

**Project:** YWCA Centennial: *100 Years of Challenge and Change: Whatcom Women and the YWCA*

**Interviewee:** Alice Richards

**Interviewer:** Dr. Lynne Masland, YWCA Centennial history chair

**Date:** August 11, 2008

**Location:** Alice's home at 252 S. Garden St., Bellingham

**Transcriber:** Lori Torres

**Editor:** Lynne Masland and Jo Collinge

***What years did you work at the YWCA?***

I started in 1969 and I worked for 13 years so it was '82, but by that time Dorothy Culjat was the Executive [Director] and she had me...she wanted to have a nice newsletter so she wanted me to do that. And I think my hours were cut back at the end because finances were so bad so I did the newsletter. Now I've forgotten your question (laughter). You were trying to see how long I stayed? Well, I think I stopped in October. I started in October, stopped in October, started and stopped the same month so it was, I guess, exactly 13 years. But I stayed on, not with going down there, but doing this newsletter [*Women Are the Reason 'Y'*] one more time and helping with something called, oh, a special fundraiser in honor of someone. It's in this [scrap]book. I can show you the page about that.

***Was that the Singapore lady? [Lim Bong Soo, who lived at the Y in the 50s while studying at Western and visited in 1982. She later left the Y a trust fund in her estate.]***

No I have pictures of her too; she's in the back or the ending of the thing.

***Oh my, what a nice scrap book***

Yes, here's *Women are the Reason 'Y,'* that's the one [newsletter] I did.

***Oh, very nice***

Isn't that nice? Oh, [Executive Director] Roseanna [Stilwell Page] loved it . But, then, yeah, it was the Katie Murphy Memorial Award. I knew her, knew Katie, and knew how much they needed the money, so I helped work on that. I think like another...enough time to do the newsletter and do that from my home so I helped them out. I really feel, I don't know what word you could say, but the Y, I felt, helped me so much. I feel like I need to help them back, and I've never lost that feeling even though it's been all this time.

[Executive Director] Sybil Tucker talked me into contributing into a retirement program that just started soon after I came here. She said, 'Oh, I wish they had this when I was here,' and it was early on for the YWCAs because YWCAs had a lot of women working

for them, mostly, and also Blacks were employed in other parts of the country I guess. In fact, one of the first conventions I went to, the President was a Black woman, and coming from Bellingham, where there were hardly any people of color; was kind of a shock. But she was wonderful, and the way that all those women worked together, I just got a lot of learning from the Y that helped me grow, I think. So every time somebody wants to help somebody, I say well how 'bout the YW.

So it stayed with me, and I don't know whether that was Sybil Tucker or what, but I paid into that for 13 years, and I don't think very much, and of course the Y matched it, I think. I think it was only like \$10. It couldn't have been very much, because we didn't get paid very much but I -- after I started getting Social Security -- and I didn't collect it [the retirement fund contribution]. A lot of the students or people who worked there [YWCA] who did it [participated in the retirement program] would take the money back as soon as they didn't work there any longer, but I left mine in. And I can't remember if I had to pay to leave it in, or if you just left it in, but I still get monthly checks of over \$300 a month and that was probably my salary in those days you know. It's funny how that didn't stick with me on money but I just think, 'how can you say thank you for something like that?' It's just something that's a constant reminder. So whenever there's some kind of money raising thing, I think 'Well, I should give them my check.' But I haven't told many people that, that's kind of...

***But that's a really special reason and it does go together with our kind of theme that I'm working on -- or have discovered - of empowering women?***

Yes, and that's part of [what] their goal was in those days.

***And still is***

Oh right, of course.

***And the nice thing is that I mean financial help, financial security is one of the strongest ways to help women that there is I think.***

Well, another thing that they helped me do is go back to school, because those kids that were in the Human Services program -- they're in some of these [looking through the scrapbook] pictures along the way. They were so special. And so I did ask, and I think the [Western Washington State] College [now University] must have needed money at that time because I said 'Well, I already work there, how about if I pay the bills.' And you had to be a junior; so I wasn't quite a junior but I was close to it, so they let me work on that. In fact, I think it was the [Whatcom] Community College that had programs where you could get credit for different work you had done [experiential learning], and I had written so many articles for the newspapers and taken pictures and things that I got quite a few credits that way. So it was just like I was empowered, in a good way.

***Did you finish at Western?***

Yes, I finished in 1976. I got my BA, and in 1986 I got my master's in Anthropology. I was looking for something about women and the only place around here that had Women's Studies was Canada. And I thought, 'Oh, I couldn't drive up there every day, it would take forever,' and so I did Anthropology, and it took me those 10 years in between but I didn't work hard on it. I just...there were different classes you had to take and actually my thesis, my thesis was about somebody from the Y. Our teacher had us...we were supposed to decide what we would write about. [Alice did her thesis on Tran Luc, a Y resident in the early '80s.]

