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Letter from the Editor

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Peace Quote:



"For it isn't enough to talk about peace. One must believe in it. And it isn't enough to believe in it. One must work at it."

Eleanor Roosevelt

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Hope for Girls: Transformation of Value Systems

By Jennifer Ang, UN Representative, WFWP, International

The **Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)** is part of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), one of the main bodies within the UN. The **CSW** was established in 1946 as a mechanism to monitor issues relating to the political, economic, social and educational rights of women.



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Fifteen Years of Service: Gwenn Bair

Gwenn Bair wears many hats: Wife, mother, Sunday School teacher, freelance artist, job coach for disabled teens, and more. On top of it all, Gwenn has served for the past fifteen years as Ohio Regional Coordinator for WFWP, USA. She is one of the few women in America who have served as a WFWP leader since its inception.

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Empowering Peacemakers

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Texas. The Third International Women's Peace Conference will



be held July 10 - 15th at the Adams Mark Hotel in downtown Dallas. Organizers are gearing up for an expected 5,000 or more people.

The stated goal of the conference is, "To bring together women of all races, ethnicities, nationalities, ... political beliefs and philosophies for the common purpose of learning ... 'peace skills,' in order to create and disperse peaceful resolutions to all human conflict."

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Going Beyond the Walls: Cheryl Honey

Strong and courageous women are part of the fabric of American history. During pioneer days when families traveled in wagon trains across the continent, women had to be tough and resilient in the face of tremendous hardship.

Cheryl Honey might be compared to those pioneer women. Life has brought her bitter experiences, but through faith and persistence, she has turned troubles into teaching tools. She lives in the Seattle area and this month was named one of five local winners of the 2007 Jefferson Award.

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International Food Festival for the Schools of Africa

By Laura Hornbeck, Regional Coordinator for WFWP Texas

On Thursday evening, December 14, 2006, approximately 55 people filled a large meeting room at the Center for Community Cooperation in Dallas, Texas. The occasion was a food festival and silent auction benefiting the WFWP Schools of Africa Project.



Emcee Ester Davis, a local talk-show host and community activist, opened the program...

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Going Beyond the Walls: Cheryl Honey



Cheryl Honey

Strong and courageous women are part of the fabric of American history. During pioneer days when families traveled in wagon trains across the continent, women had to be tough and resilient in the face of tremendous hardship. Cheryl Honey might be compared to those pioneer women. Life has brought her bitter experiences, but through faith and persistence, she has turned troubles into teaching tools. She lives in the Seattle area and this month was named one of five local winners of the 2007 Jefferson Award. This award was created in 1972 by Jackie Onassis and Senator Robert Taft, Jr., for the purpose of recognizing unsung heroes across America.

Cheryl has also received other prestigious awards and commendations, including the Giraffe Award for sticking her neck out to provide a solution to empower families. In October 2002, she was selected as an Ambassador for Peace by the Interreligious and International Federation for World Peace (IIFWP); and in July 2003 she was presented with the Excellence in Leadership award on Capitol Hill. In November 2006, she went to Korea as part of an international Peace & Goodwill Tour sponsored by the IIFWP.



From left, Seattle-area Jefferson Award recipients Grover Haynes, Rita Selin, Cheryl Honey, Mark Boyar and Harriet Morton. (April 05, 2007)

Credit: Karen Ducey/Seattle Post-Intelligencer

Cheryl has been a friend and supporter of WFWP since 1996, when she attended a Japanese-American Sisterhood program. She experienced a personal calling in 1986 to serve her neighbors and bring the love of God into her community. She says, "I had a vision while praying inside my church. I saw the walls falling down while the congregation was inside. The church members were afraid to look outside the walls; they were afraid to go into the community. I knew I had to go there."

In 1992, Cheryl herself was in need of assistance when her marriage fell apart. As a single



Cheryl with her children.

