give them permission to discuss your concerns with others or reveal your identity.

All regional ombudsmen can be contacted via email by going to the Arkansas Ombudsman web page at [www.arombudsman.com](http://www.arombudsman.com). Their pictures, along with contact information, is posted in a prominent place near the entrance of nursing facilities. Prospective volunteers may also use these contacts.

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#### Mission Statement

The mission of the Arkansas Ombudsman Program is to assure that long term care facility residents have the right to live their lives harmoniously and with dignity, feeling free to voice complaints or concerns without reprisal.

The Ombudsman strives to be a trusted advocate for all residents by educating them regarding their rights; empowering residents to speak for themselves; while providing advocacy for those without a voice.

Through regular visitations the Ombudsman seeks to enhance the quality of life for long term care residents by the investigation of complaints and interacting with both residents and staff to facilitate the resolution of the problems.

*Arkansas Long Term Care Ombudsman Program 501-682-2441*

#### Greenhurst Family Council Cookbook For Sale!

The Family Council at Greenhurst Nursing Home in Charleston, Arkansas sponsors fundraisers (a yard sale in the fall, and a bake sale in the spring) during the year to help pay for Christmas gifts for each of the nursing home residents.

Family council activities include an annual buffet lunch during the Christmas season for staff members on all shifts. During one of these functions, family council members were so impressed with their offerings, they decided to share recipes and the idea for a cookbook was born. Staff members, family members, residents & friends submitted recipes. The response was overwhelming. Initially, we imagined about a 20-page leaflet (after all, it was our first attempt), but over 200 recipes came in, some with stories, and all describing delicious dishes from great cooks.

So, we hope that you will enjoy the collective creations of the staff, patients, families, and administration of the unique community of Greenhurst by buying your own copy of our cookbook. It is \$8.00. Please contact Connie Smith at [constanceks@aol.com](mailto:constanceks@aol.com) or 479-223-3733. She will take care of your order. Thank you!

**AANHR Special Thanks**

We extend our heartfelt thanks to the following people and groups who make our outreach possible:

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- First Assembly of God Church in North Little Rock for providing AANHR a meeting room.
- Bob Davidson of The Law Offices of Bob Davidson, PLLC, for advising AANHR's Board of Directors.
- Chad Trammel and Don Sorey of The Law Offices of Nix, Patterson and Roach for gift memorials and financial support.

**AANHR Officers and Board Members**

- Executive Director - John Satterfield, Mt. Home
- President - Nancy Allison, Conway
- Vice President - Nancy Johnson, Fairfield Bay
- Secretary - Betty Buckta, Judsonia
- Treasurer - Nancy Johnson, Fairfield Bay
- Members of the Board: James Brooks, N. Little Rock; Martha Deaver, Conway; Gleason McGuire, Bryant.
- Honorary Board Members: Jim and Faye Sandstrum, Pine Bluff.
- Newsletter Editors: Martha & Ernie Blount, Searcy

**Helpful/Important Numbers**

**The Office of Long Term Care (OLTC)**

has a toll-free number for information, assistance and complaints for residents and family members:  
1 - 800 - LTC - 4887 between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. on weekdays.

You may also write to: Office of Long Term Care (OLTC) P.O. Box 8059, Slot 400 Little Rock, AR  
72203-8059

OLTC website:

[Http://www.medicaid.state.ar.us/General/units/oltc/index.htm](http://www.medicaid.state.ar.us/General/units/oltc/index.htm)

You should also report complaints to the Arkansas Attorney General

**Toll Free: 1 - 866 - 810 - 0016**

**Little Rock Local: 682 - 7760**

For additional assistance or a listening ear, call AANHR at

**(501) 450 - 9619 in Conway;**

**(501) 884 - 6728 in Fairfield Bay;**

Visit our website at [www.aanhr.org](http://www.aanhr.org) or e-mail us at [Info@aanhr.org](mailto:Info@aanhr.org)

Your local Ombudsman's number should be posted in a prominent place in the nursing home, preferably near the front entrance. You may also call your local Area Agency on Aging to secure the name and phone number of the Ombudsman.

The UALR Senior Justice Center can be reached at: **501 - 683 - 7153.**

**Strength in Numbers,  
AANHR Needs You!!**

AANHR is a nonprofit organization run by non-paid volunteers dedicated to protecting and improving the quality of care and life for Arkansas residents in long term care facilities.

Won't you please lend your support to us by joining our organization? Your membership dues help to pay for our activities that support our mission statement. Memberships are available on a calendar year basis. Join now and you will be a member through December 31, 2008.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

- I wish to receive the AANHR newsletter.
  - \$15 per individual membership enclosed.
  - \$20 per family or corporate membership.
  - \$4 per student or CNA membership.
  - Waive dues because of financial hardship.
- Please make checks payable to: AANHR and mail to PO  
Box 22421, Little Rock, AR 72221.

**Driving directions to  
First Assembly of God Church,  
4501 Burrow Road, North Little Rock**

**Coming from the North:**

When driving South on Highway 67/167, take exit #1 onto Warden Road. As soon as you safely can, move into the right-hand lane, as you will be turning right at the Golden Corral Restaurant onto Commercial Drive.

**Coming from East, West or South:**

If you are on either I-30 or I-40, take Highway 67/167 North. Take exit #2 onto Landers Road. Stay in the left-hand lane, as you will be turning left and going under Highway 67/167 and enter Warden Road going southbound. As soon as you safely can, move into the right-hand lane, as you will be turning right at the Golden Corral Restaurant onto Commercial Drive.

Commercial Drive terminates at the church. Proceed straight across Burrow Road into the church's parking lot and turn right at the far side of the building into the narrow alley-like drive.

The entry door is located about half-way down this side of the church and the meeting room (#113) is immediately inside the entrance door.



Arkansas Advocates  
*For*  
Nursing Home Residents

P.O. Box 22421 Little Rock, AR 72221-2421  
www.aanhr.org

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**AANHR's Mission Statement:**  
"To protect and improve the quality of care and life for residents in Arkansas nursing homes."