***Oh yes, do you have that photo of her [Vietnamese refugee Tran Luc]... that's used on the cover by any chance?***

I could have. We're still in touch with that family. Her second daughter just graduated from Western this year, and we're still in touch. This is her first daughter; this is dedicated to the first daughter and my husband.

***The first daughter just graduated from Western?***

No, the second one.

***The first one already graduated?***

Both have now.

***Because I have her [Tran Luc's] story from the Bellingham Herald. They did a big article about some of the students, people that were living at the Y in 1981.***

Yeah, they lived there in 1981.

***And there was a picture of her in the Herald, but I can't find anything but the Herald picture; I can't find the original photos.***

Oh I have lots of pictures of them, because this is the baby. I dedicated this [master's thesis] to Tina and Dick Berg.

***Now did she continue to stay here in Bellingham?***

That family is still here. There were three girls that came and stayed. They arrived on Mother's Day 1980. They called her a cousin, [who] had come from Canada in this nice car all dressed up, and said that her cousins were in Michigan. They were Chinese, but they had come out of Viet Nam and wanted to, um, and they were in Michigan already so they had already come to the United States. But they're, well, it tells in here what

happened. Their life was not...they just worked, worked. There were the three sisters. There were more in the family, there was a brother and another sister but the brother went to California and the other sister, I don't know how she's in here...see, I've forgotten all that...but they wanted to come here to be close to her 'cause she was in Vancouver. And [I said] 'Of course,' -- you know -- 'of course they can come.' Why would I say no? I had no idea that they couldn't speak English. That they would have all these things... And they arrived on Mother's Day. I wasn't there on Sunday so probably I didn't see them until Monday. They didn't have much money so the three of them stayed in one room. Of course people gave me heck for that, but that's all they could afford, and I was the one that said 'yes, they can come.' I think they slept across the bed somehow, but of course they were all young. At that time we had kitchens, not where they are now on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor but in the middle, so they were on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor near my office; 'cause I had an office in the end room where there was a fireplace, the front of the building. That's where Jessie Carver, when she was there, slept at nights when she would come on the weekends and stay, so it [the room] was used like that over the years. But then when they made me the Assistant [Director], I got to go upstairs instead of being downstairs. So they were right close, and this is a picture (that) whoever I identified as the photographer took of Tran in the kitchen there eating.

***Oh, wonderful, that's the picture I've been looking for. I mean it's published in the Herald so it was taken by, I know who took it actually but I can't find it, the Herald doesn't have good records of their photos.***

It's in the [thesis] acknowledgements, pictures of the family. [Bellingham Herald photographer] Becky Bolen-Rubey captured the portrait, the [thesis] title page [one] of Tran in the YWCA kitchen in 1982.

***That was for that article, and if you don't have the article I can make a copy of it for you.***

Oh I would love to see it. I probably did, but I know it's not here. But I know I have the picture someplace, the original anyway. I still have a few of these [copies of her thesis] left but there's still a copy in the library downtown, the Whatcom Community College library and up at Western, all of them if you are interested. Or if you would bring it back, I can loan you this one to take because this doesn't have any writing in it. A lot of them have people's autographs in it and different things in it.

***That would be lovely and, of course, I will bring everything back.***

Well, I have a file of stuff that I can just give you but that one is to loan.

***Absolutely.***

And actually I got it out the other day to see...you know, because of the problem now with immigration. Because they needed a sponsor, and I was the only one really in town that knew them. And I said, 'Oh, I can do that.' I think the Y did that to us. I think we usually said, 'Oh, I can do that,' not realizing that there were other things involved, because they had rules about what they were, had to do. But then I actually got to see them become citizens and all of that and go to, you know, when they became citizens. And so they just became like family to us and still are; they treat us so beautifully; and she lost her husband.

I can still remember the day at the Y when she [Tran] came, and she was crying, and I was downstairs, and I said what's the matter? And she said, well her mother had written her and told her that she must get married; she must find a husband. And I said, 'in Bellingham? (laughter) You'll have to go to California.' But she had been, I think, babysitting in different places -- and the jobs they took were not the best kind, and they'd either walk or take the bus 'cause they had no transportation. The youngest of the three sisters, when she got her car that was a big deal. They all have wonderful jobs, wonderful home lives, everything just developed, you know, looking back now. But then it was, 'how do they get out of this?' How do they learn to speak [English]? But there were classes, and a lot of the things were provided if they would be there, but they went and did everything they were supposed to. Then she [Tran] found a job at the...I think it was China Delight restaurant downtown, and, of course, the guy there was not married. He was Chinese, and that's who she married. That was just a wonderful story. The youngest one didn't marry, she has health problems I think, but she worked in the welfare system in town. That was Buu. But they...but she's marvelous, and they're so supportive of each other. No, I guess Buu is the second one; the youngest one is Phuong. She married a Lummi fella and they have a wonderful life; she works at the [Silver Reef] Casino. They come by and see us every so often; they're in touch.

