



Women's Federation for World Peace, USA

An NGO in General Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations

Women's Federation for World Peace, USA E-Newsletter

Becoming Women of Peace

March/April 2006

Dear WFWP,

Welcome to the March/April 2006 issues of WFWP, USA's E-Newsletter! We hope you are taking the time to savor the beauty of the new spring.

In this issues, we cover the International Women's Day event held in Washington, DC, the CSA women's conference in Montevideo, Uruguay, and Benefits for the Schools of Africa that were held in two regional chapters.

Our wish is that the E-News can be a tool to connect women across the nation in support of strengthening the family, sponsoring international service projects, and promoting peace and reconciliation activities. Enjoy!

Jennifer Ang, Editor

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by Caroline Betancourt, Vice President of WFWP, USA and Regional Chairwoman of the DC Metro Chapter

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by Dr. Luanne Ruona, Director, Center for Holistic Living

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by N*I*N Sharyn Bebeau, Founder and President, The Archetypal Academy Member, WFWP Leadership Team, Colorado Regional Chapter

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music played. Whole Foods had graciously donated all the delicious little cookies filled with airy light cream, and the English scones were the art of volunteers. A rare and treasured treat, Devonshire clotted cream, was enjoyed by all. A number of youngsters graciously showed up to lend a helping hand.

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Wonderful, dedicated women from the Colorado Chapter of the WFWP worked selflessly to produce this very elegant affair. Grace, serenity, warmth and open-heartedness set the stage for the guests to step outside of time and relax, as they were pampered with pleasures for the palate and the eye.

Christine Martinez, a leader with WFWP in Colorado, eloquently asked women to "...answer the call of your hearts, and live for a higher purpose. Listen to the voice that cries out to you to make a difference in the world. We can heal the residual resentment of slavery by serving our sisters in Africa. Each of us is a rose, that lives and blossoms supported by our thorns. Let us offer our fragrance and beauty, our love and compassion to heal the world in a substantial way. Make a donation to the New

Hope Technical Institute in Rwanda.”

Catherine Ichinohe, President of the Colorado Regional Chapter of WFWP, gave the guests a wonderful overview of the many dedicated projects the Women’s Federation supports. WFWP friends and members experienced a burst of pride and were honored to be part of an organization with so many helping healing arms that are reaching out to embrace the globe.

In her talk entitled, “Transforming Tragedy into Transcendence; How to Be New in an Old Relationship”, Nin Bebeau spoke of the challenging process of shedding victim hood, and using the tragedies of life to take on our full divine natures, to become the healers we can be.

Hadidja Nyiransekye, who was the principal of the Health Sciences Secondary School in Gisenyi, Rwanda before the genocide, spoke of being a mother with four children, a Hutu woman married to a Tutsi man. Her words took us to a place of horror, with death closing in around her, and her children in danger; she told us of the tragic loss of her husband, who died afterwards of a broken heart.

Hadidja came to the United States to start a new life. She earned a Ph.D. in social work in Denver. She is currently a member of an organization that was instrumental in making rape and violence against women during the Rwandan genocide a crime against humanity.

This remarkable afternoon concluded with an inspirational song by a wonderful musical group, “Cathy Mahardy and the G Notes”.

This heartwarming afternoon seemed to have a powerful impact on all of the guests. It was a profound experience for the author. Being in the company of women who are compelled by such a deep level of dedication is a rare and wonderful treat. It is the hope of the Colorado Regional Chapter of WFWP to host a similar event next year, and every year thereafter.



The Central and South American Women's Conference: A participant's experience

April 2-5, 2006

By Dr. Luanne Ruona,

Director, Center for Holistic Living

“Peace in the World through Real Love and True Families” was the title of the recent conference sponsored by the Women's Federation for World Peace, International, held at the beautiful Victoria Plaza hotel in Montevideo, Uruguay. One hundred forty women from twenty countries gathered for this historic event. There was a tangible atmosphere of love, caring, sharing and understanding that flowed throughout the entire event.

The opening speech was given by Dr. Lan Young Moon, President of WFWP, International, who called upon women to be the key to peace. She emphasized forgiveness and the embracing of our oneness as crucial, as we continue this journey. For years, she carried in her heart a deep anger toward North Korea for the deaths of her father, brother and a cousin, during the Korean War. All this she witnessed as a small child. After entering the movement of love, she was able to forgive. She stated that resentment does not lead to anything constructive and that forgiveness frees us. In her words, we must learn to let go of conflict and pain. She also underscored the importance of getting more women into decision-making positions.

