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Peace Quote:



"I am convinced that the women of the world, united without any regard for national or racial dimensions, can become a most powerful force for international peace and brotherhood."

Coretta Scott King

Letter from the Editor

We are happy to offer this January/February 2007 edition of the WFWP, USA ENewsletter. As February is **Black History Month**, we feature a special article by an African-American WFWP member in Texas. We asked her to write about growing up under segregation, the civil rights movement, and personal keys to success. The most important factor she cited for success was a good, loving family that taught right from wrong. Regardless of external factors such as wealth or social status, all people share the need for a loving, healthy family.

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Segregation Had Perks for Kids

By Ester Davis, WFWP Member, Texas

The other day a fan of my weekly column stopped me at the store. She told me she had several favorites among my articles and took great pride in sending them to friends and family. She wanted to know who taught me to write and how many hours of journalism classes or lessons I had received. My ready answer to her was "none of the above."

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Building Bridges Through Song in Upstate New York

By Dorothy Hill, Chairwoman, WFWP Upstate New York Chapter

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, 2006, as several hundred guests made their way to the Interfaith Chapel of Unification Theological Seminary (UTS) in Barrytown, New York. The event was co-sponsored by WFWP and the International Relief Friendship Foundation (IRFF). Proceeds were split between the WFWP school in Guinea Bissau, and an IRFF school in Zambia.

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By Stephanie Herremans, Chairwoman, WFWP Oregon Chapter, and Beatrice Yoshioka

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Sun of Mozambique School on Saturday afternoon, December 9, 2006. This was the first time the chapter had attempted such an event. Free space was granted to WFWP by the Multicultural Room of Smith Memorial Hall at Portland State

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Christmas for Rwanda in Indianapolis

By Susan Nishio, Chairwoman, WFWP Indiana Chapter

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Contact Information

Women's Federation for World Peace, USA (WFWP, USA)
285 Lafayette Street, Suite 307
Bridgeport, Connecticut 06604
Tel. (203) 333-5572
Fax (203) 333-5576
E-Mail: info@wfp.us
Website: <http://www.wfp.us>

Letter from the Editor



Laura Hornbeck, Editor



Jennifer Ang, Assistant Editor

We are happy to offer this January/February 2007 edition of the WFWP, USA ENewsletter. As February is **Black History Month**, we feature a special article by an African-American WFWP member in Texas. We asked her to write about growing up under segregation, the civil rights movement, and personal keys to success. The most important factor she cited for success was a good, loving family that taught right from wrong. Regardless of external factors such as wealth or social status, all people share the need for a loving, healthy family. In future issues of the ENews, we hope to share more stories from our African-American members, as well as from other ethnic groups.

As Americans, we live today in a culture of tremendous diversity. Every ethnicity and language, every religion, and every skin color are represented here. WFWP, USA has a great opportunity to build bridges of sisterhood and friendship. A signature program of WFWP is the ***Bridge of Peace Ceremony***, a simple and touching technique bringing diverse people together. It involves the expression of repentance for wrongs committed in the past and an embrace of forgiveness. Participants commit to forming new friendships in the future, centered on heart.



Bridge of Peace in Dallas 2002

The Southern California WFWP chapter, under the direction of Mrs. Sheri Rueter, expanded the use of the Bridge of Peace into the **Interracial Sisterhood Project (ISP)**. ISP events have been held in high schools, universities and other racially diverse places to bring girls and women together. Thousands of people have participated in ISP events since 1996. The Interracial Sisterhood Project is centered on the belief that women play a vital role as peacemakers to change the painful history of racial disharmony in America. The ISP was honored as a **"Promising Practice"** by President Clinton in the President's Initiative on Race in July of 1996.



Interracial Sisterhood Project

WFWP, USA offers many other activities, such as the ***Women of Faith*** programs, that allow women to get to know one another beyond traditional barriers of religion

and ethnicity. In this way, true friendships are formed that might not have happened without WFWP.

Also included in this issue are three reports on successful benefits for the **WFWP Schools of Africa**. They span the continent from New York to Indiana to Oregon. Perhaps you will get ideas from them for a benefit in your community this year.

In April, WFWP will celebrate the fifteenth anniversary of its founding. The next issue of ENews will focus on activities and achievements during these past fifteen years.

Your comments and suggestions for future articles are welcomed. We hope you enjoy this issue!