***That's a good story isn't it?***

Well, that's...you know, I thought, in this [thesis] I don't have this [story] until the end of the back part. I have all this other stuff, and I thought, 'Oh, I should put something in about this.'

***Well I wouldn't have known had I not found that article, but I'd written about them actually a little bit in my...***

Well, probably they would talk to you if you wanted to. We have their -- [I] know where they live. Tran, what is her married name? That's silly. I can't remember...

***Can I ask you now about the years that you were, were you Program Director? Did you do some program directing when you were there?***

I think you did everything when you worked there, a little bit of everything. Luc is their last name, Luc, and this is their family. The pictures are in here so you'll have them.

There's a whole section that's just pictures of them; there's one chapter that's just about her life and her ancestors and so...

*Lovely, thank you*

I think it's interesting.

*Yes, I'm sure you did. I think it's interesting, too.*

Of course, there's a copy in I think in Switzerland or someplace. [Copies of Richards' thesis, "First Born: The Life History of Refugee Tran Luc," were sent to the United Nations Headquarters offices in New York City and Geneva, Switzerland.] But I thought maybe they [the sisters] wouldn't want their life story spread around, either, some of it. Sometimes it's kind of hard to know what to do. But it, actually all the work done with them has been wonderful. Even though it seemed, 'how am I going to do that?' There is something that would happen, somebody would come along that would be helpful. The man at welfare was Asian -- how would that happen in Bellingham? So he understood what they wanted and the importance of it. So it seemed like there were people that helped all along the way.

The first woman I met when I went there [to work at the YW] -- and, boy, what a place to go! YWCA -- all the people, all women and always busy. But she came across several states and was pregnant and wanted to have the baby and give it up for adoption. So it was like she didn't want anybody to know. In those days, that didn't happen publicly, and it didn't happen very often. She couldn't even afford to live in one of the rooms, she had to stay up in the 4<sup>th</sup> floor. There's no elevator, so she had to walk up and down those stairs. But one of the girls who lived there became her friend and would go with her different places and I think helped her survive. Then it was Sybil Tucker who talked to her about keeping the baby. And I don't know when that happened, Sybil took that on her own. I don't know whether there was something in Sybil's life that made her able to do that or just she...Sybil was a wonderful woman. She was the Executive [Director] there for a long time, and she took care of a sister that really had problems, but they were both very smart. Actually Sybil and I lived in houses across from the Bellingham Golf and Country Club before I was 6 years old. She lived there. So I've known her all my life, I guess. Once I was a church secretary at St. James Presbyterian Church for seven years before I came to the Y, and one time when she was over there she said, 'if you're ever looking for a job, come and see me.' Of course I wasn't then. OK. So she was just a very special person. So then I was just shocked when I found that out but it worked out evidently. I've never heard from the girl since, but I did hear that she got married. I don't know whether she married the man that was the father, but she was beautiful, a beautiful young girl, not a person that would be doing what you know must have just happened -- and so it just seemed like...Sometimes you don't get to hear the happy endings, you just know that it did end well.

***It did end well. Did she, so she had the baby then?***

She had the baby here. I thought that she was going to give it up for adoption and go home, and the next thing I knew she had the baby at the Y and was showing it around and was going home.

***Oh really!***

Yes, she went back to where she came from and we never heard from her again, and Sybil just looked happy.

***Oh my goodness, wow!***

Well I think Sybil was a good -- instructor's probably not a good word but -- a good source for all of us. She just seemed to listen. She had that way of listening and helping and saying the right thing. The thing that she said to me that I liked was...she had a brother. I don't know if I've ever met him, but she said that he told her that 'whoever is answering the phone down there is a YWCA person. You better keep her!' (laughter) I just said, 'Oh, really?' When it's somebody you don't know it's, like, how do you know?

***It must have been because you were helpful, warm and friendly.***

I suppose. You know, something like that. But you don't think about that when you're working, you just do your job.