Alexa Ward, Vice President of WFWP, International, stressed that conflicts that plague our society will only be achieved through the realization of a global family and by learning to live from the heart. She spoke about the vision of the Women's Federation for World Peace to transcend religious, national and ethnic boundaries, through the power of reconciliation facilitated by the Bridge of Peace sisterhood ceremonies.

Throughout the conference, the importance of having life goals, developing a mature character, and understanding the essential role of the family were emphasized. We learned that people seek happiness but often do not understand that it is an internal affair. They look too much to the outside, whereas true happiness really comes from the heart and from a union of mind and body. There is a war going on between the mind and body and the material/body is winning.

There needs to be more education for people on these topics; fortunately, the Women's Federation for World Peace is doing just that. The preciousness of the institution of marriage and the postponement of sex until marriage needs to be more emphasized as well. Children from broken families suffer in every

way, from having more violent tendencies, more extreme emotional problems, poorer health, abuse, higher suicide rates, as well as poorer performance in school. The list goes on.

Some reading marriage enrichment materials recommended during the conference include: *The Divorce Remedy*; *Pairs: Passage to Intimacy*; *Fighting for Your Marriage*. A website with more information is: www.smartmarriages.com.

Much work is being done in South and Central America to make this world our global home. Chile was among the countries that presented benefits from ongoing work with young mothers over a period of 10 years, which involved approximately 1500 clients. Results of a 2004 project showed that 69% of participants were still stable. Among the things they learn are childcare, yoga, drama, art, management skills and legal counseling. They must pay \$6 per month according to their contract with the program. This can be a substantial amount for some, but it is found to build up their self-esteem.

The Women's Federation for World Peace in Peru, where the poverty rate is 50% of the population, is doing a beautiful program in which the value of pure love is being taught. This character education program has six lectures, and the words underlying it are: Pure Love is My Pride and Happiness. The University of Santo Domingo is also teaching a class in character development. This class educates about the necessity of stepping away from the negative aspects of competition as a way to succeed and placing more emphasis on art, truth, love and heart-centered ideals. Six hundred students have graduated from this class and many more are interested. The proposal for the future is to incorporate the program into a textbook.

On the final evening, a rally was held, which was attended by the First Lady of Uruguay, as well as one thousand local Uruguayans. President Moon spoke again on the role of the woman, and Caroline Betancourt, Vice President, WFWP, USA, gave a heartfelt summary on the role of women in creating peace.

I was very deeply moved by the conference and especially how love and kindness continually flowed. We may be facing much turmoil in the world and materialism may be dominant, but with groups like the Women's Federation for World Peace, things will change, for they are following a bigger and better plan of love: God's Plan.







International Women's Day Honors Women Peacemakers

March 9, 2006

By Caroline Betancourt, VP/Regional Chairwoman, WFWP, USA

“Women are essential to creating world peace” was the theme and consensus of a luncheon seminar held in honor of International Women’s Day. The seminar was sponsored by the *Women’s Peace Initiative for the Middle East and South Asia*, a project of Women’s Federation for World Peace, USA.

Thanks to all who supported and participated, the luncheon seminar held on March 9, at the Capitol Hill Club in Washington, D.C., was a tremendous success. The elegant Presidential Dining Room was filled to capacity with 140 participants. Paintings by Colombian artist Ethel Bustamante punctuated the sunlight-filled room with explosive color, capturing the organic qualities of femininity and motherhood. Networking abounded, hearts opened and tears flowed as women contemplated the essential role of women in creating peace.

Dr. Gulnara Rashidova, wife of the Ambassador from Uzbekistan, and Mrs. Bushra Al-Eryani, wife of the Deputy Chief of Mission from the Embassy of Yemen, gave remarks on how they, as women leaders in their respective countries, perceive the role that women play in bringing peace.

United States Senator Lisa Murkowski sent a letter written for this occasion saying, “I believe it is

important not to lose sight of the progress that has been made and how that progress and our work continues to inspire the next generation of women leaders...not just in the United States, but in communities throughout the world.”