Segregation Had Perks for Kids

By Ester Davis



Editor's note: Ester Davis lives in Dallas, Texas, and is a writer and television host/producer on cable and network stations. She has a weekly column at www.religionandspirituality.com. She is active in her church and community and has won numerous civic awards and commendations. Ester has been a supporter of the WFWP Dallas Chapter since 2001. Visit her website at www.esterdavis.com.

The other day a fan of my weekly column stopped me at the store. She told me she had several favorites among my articles and took great pride in sending them to friends and family. She wanted to know who taught me to write and how many hours of journalism classes or lessons I had received. My ready answer to her was “none of the above.” I learned to write in first grade, had very good English teachers, an aunt who was the school librarian, a Sunday school teacher who made us memorize scripture, and ultimately a mother who made me read everything, even street signs when riding down the road.

As children growing up in the segregated south, we knew little of the difficulties confronting our parents. I can vividly remember seeing the signs saying 'For Whites Only' in the late 1950s in Conroe, Texas, my home town south of Houston. But I can also remember the responses given by my mother when my siblings and I asked about those signs. She and my father made light of them, and they made sure we were not often confronted by them. One "For Whites Only" sign I remember best was on the water fountain inside the courthouse at the center of the town square. Children being children, my friends and I sampled the 'white water' every chance we got to see if the taste was the same as ours.

Our parents didn't allow us to shop in Conroe because of the blatantly racist signs throughout the town. They wanted to protect us, so my dad made a big deal about shopping in Houston. He would say, "Oh, you don't want to go to town! I will take you to Houston this weekend. The selection is larger and you can see a lot more of what you want."

My world as a child was a perfect one in an eight block area. We had a big backyard with an old trailer for a playhouse. There were lots of dogs, cats, chickens and rabbits. We had multitudes of cousins, a lot of love, attention and direction. The one school for all blacks was two blocks away, our church was four blocks away, and we knew everyone in between. There were three stores in the neighborhood, all run by people who looked like us. I walked to my music teacher's house for my lessons

and rode my bike everywhere else. We seldom saw a white person... our postman was even a black man.

College was my reality check. In 1963, at the height of the civil rights movement, I went to Houston to attend college. It was a battle for me to grasp the concept of gaining a higher education and being a second class citizen at the same time. The stories started unfolding about the real world for black Americans, not the one our parents had lovingly arranged for us by sheltering us from the ugliness.

I recognized early that women were the true organizers in the civil rights movement, and women were behind the scenes of all the marches, gatherings and solicitations. The meeting places for the movement business were black churches, where we were joined by Jews, Native Americans and some whites.

Several of my relatives were educators in school districts in and around our town. I remember one of my aunts telling me that she supported the NAACP, but it was a known fact that any black American teacher who knowingly supported the NAACP, SCLC or CORE during the civil rights movement would be fired. So, black teachers would send money orders to the national headquarters of the various groups, and their support could be received without their local schools knowing about it.

Many heroes emerged from the civil rights movement. I had relatives who were educated and relatives who did menial work for white families. Four of my aunts worked as housekeepers for wealthy families for years, before and after the civil rights era. Surprisingly, they were instrumental in getting their wealthy white employers to contribute to the movement. So heroes came in all colors and from all religions and cultures.

My own accomplishments and successes in life certainly rest on the shoulders of my parents and ancestors. My family members were all devout believers in a Higher Power who would direct and protect them. The objective of the adults in our lives was to give us children the best preparation possible, and they were sure that would sustain us in our adulthood. I realized later in life that my parents did not take the 'For Whites Only' signs seriously because they knew the era of division would eventually pass and those restrictions would be lifted. I am happy the changes happened in their lifetime. But there is much more work for us to do.

Now, my hope and desire is for all people of bondage and oppression to be able to live a life of freedom as ordained by God. The earth is the Lord's, made for all His creation. Just as the chains were removed from black Americans, the borders, bombings and bondsmen should be removed from those who suffer from them.

Christmas for Rwanda in Indianapolis

By Susan Nishio, Chairwoman, WFWP Indiana Chapter



Susan Nishio

The community clubhouse of the Heron Lake Condominiums in Indianapolis was the location for WFWP Indiana's first annual benefit for the New Hope Technical Institute in Rwanda, one of the WFWP Schools of Africa. The setting was warm and hospitable, with tables and chairs to facilitate discussion and relationship building. The program began with music played by a string quartet, members of the Martin-Finch family from the Metropolitan Youth Orchestra. This local organization teaches strings not just to individuals but whole families.