From left, Emma, Cheryl, Nate, Kristin, Addie.

mother with four children, she applied for social services but was disturbed by the coldness of the bureaucracy she was forced to deal with. She told her caseworker, "I'm not broken and in need of fixing; I just need to be connected with people who care." Later, she and a group of friends were discussing their problems: drugs; alcohol; abandonment; lack of fulfillment. She went home that night with an idea: Why don't we pool our resources and help each other?

That idea inspired her to begin the nonprofit organization called **Family Support Network**. She knew the internet was a great untapped resource, so she brought together some tech-savvy people and worked with them to set up a website: www.familynetwork.org.

The Family Support Network has three basic levels, beginning with **Good Neighbors**. If you are looking for tools, services, or peer support to deal with a challenging situation, just fill out the registration form and you will gain immediate access to an abundance of resources from all the other Good Neighbors around the country.

On the next level, you can start a Family Support Network in your own neighborhood, school, church, or nonprofit organization by becoming a **Community Weaver**. Like weavers of cloth, Community Weavers pull together people and resources. More about this level of involvement is found at www.communityweaving.org.

Finally, to participate in service-learning opportunities, you can become a certified **Family Advocate** volunteer who is matched to neighbors needing one-on-one peer support services. These levels of volunteerism are supplementing the work of agencies and institutions, and some government agencies are referring clients to the Family Support Network because of its effectiveness.

Many people who volunteer in the network first joined as recipients of others' assistance. Other volunteers simply love the sense of purpose gained by working a few hours a week for the network. As one man put it, "I feel inspired by spending time with the Family Support Network. It's much more meaningful than just going to work, coming home and watching TV every day."

In 2006, Community Weavers facilitated 175,000 volunteer hours around America totaling \$2.6 million in direct services to individuals and community initiatives. These projects included: Operation SafeHaven to provide temporary housing for Katrina evacuees; food and babysitting co-ops; and recycling furniture and clothing.

Cheryl now travels to various places conducting workshops and training groups in the concept of Community Weaving. A woman striving to bring the love of God into all the homes and neighborhoods of this country, she works with anybody who shares her passion for helping. "All major religions teach that we are here on this earth to love one another. We have to go beyond the walls of our religion, culture and political beliefs to heal this world," Cheryl says.

Note: WFWP members may sign up for free as Good Neighbors at www.familynetwork.org. Enter Group ID: WFWP (all caps) so WFWP members will be interconnected to serve one another and be of service in communities all around the world.



Hope for Girls: Transformation of Value Systems

By Jennifer Ang, UN Representative, WFPW, International

The **Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)** is part of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), one of the main bodies within the UN. The **CSW** was established in 1946 as a mechanism to monitor issues relating to the political, economic, social and educational rights of women.

The Commission holds an annual session centered on a particular theme. This year, from February 26 to March 9, the theme discussed was, “The elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child.” The term “girl child” is a UN label that refers to a female between zero and eighteen years of age.

To coincide with the annual CSW session, WFPW, International (WFPWI) held a panel discussion on February 27 in the United Nations Church Center across the street from the UN headquarters in New York City. The discussion was entitled “Transforming Value Systems to Eliminate Discrimination Against and Enhance the Status of the Girl Child.” It was moderated by Ms. Bonnie Berry, UN Representative of WFPWI.

Ms. Motoko Sugiyama, Director of the UN Office of WFPWI, spoke first. She stated that there is a new level of recognition of the historical problem of discrimination against the girl child. Poverty is known as a contributing factor since poor girl children often have to go into labor, which can include force and sexual servitude.

Ms. Sugiyama emphasized the importance of changing people’s values to combat the dehumanization of the girl child often found in the developing world.



Ms. Motoko Sugiyama

The next panelist was Dr. Keisuke Noda, Assistant Professor of Philosophy at the Unification Theological Seminary in Barrytown, New York.

His presentation was titled, “A Value Perspective Underlying the Abuse of the Girl Child: Critique and Counterproposal.” He told the audience that, while he prepared a written speech, he would speak from his heart.



Dr. Keisuke Noda

Dr. Noda pointed out that, in developing countries, many girls are viewed either as child-bearing machines, tools, or property. This perspective results in girls being seen as objects that can be possessed, used, and sold or bought.

