

Gleanings



'Bring a plate'

We are fast approaching the season when a myriad of end-of-year events are held and we are invited to 'bring a plate'. Judging by the puzzlement of many newcomers to this country, when this request is made, the expression, if not the practice, may be distinctly New Zealand.

As readers of Gleanings we have all experienced such functions. The concept of bringing whatever you can, for the greater good, in my opinion reflects some of the traits of our organization. In the general scheme of things we are a relatively small group dispersed throughout the country, offering variety, diversity and 'nourishment' through a wide range of ministries to each other and the communities we live and serve in. As Presbyterian women, we are known on 'community grapevines' locally, nationally and internationally, having the potential to meet challenges and opportunities and to invite others to join us in them.

We can find inspiration from the story in John's Gospel of the young lad who stepped up with his small contribution towards what might be described as a pot-luck 'picnic on the grass' for a crowd of five thousand plus. His example caused a chain reaction. We have that same potential. As followers of Jesus Christ we are called to be inspired and compassionate women, responding to the needs of people around us and far away. It may require money, practical help or to be a voice calling in a seemingly hopeless situation. The fact of life is that Jesus Christ needs what we can offer. So, when we are next invited to 'bring a plate' may we remember that little can be much in the hands of Jesus.

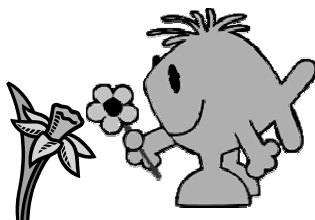
Nola Stuart

HIV/AIDS BROCHURE prepared by the APW UN Committee is ready for distribution. This brochure has been developed to raise the awareness of HIV/AIDS with a focus on valuing and respecting life.

The brochure includes information about the global epidemic, the relationship between gender inequality and HIV/AIDS, the relationship of faith and HIV/AIDS and resources for learning more about HIV/AIDS. I encourage you all to use this brochure as widely as possible among your groups, friends and family to develop a deeper understanding and awareness of this issue that affects everyone of us through our own society and the wider world. Brochures are available from Mary McIntyre.

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Are Scholarships outmoded?

A little research has shown that in the last 15 years, 44 girls have benefited from scholarships given by Friends of Turakina and from A.P.W. 10 of the girls currently at Turakina hold scholarships. Others who have left school include university graduates in Viticulture, Information Services and Veterinary Science; 2 are due to graduate in International Studies this year; another 6 are completing study in university or polytechnics. One owns and manages a clothing store specializing in Maori design, 2 are teachers at Kohanga Reo and Kura Kaupapa, 1 participates in Howard Morrison's performing arts group, another won a NZ idol competition and 2 have responsible jobs in data entry. The staff is adamant that had it not been for the scholarships, many would have slipped out of education and not have reached their potential.

Turakina Maori Girls College is a special place which values the support of A.P.W.

Bridgebuilders Network 10th Anniversary Celebration

This has been planned for May, 2007 in Auckland. The weekend will be a time of thankfulness for God's guidance in the past and a time to pray and plan for a vision for Bridgebuilders on-going journey.

Over the years one of Bridgebuilders main thrusts has been to support and empower Christian women in Pacific Rim countries to stand up against domestic violence which is still widespread, and to pursue equality and justice for all members of their communities. We have promoted Restorative Justice programmes, peace promotion projects, and several workshops including one on the plight of girl children in many countries. Sustainable social and environmental development, and confidence building for women have also been in our programmes.

If you would like to know more about Bridgebuilders which was formed in 1996 by the APW National Executive, then this celebration would be an excellent opportunity to do so. Registration forms for May 2007 will be available in late October from – Bridgebuilders Office, St. David's Presbyterian Church, 70 Khyber Pass Rd., Grafton, Auckland.

Lynne Milne (for BB Committee)

Snippets

Operation Cover up: St. Mark's, Tokoroa reply to the ladies of Birkenhead, yes we are knitting too. We had Liz Clarke and the local co-ordinator to our meeting in July when we presented them with four knitted blankets, two cot blankets, two hand-made quilts and some baby booties. We had only been knitting for a few months and a gold coin donation was taken. We were able to give Liz \$23.00 towards the cost of sending the blankets, etc. to Romania and Moldova. The local paper came and took a photograph of the ladies with the blankets and we appeared in the South Waikato News.