The Metropolitan Youth Orchestra promotes life skills necessary for success and serves as a focal point for family unity. The Martin-Finch family played for about thirty minutes while the attendees sat and chatted. Few people had ever heard a live string quartet and were delighted with the experience. The music ranged from classical to sacred to movie themes. It was an appropriate choice for the small and intimate venue and the thirty-three people who attended.



Martin-Finch Family

Following the music, Susan Nishio gave a short introduction to the Principles of Peace and shared a PowerPoint presentation about Rwanda, which was prepared by Mrs. Kayo Masuda. Then everyone took a break for bidding on silent auction items, including artwork from local artists. During this time, Mr. Wayne Strautman played holiday music on the electric keyboard.



Five young people significantly helped prepare for the event. They developed the database, sent and received digital information, prepared artwork for the silent auction and made the large African animal silhouettes as decoration. They also researched and solicited local businesses for contributions, then helped to set up and clean the clubhouse. These powerful helpers were Lee (age 18), Jin (16), and Mark (14) Nishio of Indiana, and a young married couple named Kayo and Hiromitsu Masuda of Ohio.

Since the WFWP organizers realized that many mothers would not be able to attend or participate if there was a restriction on children attending, women with young children were allowed to come. It required more planning, as two young volunteers Aika Callahan (age 11) and Mi-Jin Nishio (11) helped entertain the younger children as they baked and decorated sugar cookies and served the adults with their fresh-baked creations.



Shigeko Nishikawa beautifully and professionally prepared all the refreshments for the event.

The program was a financial plus and only the second program of the year for the Indiana chapter. For the WFWP Indiana chapter, just getting their feet wet in this area was a victory and a great foundation for next year. WFWP Indiana was glad to be able to help the WFWP New Hope Technical Institute of Rwanda.



New Hope Technical Institute, Rwanda

What Does Peace Look Like?

By Stephanie Herremans, Chair, WFWP Oregon Chapter, and Beatrice Yoshioka



*Stephanie
Herremans*

The Oregon / Southern Washington Regional Chapter of the Women's Federation for World Peace held a benefit for the *Sun of Mozambique School* on Saturday afternoon, December 9, 2006. This was the first time the chapter had attempted such an event. Free space was granted to WFWP by the Multicultural Room of Smith Memorial Hall at Portland State University in Portland, Oregon.

Invitations were given out by local WFWP members, advertisements were posted around campus by the multicultural department of the university, and as a result, approximately fifty people attended. The keynote speaker was Susan Bradbury, founder of *The Sound Essence Project*, a Washington State nonprofit corporation (www.soundessenceproject.org). She works in Bellingham, Washington, and had planned a trip to Portland which happily coincided with the date of WFWP's benefit.



*Beatrice
Yoshioka*



Susan Bradbury

Susan is an acupuncturist with a Master's Degree in Oriental Medicine. She specializes in the effects of sound energy on the human spirit. Her organization, founded in 2003, brings diverse people together through cross-cultural exchanges. They encourage understanding among cultures by visiting indigenous peoples, learning their healing methods and recording some of their stories.

In the summer of 2006, Susan went to Mongolia, where she and her team stayed with a tribe of nomadic people. They ate Mongolian food, rode wild Mongolian horses, and listened to some of the traditional tales of the people. Susan and her team delivered high quality stethoscopes to health workers who had been using old Russian stethoscopes. The organization is also sponsoring six young Mongolian people with college scholarships this year. Susan was recently named an Ambassador for Peace by the Universal Peace Federation.



*Susan Bradbury speaking
at WFWP benefit*



Children's art exhibit on back wall

Susan's talk to WFWP was entitled, *What Does Peace Look Like?* She brought a traveling *Peace Art Show* which included drawings and paintings created by children from different countries, including Africa. Each child had been asked to depict his or her own idea of what peace looks like. She told the touching story of a little boy in Korea who had to have one eye removed. His own vision of peace was to have two eyes.