He argued that the only way to end the abusive treatment of the girl child is to end the concept of people as merely material objects, and to spread the understanding that all human beings have a spiritual aspect which must be respected and preserved.



The next panelist to present was Ms. Rajeswari Menon, Senior Principal of the S.B.O.A. School and Junior College in Chennai, India. The S.B.O.A. School was started in 1979, the UN International Year of the Child, as a project of the State Bank Officers Association. Today, it is one of the top schools in India.

Ms. Menon shared an excerpt from a poem written by an Indian poet, Subramania Bharathi, 100 years ago.

*We will burn the foolishness
That despises womenfolk
No more subservience or slavery
In any walk of life
Man and woman shall equal be
In this land of ours*



Ms. Rajeswari Menon

This poem was written before the liberation of India from British rule and the expansion of women's freedom. However, after liberation, many women went back into their homes and kitchens where men were still the masters.

Ms. Menon stated that in areas of India today, dowry, child marriage, female infanticide, and female feticide are practiced. Rather than blaming poor economic conditions, Ms. Menon said that a new value system must come into being. She emphasized that the girl child herself must have a sense of her own dignity and

value. “Education is not only schooling, it is also awareness of the need for a dignified life,” she said.

The final panel presentation was given by Ms. Nora Spurgin, Principal of Bridgeport International Academy, a private, college preparatory high school. She was also the first president of WFWP, USA, during the 1990s.



Ms. Nora Spurgin

Like the other panelists, Ms. Spurgin stated that any fundamental change must begin with value transformation. “Governments and legislation touch only the surface of communities and their actions,” she stated.

She laid out what she believed to be four key areas that shape the values of an individual, and specifically of the girl child: **religion, culture, economy, and education.**

If negative interpretations of a religion are being taught to the girl child, reeducation is necessary in the positive aspects of her religion, which can uplift her dignity and self-esteem.

While negative cultural traditions may be difficult to change, Ms. Spurgin suggested that economic incentives could encourage better treatment of girl children. She cited *The Godparents Association* in Uganda which pays for schooling for girls who decide not to accept female genital mutilation. The girls’ education also introduces them to a broader worldview outside of their village.

Ms. Spurgin spoke of the power of education to change value systems. Both the girl child and her family often need education on the advantages of abandoning harmful social practices.



Questions and comments were invited from the audience comprised of men and women from different countries and backgrounds. Many offered comments. Some women had direct experience with the situations described. A very passionate discussion of the situation of the girl child emerged, carrying the program well past its appointed ending time.

Many ideas and solutions were discussed throughout the evening, and participants were united in their determination to work to end discriminatory and harmful practices against the girl child.



International Food Festival for the Schools of Africa

By Laura Hornbeck, Regional Coordinator for WFWP Texas

On Thursday evening, December 14, 2006, approximately 55 people filled a large meeting room at the Center for Community Cooperation in Dallas, Texas. The occasion was a food festival and silent auction benefiting the WFWP Schools of Africa Project.

Emcee Ester Davis, a local talk-show host and community activist, opened the program after a prayer was offered for the delicious food. Diners were treated to delicacies from around the world, including Mexico, China, the Philippines, Turkey, Korea, and Japan.

While feasting on the buffet, guests enjoyed entertainment offered by a drummer known as "Baba Kwasi." Baba is popular at local schools, where he performs an inspirational medley of African drumming and chanting, urging students to know, "You are somebody SPECIAL."



*Baba Kwasi,
African drummer*

Laura Hornbeck, Regional Coordinator of WFWP, gave a 20-minute presentation about the schools in Africa which WFWP, USA, is sponsoring. The Texas event benefited the



Handow Secondary School in the Lugari district of western Kenya. This is about six hours from the Kenyan capital of Nairobi, and it is an area where the people face a shortage of schools. Dormitory facilities are available for students during the school week, so they do not have to make the long trek home each day. Photos were shown of the new cafeteria and library, which have been funded through WFWP International.