***Right. Do you have more stories from that time?***

Well, I was looking through stuff and I found this one. When I went through the Human Services program, we had to write lots of papers. I know that I wrote one about the YWCA -- I don't know if you can find it -- and told all the different executives [directors], when they were there, and the [board] presidents. I think there's a list of them that would be up into the '80's at least. I think I took it and gave it to the gal that's there now.

***Julie [Foster, Executive Director]?***

And I think there used to be -- right inside the ballroom -- there was a bunch of books and things and a bookshelf. I think she put it there after she looked at it or something, but now they've moved all that. I asked her one time if she knew where it was because I thought it'd be nice to see it again, I guess, but I did give it to her. I thought the Y might as well have this. It was written with...you know, I was there to get the history so it has exactly the women's names that started it and all of that, so I thought why did I give that away?

*Well, without making a copy...*

But this is one [pointing to an item, perhaps a newsletter, in scrapbook] I wrote in March of '75. It was about when I was the acting [Executive Director, between Sybil Tucker's retirement and Dorothy Culjat]. I think I called it the Acting. I found these words from Albert Sweitzer about the essence of goodness, and I even posted that. I do remember doing that because there were so many people there that you didn't want somebody talking down to them. They really did need to make them work on helping them, so this talks about that. It also talks about how we got help for – Sedro-Woolley [Northern State Hospital for the mentally ill] closed at that time, sometime in there [1973], and we had to keep track of the times that we spoke to help people. So you can look at this if you want to, but I want this one back. And that is about the Y.

*So you were primarily in charge of the residence?*

I was the Residence Director. I worked in the office for a while, and then the Residence Director was my friend, Mary Lou Orlosky, Mary Lou Colby it used to be. In fact, she lived next door to Sybil, so we were long long time friends, the three of us. When I went there she was the Residence Director, and it was fun working with her. But she got sick and didn't get well, and so she couldn't come back. She lived nearby even. It was just really sad. I felt so strange 'cause that was part of the fun of coming is that she was going to be there, a little buddy to talk to. So then when Sybil knew she couldn't come back, she asked me to be the Residence Director 'cause she had to have somebody. That was the way it was run in those days so that was a biggie. But for a while I did both, I think. It's funny. You don't remember that part, just know you did it.

Well, actually when I went to look for a job, I was secretary at St. James Church. The minister I worked with so many years [was] Glen Carlson. His wife, Madeline, was on the board at the Y, and I just thought she was so wonderful. She's gone now, but she was, oh, special. There's a picture of her in here, I think. Actually I think I prayed: 'where can I go?' 'cause I knew I needed to leave the church. That wasn't my church, and I needed to get more hours. Our kids were getting bigger. But I didn't know what I was going to do, and I'd really forgotten about Sybil, what she said that time. So I went and went through the interview with Sybil and came away from that. I think it was the same week -- and she was interviewing many people I'm sure -- but I was going that way and -- in those days, I think, Forest was a two-way street -- and I thought, I don't know how the car got parked. The car got parked in front of the Y, and I didn't have an appointment. I didn't even plan...I was going someplace else, and after I thought, 'How did I get here? Why am I here?' I thought maybe I should go in, because I didn't park this car. So I went in and that is when she hired me. So I don't know whether it clicked, something clicked, or something happened that I didn't know about that she never told me, or what, but I always felt like I had a lot of extra help.

*In getting that job...*



And probably a lot of help after I got there. In fact the first week I was there, there was something happened every day. One day -- the kitchen was on the front, on the basement part of the main floor -- and something happened in there. I don't know if it blew up the electricity or what, but it happened when I was at lunch. I came home for lunch, went back and so my husband said "be careful." I just laughed and said, 'oh, there's lots of people that live down there, lots of things can happen.'

We had a girl that tried to take her life one time, a later tale. I can still remember how everybody was frozen; people that I respected so in leadership roles, they couldn't move. I just walked upstairs, I suppose because I'd been doing it so many years, to see if she was okay, and that was hard. She was on that far end room looking out both ways. I don't even remember her name or any of that, but she had tried to take her life and needed some help. So I went back downstairs, and everybody's still standing there, staring not talking. I called somebody, probably emergency, to come and get [her], so it seemed like when everything happened like that that there was always somebody to help you. It really was great.

The Y owned the building at the end here of the block at that time, and we had men staying in there. So many of the women that worked at the Y were afraid of men, but I had five brothers. I had no sisters. So I was not afraid of men, but I thought they were interesting and fun to work with. They would come down to the other building; I think I have a picture someplace of a couple of them with me. It turned out nicely. We also owned the house next door and rented it to a family, and that family had a baby, and the baby died, or there was something that happened real sad to them. He couldn't hear very well so when my husband [Leroy Richards] had that hearing problem, he was one of the people we talked to; and we stayed in touch with them over the years too. I can't remember his name right now but he's known in the community for the work he does; he lives on Lummi Island I think. So, I could probably track it down, but really the Y just seemed to have so many connections that were marvelous.