The basic message she wanted to convey in her talk was that of unconditional giving, which means, "Never stop giving and never give up." Her travels have also taken her to Africa, and she has worked with women and youth there. She said she didn't want to leave because they appreciated her so much. Her encouraging words concluded with, "Everything starts small. Even the slightest effort has great value, so never give up."

Following the talk, entertainment was provided by professional performer Randolph Remell, who sang two songs of his own composition written from experiences overseas. His touching renditions moved some in the audience to tears.

In preparation for this benefit, volunteers like Kelly Coryell and Shizuko Comey went house-to-house in their neighborhoods asking for donations to support the school. In this way, they were able to meet a lot of people and make a good foundation for future programs.

Since the meeting was held at Portland State University, and they have rules against charging admission to on-campus events, the main source of proceeds was from a raffle. Tickets were sold for \$1 apiece for donated goods from local businesses and individuals. The grand prize was a new air hockey table and a 71-inch projector screen. The Oregon/Southern Washington WFWP Chapter was happy to send approximately \$1,000 to the Sun of Mozambique School, and are looking forward to sending even more in the coming year.



Sun of Mozambique school

Building Bridges through Song in Upstate New York

By Dorothy Hill, Chairwoman, WFWP Upstate New York Chapter



Dorothy Hill

A cold rain was falling on the evening of December 22nd, 2006, as several hundred guests made their way to the Interfaith Chapel of Unification Theological Seminary (UTS) in Barrytown, New York. The event was co-sponsored by WFWP and the International Relief Friendship Foundation (IRFF). Proceeds were split between the WFWP school in Guinea Bissau, and an IRFF school in Zambia.

Featured performer for the gala was the lovely Seiko Lee, an internationally renowned soprano, who launched her own World Peace Tour with this benefit. Guests came from as far away as Ohio, Minnesota and Indiana to enjoy Ms. Lee's beautiful music. She has built a loyal fan base in the United States.



Seiko Lee

The Interfaith Chapel with its beautiful old stained glass windows was artfully decorated for Christmas by Gillian Corcoran, a local WFWP member. The chapel was transformed into a first-class concert hall for the evening.

The emcee for the festivities was Dorothy Hill, Chairwoman for the WFWP Upstate New York Chapter. Letters of congratulations from Congresswoman Deborah Pryce of Ohio and from Archbishop Augustus Stallings were read. A poignant video presentation depicted the great need of the people of Guinea Bissau and Zambia. Afterwards, Ambassador Tens Kapoma, Zambian Ambassador to the United Nations, came to the stage and expressed his gratitude for the compassionate effort of WFWP and IRFF to help his country.



Zambian Ambassador, Tens Kapoma

The performance began with a haunting Gregorian chant which mesmerized the audience. All of Ms. Lee's following pieces built on that intensity of spirit and heart. Accompanied by a talented team of professional musicians -- a string quartet from Bard College Conservatory of Music, a pianist, and three other classically trained vocalists, Seiko Lee delivered a powerful



performance of the highest quality.

One of the most moving songs was "Silent Night," during which seven local children stood on stage holding lighted candles. At this time, baskets were passed around and the audience was moved once again to donate generously to the cause. It was beautiful to behold.



The stirring finale performance was the riveting *Halelu* Peace Cantata, introduced and conducted by David Eaton, conductor of the New York City Symphony. Mr. Eaton was co-composer of the piece, along with the world-famous Israeli tenor, David D'or.

Following the concert, a catered reception, silent auction, and autograph session were held in an adjoining banquet hall. Attendees had a chance to express their enthusiasm about the concert and purchase items from the auction tables. Despite the unusually heavy rainstorm that night, the benefit was a substantial success for both schools.

For this noble effort to support the schools in Africa, members of WFWP of Upstate New York are grateful to Seiko Lee, to the spellbinding musicians, and to all the generous guests who attended. The WFWP Upstate New York Chapter would also like to give credit to the many hardworking volunteers who helped with corporate fundraising, video taping and recording, and many hours of preparation.

Seiko Lee's magnificent voice and magnanimous heart blessed all in attendance. This holiday benefit concert heralded an auspicious beginning to her upcoming World Peace Tour. She wants to offer her talents for the sake of building a better world and will go anywhere she can for that purpose. For more information about Seiko Lee, please visit her website at www.seikolee.com.



Physical Education Class in Guinea Bissau



WFWP School Building, Guinea Bissau



IRFF School in Zambia