More entertainment followed from a quartet of young women calling itself "Flirt!". They are affiliated with the international singing group Sweet Adelines and sing everything acapella, meaning no accompaniment. The intricate harmonies created through their melodious voices had everyone enthralled. Some Christmas songs were included in their medley and they wore Santa hats to celebrate the season.



*Emcee Ester Davis, center,
with the Flirt! quartet*



Yoshiko Halsey

Then the lovely Yoshiko Halsey, a recent arrival and newlywed from Japan, sang two songs, one in Japanese and one in English. She is classically trained to sing opera and her voice really filled the room. Accompaniment was provided by Mrs. Fumiyo Ito, a local piano teacher and member of WFWP.

Throughout the evening, guests circulated around the tables of silent auction items, including handmade iron candlesticks, vintage rhinestone jewelry, quilted wall hangings, and gift baskets of perfume and toiletries. People were Christmas shopping and helping the Schools of Africa at the same time: a win-win situation!



Some of the Silent Auction items

The biggest single source of funds for the Texas benefit was a queen-sized, handmade quilt in the “Ozark Maple Leaf” design. Its multicolored, intricate beauty made the raffle tickets easy to sell at \$2 apiece. At exactly 9 pm, one ticket from among hundreds was drawn. The lucky winner was Mrs. Pauline Chen of Richardson, Texas.



“Ozark Maple Leaf” quilt



Debbie Sand, quilter

The creator of the quilt, Debby Sand, said she had felt called by God to start work on the quilt the previous year, even though she was not sure for what purpose. When she heard about the WFWP Schools of Africa benefit, she immediately offered her quilt. When the proceeds were tallied, Debby's quilt raised more than \$1,000! Total net proceeds for the benefit were approximately \$2600.

Local supporters of the benefit included Congresswoman Eddie Bernice Johnson, head of the Honorary Host Committee; Mike and Najma Ghouse, directors of Foundation for Pluralism; Fred and Debra Jones, youth guidance experts; Alexis and Marzuq Jaami, interfaith leaders; and members of the Chinese and Korean communities of Dallas. Ester Davis, emcee of the event, spoke admiringly of the dedication of all WFWP members. "It was a labor of love," she said, "and it was a great success."

Letter from the Editor



Laura Hornbeck, Editor



Jennifer Ang, Assistant Editor

April 10th marked the fifteenth anniversary of the founding of the Women's Federation for World Peace, International (WFWPI). Founded in Seoul, Korea, in 1992, WFWPI has expanded throughout the world, with chapters in 119 countries. In 1997, WFWPI was granted *General Consultative Status* with the United Nations, a category shared by only 137 other non-profit organizations in the world.

International anniversary celebrations were held in Seoul this past week, and WFWP, USA President Alexa Ward was one of the featured speakers. Dozens of representatives from around the world were also there. A report on the gala will be part of the next ENewsletter (May/June).

Here in the United States, a 15th anniversary celebration will be held in Los Angeles in September. Stay tuned for more info!

This issue of the bi-monthly ENews features a profile of two special WFWP members -- one in Seattle and one in Columbus, Ohio; a report on Texas' benefit for the Schools of Africa; an article about a WFWP-sponsored panel on ending discrimination against girls and women; and news of a big International Women's Peace Conference coming up in Dallas in July.

Hope you enjoy it!

Fifteen Years of Service: Gwenn Bair

Gwenn Bair wears many hats: Wife, mother, Sunday School teacher, freelance artist, job coach for disabled teens, and more. On top of it all, Gwenn has served for the past fifteen years as Ohio Regional Coordinator for WFWP, USA. She is one of the few women in America who have served as a WFWP leader since its inception.

With a quiet and friendly personality, Gwenn has worked steadily during these fifteen years to develop the WFWP chapter in Columbus. In an interview, she was asked how she has approached her volunteer WFWP work:

“My personal commitment was to invest at least a few minutes each day into WFWP, and it often turned into a few hours a day,” she said. Over the years, her experiences have ranged from small discussion groups in the Columbus library, to dinner meetings in members’ homes, to large international conferences in places like Moscow, Russia.