Then the house next to the residence...there was a building for a while that I think the gal Carol Batdorf [Program Director] was there, have you heard about her? She did so many creative things, oh my, and I think she had maybe art classes or something in there. Eventually we had what we call Y's Buys -- now it's in the paper they're moving around -- but that started with the Y. It was the Y's Buys, and we would have it at that end building [1000 North Forest] in the front part of it, the lobby part of it, I think. The guys were in the rooms behind but we would have -- not every day but just -- I've forgotten exactly how, but I worked on that. Plus we went to different places and set up things for sale out of our vehicles -- like, well, there was the movie lot, that was one place we used to go to, and there was another one out by the airport, I used to go to. Actually the one at the Y, I think because they didn't have their... women are just as smart as men but in the days when I was growing up the women didn't have the chance to do things like they should have. They still don't, I don't think, but it's different now because the young

women don't even realize there's any difference. We did, and there were all these different women at home that were so talented, and they loved coming to the Y because of Carol Batdorf who worked with them to do things. Of course they're the ones that started Boulevard Park. That was a biggie at the time.

**Yes**

Were you involved in that?

***I wasn't but we have interviewed several of the women from the Eco Action group so there's going to be a section in the book about them...***

Oh good, 'cause they were marvelous. Phyllis Jones was a good [Board] President. I'm still in touch with her too. We went to the wedding of Roseanna's [former Executive Director Stilwell Page] son this summer; well, we sat with them at the wedding, it was outside. Well, it seemed like Ferndale to me but it there is a special park out there, amazing. Roseanna, have you talked to her? [Lynne nods.] Oh good, she's wonderful.

***Is she still here or has she gone back [to England]?***

I think she's here this summer for a while because the wedding was in June and maybe she will only be here until August, but I think she's trying to sell her place in Ferndale and when she settles in Bellingham, she will settle here. She wants to be in town -- although I don't get to see her that often, but that's my memory of her situation.

***So she's not going back to England?***

Well I think she has to go back; there's something about selling the house there. She was married, but she's divorced now. He was here for the wedding, I saw him. I don't know if that's easily being worked out, sometimes those things don't work out easily, but she wouldn't say anything and I don't know enough to say it correctly. We're good friends with the son that got married because we played golf with him. When he was just a little boy I thought he'd be another Tiger [Woods], he was so good. He could hit the ball forever. People would be like 'wow!'

***Now you were involved in the golf tournament?***

That started in '73, and I think that's when I was the acting Executive, so that might have been how I got it started. I can't remember, isn't that funny? But I have some numbers on it; I think they're in your file,

***Right, and you gave some to Pat O'Brien and I have those, she gave those to me.***

(Looking through scrapbook) OK, well, there may be more here -- so when I do a medical review, I give who I am at the top and then all the hospitalizations but anyway I cut that out so if you wanted...

***That helps, yeah***

(Still commenting on scrapbook) One of the doctors saw it, it usually goes to the nurse; but, he said, "I like this." And in here I've got...this is the picture I took. I made these postcards when I was there, and this is the last one I've got in blue

***Oh yes, I've got that picture, it's a wonderful picture.***

Well, the girls used to write, and we'd write notes to people that we wanted to let know -- and so it [the picture] was on a lot of things. Oh, the Luc family, they said they would like one of those, but I don't have any more...and this was another thing I think I did to advertise using the picture. I put them up different places...this was something I did in 1969, the first year I was there. I went in October, and it was a poem that I wrote up, a Merry Christmas greeting to the girls, with apologies to Charles Schultz. Is there a song that goes like this, 'Happiness is driving to the Y?'

***Oh, how nice.***

(Looking at photographs and identifying people) I liked that. I don't remember...maybe that's how I got along with the girls so well, stuff like that. And these are some pictures of Sybil Tucker, and have you talked to Dottie Dale? She's in this picture, and here's Carol Batdorf and, oh, the gal that was on at night, and Sybil, and another gal...I must have their names someplace. And this is Jessie [Carver], she was reading with me and...

***Oh, was this Jessie?***

That's Jessie. (Points out another photo) This is the woman...maybe her name is down someplace...and this is Jessie and Jack Carver is her nephew on the [*Bellingham Herald*].

