

Park Tower Profile

Pam Woll, A Friendly Face

by Bob Shamo

The pleasant looking lady in our mall, the one typing away in that corner office as you head out to the dock? Why, that's Pam Woll, with whom I talked early one spring morning about life in general and her experiences in particular.

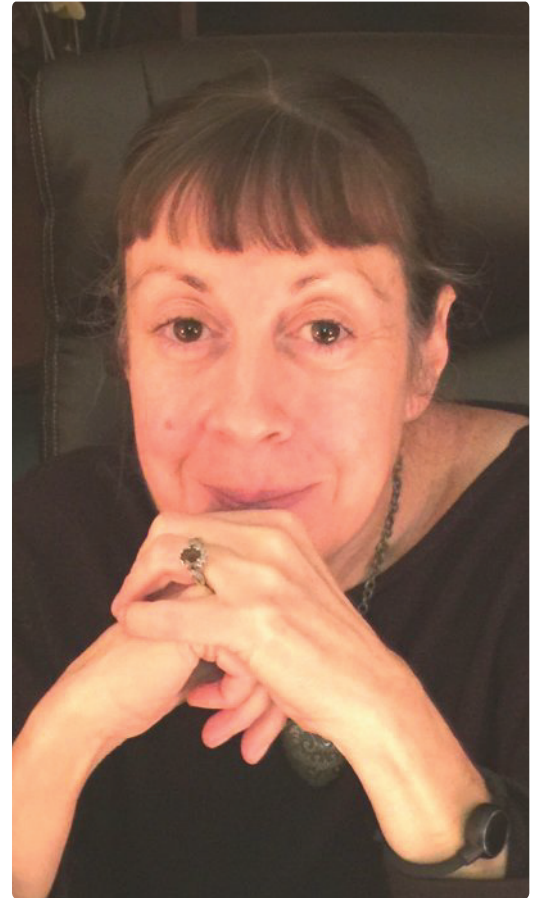
Pam is a writer, trainer and consultant in the area of behavioral health. Like most specialized writers, she found her way to this particular niche over time and following a number of work experiences.

A journalism major at college, her first job after graduation was reporting for a suburban newspaper, where she specialized in stories on "quirky" (her word) people. There were also jobs to put bread on the table, as when — long

before moving here — she worked as a hostess at Jonathan Livingston Seafood, a 1970's era Lettuce Entertain You restaurant in Park Tower's commercial mall. For awhile, she even wrote reports for a couple of Chicago detective agencies!

In the years that followed, Pam grew increasingly frustrated in a series of less-than-satisfying jobs, until *Voices for Illinois Children*, a children's advocacy group, gave her a chance to start writing again. Those initial contacts have blossomed over time, and now she finds herself immersed in such sub-specialties as trauma, returning veterans, addiction, resilience training, stress management, and population health approaches.

Pam bought her place at Park Tower in the early 1990's, just as the threads of her career were coming together. Except for an interval of a few years when she was caring for an aging



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parent, she's been here ever since, writing first in her 04 tier unit and more recently in that cozy corner office where we talked.

She likens her working arrangement at Park Tower to living in a small town with a shop on Main Street, but not having to sell anything! She is good with words — *"Not a marketing bone in my body," "It's less about your resumé and more about who you know!" "My mind hasn't got many doors, mainly windows," "Even the most self-sufficient among us, on some elemental level need human connection to stay strong."*

She is also anecdotal and likes to illustrate with examples. When asked about important people in her life, Pam thought immediately of her high school freshman English teacher, a young woman herself, who had found value in Pam's writing and instilled some much-needed self-confidence. And a respected college poetry teacher made a similar contribution when

he went out of his way to renew the acquaintanceship years later.

A rare day off, Pam says, will find her up in her condo working on a song. Yes, she is also a writer of songs, usually simple settings of her own poetry and sometimes accompanied by piano or the Celtic harp she uses to compose them. *The Red Blood of the Somme* is one such song and a particularly moving example because it illustrates one of Pam's favorite subjects, the reality of strength and healing in many people who have sustained traumatic stress injuries in war.

As explained at the beginning of the song, the Battle of the Somme was one of the bloodiest of World War I. This song is written in the voice of a fictional British Soldier who survived that battle, only to find that it had followed him home and a new battle had begun. The song, together with narrative and photos, can be experienced on YouTube at youtu.be/EmWUQ9bRbdk.

Pam's website, www.humanpriorities.com, also invites viewers to read a small self-help book she wrote a few years ago, **How to Get the Piranhas Out of Your Head**. The book is a light-hearted approach to stress management, with readers also able to download study materials — a Workbook and a Leader's Guide.

Pam Woll would definitely want me to mention the latest wonderful thing that's happened to her — a liaison with a man she's known professionally for 20 some years, and to whom she is now engaged. David's interests are similar and, like her, he mixes easily and seems genuinely at home here. We share Pam's joy and wish them the best.

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Bob chairs the Newsletter Committee and edits TowerTalk. 

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