Mrs. Alexa Ward, President of WFWP, USA, said that the future is quickly moving towards the time when women need to take leadership roles in many more capacities. However, the question she posed, which gave everyone food for thought, was “Are we ready to take leadership?” She emphasized how the quality of leadership presented by women has to be such that the world can move in a different direction than that of the past millennium. She also proudly announced the successful completion of the WFWP International *Declaration for Peace* signature campaign. Nearly 11 million women dedicated themselves to peace by signing the declaration in support of the essential role of women in bringing peace. Only one million signatures were expected. These signatures will be presented to the United Nations as the voice of women around the world supporting the need for more women to be involved in the peacemaking process.



The highlight of the seminar was the panel from the *Women’s Peace Initiative for the Middle East and South Asia*, moderated by Susan Fefferman. Katrin Michael, PhD, from Iraq, Fawzia Etemadi from Afghanistan, Israeli Karnit Asher-Biran and Palestinian Nahid Kabbani spoke on women’s issues in their specific countries, supported by personal testimonies. Each of the panelists emphasized the essential qualities women can bring to the peacemaking process, especially that of a mother’s heart.

Gail Paine introduced the Principles of the *Ambassador for Peace* program bringing home the need for common principles of peace to bring our work together, interspersed with her personal experiences in Rwanda and Kenya. Five women were appointed as Ambassadors for Peace, including Gul Rukh Rahman, Kathryn Hill, Karnit Asher-Biran, Olga Sulla and Jacqueline Kakembo.

The program concluded with a signature project of WFWP, the “Bridge of Peace” ceremony. Participants were moved to tears as women from different religions, nationalities and races crossed the bridge to meet a “sister in peace” and melted into one heart, leaving behind the prejudices and barriers that divide us. Ms. Selma Musavyi summed up the seminar with the sentiment, “This was just wonderful. I can’t remember when I experienced so many tears and love. I am really glad I came.”

A Benefit for the Kizinda School of Uganda

Manhattan, NY

By Donna Howell, Chairwoman, WFWP, NY Metro Chapter

On March 12, 2006, the WFWP, NY Metro chapter held a fundraiser for the Kizinda Parents Vocational School, one of the many schools in Africa begun by WFWP International. The school, which was founded in 1995 in Kizinda, Uganda, has more than 500 students, and as many graduates.

The March fundraiser was held at the Ugandan Mission to the United Nations in Manhattan. Fifty people attended, offering from \$10 to \$200 donations to maintain and expand the school. This event, which raised \$1,600, was one of several fundraisers for the school that the New York WFWP region is planning this year.

The event was also an opportunity for the participants to learn about the country and culture of Uganda. Mr. Mustafa Lutala, a representative from the Ugandan UN Mission, spoke to the gathering about his country. He explained that Africa is a complicated continent and not easy to understand. In Uganda, as in most of Africa, the ancient and the modern exist in the same space, as do various tribes with unique customs and languages. He said that Kizinda is in a rural area, which needs modern education and development. He thanked the group for caring about his country and was deeply moved by the efforts of WFWP for both founding and funding the Kizinda school.

Mr. Lutala, who is also a member of the African Pearl Troupe, a Ugandan entertainment group, later danced and played drums with John Magoola, a Ugandan drummer living in New York. Mr. Magoola explained how one could tell the origin of an African by the way he dances. In Uganda people dance from the waist down, in east Africa they dance from the waist up and in South Africa, "they start from the ankle and work their way up." Mr. Lutala and Mr. Magoola came from different tribes and each demonstrated their tribe's way of dancing (both of which were waist down).

A vigorous silent auction followed the dancing and drumming. Una Clark, the director of the Empire State Development Corporation, who had brought greetings from Governor Pataki's office, was the highest bidder on a diamond necklace from Christian Bernard Jewelers. Other items also drew intense bidding, including a two night stay at the New Yorker Hotel, Ugandan batiks and paintings, handmade scarves from Pakistan, and a gift certificate to a Japanese restaurant.

*The following is an excerpt from a talk given by N*I*N Bebeau, on March 25, 2006, at a benefit for The New Hope Technical Institute in Rwanda.*

Tragedy into Transcendence

By N*I*N Sharyn Bebeau

Founder and President, The Archetypal Academy
Member, WFWP Leadership Team, Colorado Regional Chapter

“Tragedy is losing something or someone important to you, someone you love. Perhaps the focus of your heart is damaged, lost or separated from you. Whatever the event, you feel like a part of you has died, which it has. This painful event becomes a trigger that launches you out of your ordinary world, launches you into the grief tunnel.

People often cling to the trigger, repeating details obsessively. “I should have done this... I should have said that... If only I had... If only I hadn’t...” Rehashing the events over and over keeps you dangling on the surface of reality, reifying your victimhood. It also keeps you from descending into the process.