***Right, and do you know that Jack's grandmother, which would have been Jessie's husband's mother, was Delia Crites who started the Monday Club?***

No. Well, I think that's one of the reasons all these different clubs happen, because when we were there, there was a club that had been meeting at the Y for many many years, what was it called, brunch...lunch club or Monday Club, it had a special name, and, boy, those women were tight. That's not the right word, but they were such good friends. I think we all were wishing we could get in it somehow because it's was so wonderful, so special. [The club was the Bun Club.]

***And it's still going, I have a friend who's still in the Monday Club. I don't know how active, how many people are in it anymore...***

No, well that was a long time ago...here we go. This is Florence Brussel (spelling?). Oh she was wonderful. She was in the room right over the door, and she stayed there all the time. Then when she wanted to go away for a day or two or the weekend, Jessie [Carver] would come and stay in the room at the end and take her place. These are the swim people, Jessie, and Shirley Beatty (spelling?) and Carolyn Griffith; they had their names in one of the [recent YWCA newsletter] articles was asking who they were. We told Julie [Foster] but, anyway, just in case you run into that again... I think at the meeting that we had where they were showing some pictures before we had the meeting of the Y, they had this picture of Jessie Carver...no, they had my name, Alice Richards, Deputy Director, you know dah, dah, dah, and then the next thing I saw -- maybe I missed something -- but it was Jessie Carver. I'm like, 'Oh my gosh, I'm going to tell them that's me, that's not me...' So I don't know who's doing that, but yeah, I think this is one that I gave...so you can have this one if you want.

***Well I do have this one. Pat [O'Brien] gave it to me, thank you.***

Did she give you this one too? This is about the golf tournament.

***Yes, she did give me the...***

I guess she called [me], and said do I know anything about it...

***I had called her because I knew she was very active as a golf player...***

Oh, yes. It took somebody on the board to be interested in golf for that [YWCA golf tournament] to happen. Actually, in 1973 there were hardly any golfing things available for women, nothing like this, so it was a big deal. But only 58 people came, and we didn't make a lot of money. We didn't know how to do that yet, but we kept doing it. I think because I was there and interested and because there'd be someone on the Board like Pat or others that got involved that we were able to keep it going. I played in all of them, 30 years, and I played each time. I think one time I had purchased a place but I couldn't -- the family had something or couldn't go or something, so I got somebody to take my place. But all the others...

***Do you know how long they continued?***

Til just a couple years ago.

***That's what I thought, about thirty years.***

Yeah, there's a write-up someplace on that last one because it was families. Yes, because my husband came and Pat O'Brien and her husband so I've got a picture of the four of us someplace, but I think it was just a few years ago. 2003 was 30 years, and the reason it hasn't gone on, I think, is there's no one on the Board that has the drive to do that, maybe nobody on the staff either; it takes somebody that really loves the game.

***And I think you're right***

And also Julie's been so good to work with men in the community... There are other groups that have had tournaments, I think, and have given the proceeds to the Y but not on a regular basis is the problem. 'Cause now they bring \$10,000 or more. That's a lot more than the \$400 but I - we did get up to \$3000 I think.

And this is another one [picture] that I thought you should have a copy. This is an extra one: something at the national, the family meeting conference down in California. I was the delegate from this area. When I got down there, the Y didn't have anyone representing them, so I got to represent the YWCA, and I wrote this up; they liked it. They printed a couple of things that I've written, and that's one; you can keep this. You can keep that stuff. Now where do I go from here what were you asking me?

***Well I wondered if maybe I could use this picture, would you mind if I borrowed this picture?***

For a picture of Tran? You don't want the other one, huh?

***Do you have it?***

I'm not sure. I have to look.

***If you had it, it would be wonderful.***

Ok. Well, I think this is their picture. I didn't take it. They sent it to me, so I think we'd want to ask them but she's [Tran's daughter] gone to Australia to work. This one [Tran's other daughter] went to England for a while. They just have so much energy.

***I just think it would be lovely to have a 'before and after' picture.***

Oh yeah. Well, she looks great.

***She looks fabulous but yet she still looks like herself! But if you had a copy of that other picture of her eating, and if I could use this picture that would be wonderful.***

I'll have to find my original thing of this. It probably is upstairs in the attic part up there. I'll have to move all these things to get to it, but I can do that maybe tomorrow and look...

***I would love that, Alice, if you wouldn't mind doing that. I think it would be just so lovely. I'm trying to put these little success stories in and these personal things as well as the history because I think that's what's going to be memorable to people who read the book.***

Well, that's what's memorable about working there. You got to know all these people and their problems. Actually, Roseanna hired a woman who had a baby, and they're still friends, did she talk about her? I got pictures somewhere of the woman and her baby. She worked in the office downstairs, that main one there, and the baby was so good. She would work and then hold the baby or feed it when it was necessary. That just didn't happen in those days, it was monumental.