Waikanae A.P.W. recently held All Saints Day two months early! Almost 30 women got busy looking up encyclopedia, visiting the library, using the internet and generally fossicking out stories of different Saints. The result was a fascinating afternoon where we learnt quite a lot about Saints, and quite a lot about each other. We concluded with the singing of "I sing a song of the saints of God" which ends with the words – "and I mean to be one too." An easy idea for a fun afternoon.

The Spring gathering of the women of Central Otago decided they did not need to keep \$700 in their Travel Fund, so the decision was made to buy an item of furniture needed in the Dunstan Hospital Chapel. A plaque saying that the item has been given by the women of the Union and Presbyterian Churches in Central Otago is to be put on the item of furniture.



Around & About

Christchurch Presbyterian: We have recently held two very different events. Our 'Morning of Refreshment' was shared with our Methodist friends. The theme was 'water' and as we were meeting at Sumner Church, most of us had to drive along the foreshore and we appreciated and were aware of the beauty of the sea. The church was decorated with shells, driftwood, pictures and colours relating to water. We listened to a recording of a storm as it reached its peak and then calmed down – we asked God to calm us. Our Chaplain, Margaret Simpson, spoke of rainbows – over the sea, and like little children, we enjoyed watching bubbles floating in the air. The Bible has many references to water and we moved into small groups to reflect on some of these. A time of sharing followed with stories, some sad, some happy, some funny and some very moving. The story of Jesus by the Sea of Galilee was read and at the appropriate time members were each given a chocolate fish. The setting, the music, the sharing, and Margaret's calm, gentle manner all contributed to a real feeling of refreshment. Our 'Fun and Fellowship Day' had them, 'Back to the Kitchen', and approximately 60 women attended. The hall was decorated with tea towels, kitchen items and recipe books, both old and new. Quizzes, a competition to recognize spices, etc. from the pantry, stories about special tea towels, and a fashion parade of aprons, all contributed to a very happy time. We always enjoy meeting with our Methodist friends for this time of fun and fellowship. **Gillian Burlton**

General Assembly

News of the Assembly activities and discussion can be found on the Presbyterian website each day of Assembly. You are also invited to uphold the new Moderator, Pamela Tankersley in prayer. If you would like to be part of this ministry please contact Heather Tate kevtat@clear.net.nz who will send you regular prayer items throughout Pamela's term of office. In remembering Pamela in her responsibility, let us also be mindful of St. David's, Palmerston North as it adjusts to a challenging phase which will see the absence of Pamela at times.

CWS is hosting the visit of Damaris Albuquerque and Gilberto Aguirre of CEPAD (The Council of Protestant Churches of Nicaragua), which it has supported for over 10 years.

Nicaragua is a country of vast wealth and abject poverty. A visit to the Capital would give the impression that it is a modern and beautiful country but along with poverty, there is much corruption at Government level. There are 5.8 million people, 50% are under 17 years. Many exist on the minimum wage which is \$US50 per month and as 30% are unable to get schooling there is a huge literacy problem. Many of the services such as communications, electricity, health, education have been privatised and so all have to pay to benefit from them. CEPAD works mainly in the rural areas, with education and training the main emphasis. Women are able to access \$200 loans to help them plant gardens or buy small animals which in turn provide them with a living. The farmers are taught how to market their produce and although there is a free trade agreement with the U.S.A., it often does not work because the farmers are unable to meet the high standards set by the U.S.A. for importing their produce.

CEPAD is able to encourage small pressure groups to press for such things as schools, better roads, electricity, the provision of water, food, income opportunities.

There is free speech in Nicaragua and so the Christian radio is used to help raise awareness e.g. the causes of poverty and to educate people. During the 1980 war 50,000 of the population were killed and so now they are a peace loving people who are very against war as a solution.

It is worthwhile that CWS continue to support the 28 Nicaraguan Churches which form the CEPAD organisation. For more information, log onto the website www.cepad.org.ni

Shirley Fraser, Hazel O'Brien, Margaret Hastie

Thanks to all contributors.
Some news will be held until
next month – Nan Burgess
PLEASE NOTE – New email
address n-burgess@xtra.co.nz