Gwenn Bair, center, with husband Roger, daughters Waverly, age 17, and Wyndra, age 7, on a recent trip to Disneyworld

Gwenn says, “One of the highlights of my WFWP work has been meeting women from all different walks of life and regions of the world. I loved going to New York in 1999 with four other women to participate in a United Nations program.

Then in 2005 I got to go to the WFWP International conference in Moscow. Six of us took a night train from Moscow to St. Petersburg and spent three days sightseeing after the conference. That was truly an unforgettable experience.”

She was drawn to the newly created women’s organization in 1992 because, as she says, “WFWP was founded by Dr. Moon and her husband, Rev. Moon, with the great vision of encouraging women everywhere to develop their natural talents. Women are recognized within WFWP as being equal to men, brilliant and inherently caring, therefore indispensable in the establishment of a peaceful and moral society. The founding vision resonated in my heart and I jumped at the chance to work with this organization.”

Gwenn has volunteering and service in her genes. Her great grandfather, Rev. Edward F. Baldwin, went to northern Africa in 1896 as a missionary. Then he joined the American Colony Christian commune in Jerusalem, which was serving

needy people of all religions and devoutly anticipating the Second Coming. While working with that group of one hundred people, he married and raised four children in Jerusalem, including Gwenn's grandfather. Gwenn's grandparents moved in the 1920s to America.

The building housing the former commune is now the American Colony Hotel. Gwenn traveled to Jerusalem in 2003. She says, "I took the opportunity to visit the place where my relatives once lived and worked. And it was a sweet experience to place flowers on my great-grandfather's grave in the small cemetery on Mt. Scopus, overlooking the hills of Jerusalem."

In 2004, a Women's Middle East Peace Initiative was launched jointly by WFWP and the Interreligious and International Federation for World Peace (IIFWP). A moving Bridge of Peace Ceremony was held in Jerusalem, which brought together Israeli and Palestinian women and others from around the world. Although she could not attend, Gwenn was able to participate by creating a mural as a backdrop for the stage. She drew the outlines of a hilly setting with two women and their children meeting one another and angels circling above them:



Others transferred the image onto large blank wallpaper, and it was rolled up and carried to Israel. During the week-long gathering of women, participants used paint and brushes to color in the mural. (see below)



Women Coloring together



Finished Mural at Ceremony

Read more about this exciting Women of Peace event on the WFWP, USA website at: <http://www.wfwp.us/wmepi.html>

Gwenn has built up a network of women who are inspired by WFWP. Setting up information tables at various public events has been an effective way of meeting new people. “Although it always requires a lot of preparation and effort, we have been able to make good connections this way,” she says.

WFWP under Gwenn’s guidance has participated in the annual United Nations Association Columbus International Festival. This large-scale event brings people together to share activities, music, and ethnic foods. WFWP has conducted a Bridge of Peace Ceremony each of the past five years, during which pairs of women from various cultures unite in a moving ceremony of repentance, forgiveness and acceptance.

Read more about the WFWP Bridge of Peace Ceremony at <http://wfwp.org/bridge/Bridge.htm>

In November 2006, Gwenn was awarded a citation which read in part: “A Salute to Gwenn Bair by the Columbus Chapter of the United Nations Association ... for bringing together peoples of different culture, color or creed in the Bridge of Peace Ceremony at the Columbus International Festival thereby promoting PEACE THROUGH UNDERSTANDING.”



*Some of the participants in the 2006 Bridge of Peace at the UNA Festival.
Theme: Mothers and Daughters*

Gwenn also encourages young women to get involved with WFWP activities, giving them opportunities to help organize events and serve as emcees. She is hopeful that, although the Ohio region needs much more development, the ideals and practices of the organization will inspire a new crop of women leaders. Congratulations to Gwenn Bair for her steady and faithful fifteen years of service to WFWP, USA!