In the ancient myth of Inanna, the Goddess descended into the Underworld to wrestle Her Beloved from death’s claws. Stricken with grief over her husband’s death, the Goddess refused to let him go. She followed him into the Underworld itself. On the way down to the depths, Inanna passed through seven gates. At each one, She was forced to surrender a piece of clothing: a crown, her identity; a breastplate, her protection. When She finally reached the deepest of all places, She was stripped naked.

Trauma launches you into the Underworld, where you too are stripped to the core. People do not like to change, to let go of the known, even if it is awful. When Destiny demands that we step forward to embrace our power and take on our fate, we sometimes need to have our fingers pried loose, for we do not want to let go - even when we want to go on.

Tragedy forces you to confront your beliefs. Your value system changes. Old beliefs and imperatives fall away when the world spins out of control. Suffering forces you to surrender, compelling you past your resistance and into change. When you surrender, something new emerges.

Sometimes you cannot grow from where you are, and a dramatic force is needed to launch you. Stripped of outmoded identities, cumbersome roles and responsibilities, and exposed to dramatic and shocking events which demand so much of you, you are forced to discover new parts of yourself. Drawing on your deeper resources to merely survive leaves you with access to those new resources, thus catalyzing a rebirth in your life.

Dennis was a successful dentist. He was revered by his clientele and appreciated by his community. There was no reason to give up his lucrative practice. Dennis’ 40th birthday brought a hunger for freedom, but no visible way to break free of his busy schedule. Then tragedy struck! He was diagnosed with stomach cancer. In the following months he was too sick to work, and spent most of his time in bed. There, in the quiet of his bedroom, he rediscovered the guitar, an old forgotten love.

Over the next year his music became more and more exciting, more central to his life. His soul felt free at last, and the cancer went into remission. Instead of returning to his successful dental practice, Dennis became a professional musician. He never made much money at music, and his wife left him for a successful businessman. Nevertheless, Dennis enjoyed his new life, especially the freedom and satisfaction it afforded him.

The path of your life is destined. The past molds the choices you make today. From Plato’s teleological point of view, so does the future. It pulls on you as well. If this moment is molded by the past,

the future and the needs of the present, where does free will come in? You may not be able to choose your life, with all its strange twists and turns, but you choose how you walk the path. You can make conscious choices or you can be dragged along by Fate's capricious whims. The moments when you take assertive action form your fate.

Some say that Karma works as crime and punishment. When tragedy hits, they righteously proclaim that you must have done something really awful in your last lifetime to deserve this! No one deserves to suffer, and God's Karma is not vindictive. Karma is a search for balance. The wide swing of your experiences exposes your soul to experiences that in some way bring balance to your understanding of life.

Don't blame the messenger. See the message. Nothing is punishment. Everything is a call to awaken. Whether it was you or someone else who initiated the intense events which led to loss, no one is the cause. Greater cycles are at play than you can ever see. God/Goddess/ Great Spirit/Divinity is compassionate, but not sympathetic. It cares about getting you where you need to be to do your soul's mission, but thinks nothing of dragging you through hell and high water to get you there.

All the resources you need are inside of you. The challenge is to recognize your traumas as the awakening of those resources. Laura Evans was a successful designer, well loved and respected. In the prime of her life, she was diagnosed with breast cancer and was given three to five years to live. Ten years later, she was well enough to lead a group of cancer survivors up the highest mountain in the Argentina Andes. Beating the cancer became the vehicle of her empowerment and gave her the determination to give others the tools they need in order to take control of their fate.

Ask yourself what is your greatest wound. Then ask this unbelievable question: How has it served you? What is the opposite of this affliction? The answer will give you a hint about your soul's mission.

We are all healers in a world dearly in need of healing. Only the wounded can heal because their healing power comes from within. It was not gained lightly with a turn of a page, but grew from the courage they were forced to cultivate and the wisdom they suffered to acquire.

When you can disengage yourself from the personal part of an event and look at the overview, the destiny that calls to you, this is transcendence. We are all little fishes caught in a net. Your soul is stretching and you are being forcefully evicted from a familiar world. Loss and gain, like lovers, lie entwined, one sometimes disguised as the other. Beyond blame, victim hood and guilt lies a greater overview of what is really happening. When you connect with a greater overview of your Destiny, your soul's mission becomes apparent and you feel transcendent!"