***Right, I assume she was nursing.***

That's what I don't remember. All she would have to do is close the doors.

***Because that was quite in those days...***

OH, I know, I have three kids. I nursed all mine because that's what you did, that's what was expected I think.

***Ok, is there anything before we start going through the scrapbook -- and I'll probably turn this off while we go through the scrapbook -- but is there anything else you would like me to especially know about?***

I told you about going to school, because I think in many places you work that wouldn't have been allowed. I wasn't gone that much, classes were short, and I even think I went to Mt. Vernon and drove some kids down there so that helped them, and it was just a special relationship.

***OH I bet it was, I bet it was wonderful to feel like you could do that too, really stepping through a door where you thought the door had been closed.***

Well, it seemed like impossible. Yes, well, I think I was 50 years old when I graduated, so that was nice and unusual, but the classes were different. I still remember going to one and the kids all sat on the floor to talk. There was one woman there, and she wouldn't sit down, and she said, 'don't sit down on the floor,' and I thought, 'why not? It looks comfortable.' And it was like the Y. You adjusted to the situation, and here she was just being 'don't do that.' so I don't think she lasted very long. But it was different, the

teachers, too, were different. The teacher I had in Mt. Vernon was a woman and that was especially good, too, I thought.

***Now did you go... when you went back to school did you go to Whatcom Community College first to finish your...***

I did that the same time. I took classes on weekends or nights. I had been taking classes, that was before Whatcom had a place. You know for years they didn't have a place that you go to. So I later worked at Whatcom for 13 years. I worked in the Writing Center as the ESL specialist, English as a Second Language, and some of those people, especially the women who played golf (laughter), became good friends.

***But when you got your degree had you already had some college?***

Yes, I got a scholarship out of high school for one year so I had gone one year. The scholarship was Western and I didn't want to be a teacher. That's what I knew, so I forget what I signed up as, but anyway there were classes you had to take in those days to proceed. That wasn't a lot of money, but it wasn't money I had, so I went to work for Charles F. Larrabee, the son of Frances Larrabee that started the Y. I worked as his secretary for several years.

***Oh really! What was his name?***

Charles Frances Larrabee, he had an office downtown in what's the Bon Marche. I think there was a restaurant next door, and there was a photography studio across the street that my girlfriends worked at so we had lunch together.

***Now what was he like?***

Wonderful man, just wonderful. He was so nice.

***Now did he continue to work here or did he move away.***

No, he lived here. I forget when he died. He came to our wedding. I was so impressed. We did invite him, but I thought, 'Well, he'll never come,' but he and his wife came to the wedding. I was still working for him when I got married, so most of the people there came to the wedding. But I can't think...he was...he had a lot of brothers, but I think a lot of them died or something happened, so he was always helping other people in the family with whatever they needed -- plus his own children who were grown, of course, by that time. His wife was a wonderful person, absolutely beautiful.

***What was her name, do you remember?***

Oh, I'd have to think about that. She used her maiden name, Mary something Larrabee [possibly **Mary Brownlie Larrabee. In the CPNWS Larrabee Papers, box 5, Charles F. Larrabee file, there is reference to a 1917 wedding announcement to Mary Adele Brownlie**] I always thought that was neat that she said it that way. Larrabee was added on at the end like sometimes you do when you're first married, but she'd been married a long time. I just felt really lucky to be there.

*Anything else?*

It's hard to say until you bring up a subject, and then it just pours out.

*How about Red Stocking Teas?*

Well there's a picture someplace of me at a Red Stocking Tea, uh, here.

*Oh yes. Oh yes.*

That was early on, and those are women from the First Christian Church, where I'm a member of the First Christian Church. I probably told Sybil about how [there's a blip in the tape here] that they sang. They had special outfits so it just fit the Red Stocking Tea. That was a big thing. They're starting it up again, but during Sybil's time that was a really a big affair. Special. I think it began Christmas in Bellingham, 'cause it was held the first part of December -- Saturday or Sunday, I can't remember which day, but it was really well attended and a lot of church people came. Sybil knew so many people in the community. It seemed like she just knew everyone.