Empowering Peacemakers

WFWP, USA is one of several co-sponsors of an ambitious event planned this summer in Dallas, Texas. The Third International Women's Peace Conference will be held July 10 – 15th at the Adams Mark Hotel in downtown Dallas. Organizers are gearing up for an expected 5,000 or more people. The stated goal of the conference is, "To bring together women of all races, ethnicities, nationalities, ... political beliefs and philosophies for the common purpose of learning ... 'peace skills,' in order to create and disperse peaceful resolutions to all human conflict."



Vivian Castleberry

This world-level conference had its genesis in 1987, when Vivian Castleberry, an award-winning journalist with the Dallas Times Herald, formed Peacemakers, Incorporated with a group of like-minded individuals. They launched the First International Women's Peace Conference in 1988 with the theme "**From Vision to Reality.**" The second conference in 1999 emphasized inner peace with the theme of "**Healing as a Prelude to Peace.**"

The Third International Women's Peace Conference sponsored by Peacemakers, Incorporated will focus on "**Empowering Peacemakers.**" Like Women's Federation for World Peace, this group understands the energy and strengths of women and seeks to help spread that power in positive ways.

As a follow-up activity after the conference, Peacemakers Incorporated will publish issue papers; an action plan generated by conference participants; and a directory to support an international network of peacemakers. Additionally, Peacemakers will facilitate the establishment of an International Peace Center.

Texas WFWP Coordinator Laura Hornbeck and other local WFWP members, including Debby Sand, Kimie Stana and Jeannette Walker, have been attending planning meetings which began in 2005. Dallas WFWP member, Nariko Nogami, has made 1,000 origami cranes for this conference and other Japanese WFWP members are also offering their help.

Co-chairs are Attorney-Mediator Carol Crabtree Donovan of Dallas, and honorary co-chair Letitia Shahani, former United Nations Assistant Secretary General, of the Philippines.



Carol Crabtree Donovan



Letitia Shahani



Betty Williams, Ireland

To provide an abundance of opportunities for meeting and networking, the conference will operate on several tiers or “tracks.” Workshops will be offered each afternoon centered on fifteen different themes, including Diplomacy; Discrimination; Education; Environment; Health; Law; Media; Poverty; and Power. Participants will be asked to choose three of these themes for their workshops.

Each morning there will be plenary sessions followed by the workshops. Each evening will include addresses from notable women including several Nobel Prize Winners. Betty Williams, Northern Ireland; Rigoberta Menchu Tum, Guatemala; and Jody Williams, USA, are on the agenda. Other distinguished women will be speaking, including Merve Kavakci, former member of the Parliament of Turkey.



*Rigoberta Menchu Tum,
Guatemala*



Jody Williams, USA

WFWP, USA President **Alexa Ward** will be a featured presenter in the workshop on Poverty, speaking on the United Nations Millennium Development Goal of poverty eradication. She will highlight the successful work of WFWP, International, focusing on the Schools of Africa. In another workshop, WFWP, USA Vice President **Susan Fefferman** will give a presentation on the Middle East, with special emphasis on the Women’s Middle East Peace Initiative.

Throughout the conference, there will be opportunities to participate in and/or observe cultural activities including: Art Exhibits; Choirs; Dance; Films; City Tours; and International Performances.

An art exhibit centered on the theme “Vision of Peace,” will be an important part of the conference. Organizers are requesting contributions. If you are a visual artist (or if you know someone who is), please consider helping Peacemakers, Incorporated. All submissions must be affixed to paper of approximately 8.5 by 11 inches (22 cm by 28 cm). Any type of paper and medium is acceptable as long as the materials used are well fixed to the paper.

The art pieces will be “love offerings from the heart” and will not be returned. A signed permission slip will give the organizers permission to auction your artwork to raise money to support post-conference communication. Your name will be recognized at the conference. Follow this link for information about mailing your art and for the submission form:

<http://www.womenspeaceconference.org/CallForVisualArtists.htm>

The deadline for submissions is May 1st, so time is short.

Please consider supporting this conference in any way you can. Even if you cannot attend, you can pass the word among your friends and co-workers. Conference registration for the week is \$250 per person with discounts for youth and senior citizens. Hotel costs are \$99 per day per room for up to four people.

See the website at www.womenspeaceconference.org for lots more information.