I did start the women golfers in the evening. They had a morning group, and lots of times I would work so many hours and weekends, too, that when Roseanna came, she said, 'You should take a day off during the month 'cause you work so many hours.' I said, 'Oh, I know. I'll take the first Tuesday because that's golf.' The women played golf that day, and I never got to play with them. So I took the first Tuesday. And then I thought, 'I bet it would be nice if there were a Tuesday evening group,' so I think I asked out at the golf course. They said, 'Well, there's nobody to start it,' I said, 'Well, what if I start it, and what if I start it as a Y club? It was the Bun Club that they had at the Y, not the Monday Club, but the Bun Club, and so I thought well this could be like the Bun Club. So we had the meeting, and they wanted to call themselves "Ladies of the Evening" and I said, 'I don't think that will go over at the Y.' So we decided on "Swingers." So for many years even after it stopped being connected to the Y, it was the Swingers. They call themselves something else now, but I talked to them recently even, because they know I'm the one that got them started. Some of them do, I guess. I like to tell that, but it isn't something a that people do anymore, I guess, and maybe it's not set up so you can. They had to be a member of the Y, so they paid their dues, which, I think, was only like \$4 but in those days \$4 was a lot of money. Sounds funny to say that. But they would play nine holes. I thought it'd all be people like me that were older and worked. They were a whole



bunch of young women whose husbands came home and took care of the kids so they could come and play golf. They were so tickled to be out that they wanted to go out and go someplace afterwards and have a drink or eat or whatever. They did want to be "ladies of the evening" -- with each other. I don't think I was able to do that part, but it was a fun, fun group. It just evolved, and I think now it's bigger than the morning group.

***Is it still going?***

Oh yeah, only it's not connected to the Y. I think it was only there about eight years and I wasn't active in it, in both groups, and I really liked the morning group. I liked to play 18 in those days.

***Do you still play?***

After I stopped working, I was the President of the morning group so I still played. My husband is a golfer, and he got me started, and then I played more than he did.

***Where do you play?***

Lake Padden, that's where this was, at Lake Padden. That's where the golf tournament started, too, there but then the Country Club said we could have it there. They needed to have a group like that so they could tell -- was it Anne Rose or somebody on the Board that got that set up? There were all these people that helped it happen that didn't really get a name or get involved, but the things they did helped it happen. And that was like that at the Y. It seemed like there's always somebody that would come along, and whatever needed to be done they would help it happen. Then wow! We became good friends.

***Do you remember much about the Bun Club?***

No. Just that these people that are in that picture with Jessie Carver were all members, and the things they talked about made you want to be one because they had wonderful times. Oh it was so nice. I don't know who would be able to tell you more. Probably they're gone now, but it was that kind of group and they had been meeting for a long time. Maybe there'd be something in it. I don't know if I wrote up that in the one I wrote about the Y or not.

***Well, they started right after the war.***

World War II?

***Actually it started as a club for women who went on to work after high school after World War II, and they were very active in the 50s. They made Kits for Korea for orphanages, they assembled things...***

I didn't hear that part of it; I just thought they had lunch together.

*They did do community - you know - social service things as well as have a good time.*

Well, of course, that's probably why they lasted. Well, that'd be important to write about it. But I think that's what happened at the Y; there are these people that met there and then seemed like they wanted to be together more.

There was another group that did something. I don't know if I have a picture. It was the church secretary -- somehow there was a place downtown where they held an open house...and I don't know if it was for women that might need some help. It didn't last very long, but there would be women that would volunteer...and I think it was the secretaries that are church women, church secretaries, church women that would be the hostesses. That's what I have a picture of is these two women sitting at this table. It's not at the Y and I never did it. I just know about it.

*Oh, that would have been the Interfaith one, the Interfaith women, 'cause I know the Y worked with them, collaborated with them on an Interfaith tea for several years and...*

What year would that have been?

*Sixties perhaps*

Well it's kind of on the edge. There were a lot of things you knew about but weren't closely involved in...

*And I think it was kind of on the edge anyway. But in the Sixties (I believe it was), the YWCA nationally updated its mission statement to reflect a more ecumenical [perspective] you might say...or people of other religions. Acknowledging in the United States that we had -- although the YWCA had -- a Christian background, but they wanted to include people of other faiths beyond the Christian faith. So they updated their mission statement to reflect that. And that really did, I think, spark some work, which I think had been ongoing before, with the Interfaith group. I know there were some women from the Greek Orthodox Church, St. Sophia, who were involved; some women who were involved from Hadassah, which is the Jewish [women's organization]; and women from...*

That must have happened before I came on because I don't remember that part.

*And they did teas for a while.*

Well, I went to, I forget how many conventions. I went to one with Sybil Tucker when I first came that was in Texas. First time I'd flown, so it seemed like there was so much

excitement -- I don't know if excitement's the right word -- just really way beyond what I thought I would ever get to do.

*So the job opened...*

I learned about so many things and met so many people -- and stayed in touch, it seemed like, with lots of them too.

*Well, thank you. I'm going to shut this down now so we can go through the scrap book if that's ok with you.*