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*by Evelyne Drake*

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WFWP is a non-governmental organization (NGO) in general consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. Because of this affiliation, WFWP, USA representatives Alexa Ward, Yasue Erikawa, Senior Vice President, and Laura Hornbeck, Texas State Chairwoman, traveled to College Station, Texas, to hear an address by UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, at the George H. W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum. Before the Secretary-General's speech, they toured the museum. They were able to wave hello to the Secretary-General, who was also touring at that time.

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The eighteen women in attendance at the meeting were inspired by the prospect of helping refugee families and decided their chapter should become a sponsor. Monthly donations were set aside to be used when a refugee family was assigned to the WFWP chapter, which Mrs. Nguyen said could take up to six months. Many were disappointed that they might have to wait so long, but fate had a surprise in store.

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*UN Group Honors International Women's  
Day  
with Women for Peace Celebration*



The United Nations Delegations Women's Club (UNDWC), an association of women delegates to the UN and spouses of delegate missions' representatives, hosted a unique cultural event on March 11 at the UN General Assembly Hall in New York City. The program, entitled Women for Peace, was held in honor of International Women's Day, celebrated annually on March 8. The central responsibility of women to work together with men in building peace is being recognized in many places, including the United Nations.

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Sincerely,

WFWP ENews  
Women's Federation for World Peace, USA

## UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon, Speaks at the George H.W. Bush Library and Museum



*Exterior of Bush Library*



*Yasue Erikawa, Alexa Ward, Laura Hornbeck*



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The library is a walk through the history of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as experienced by the Bush family both before and after his presidency. One dramatic exhibit includes a graffiti-decorated section of the Berlin Wall, with photos of the separated city and grim depictions of communist oppression. The wall was torn down in November of 1989 during the Bush presidency.

Audio-visual displays include the eight year presidency and vice-presidency of Ronald Reagan and Mr. Bush, and then of course the 4-year presidency of Mr. Bush. But the library is not entirely political in nature. The extended Bush family figures prominently in the exhibits, with many photos of the children, grandchildren, as well as the parents and forebears of the President and Mrs. Bush.

In fact, "faith, family, and service to others" are key words that recur over and over in the George H.W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum.

The evening address by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on February 29<sup>th</sup> was part of the William Waldo Cameron Forum on Public Affairs.

Well before the talk began, the auditorium was filled with guests and many students from the adjoining Texas A&M University. The former President and Mrs. Bush were also in attendance.



*Ban Ki-moon at the Presidential Library*

Secretary Ban spoke admiringly of former President Bush, describing an event that deeply impressed him. When the former First Couple visited Seoul, Korea, in 2000, Secretary Ban was part of the reception delegation at the airport. As President and Mrs. Bush climbed down from their airplane, the welcoming delegation scrambled to help carry their bags, but they insisted, “Oh, no, we can carry our own bags.” To Koreans, this kind of humility on the part of a governmental leader was amazing, even shocking. Secretary Ban stated, “I saw this as a measure of the man – modest, decent, down-to-earth, and unaffected by power.”

He went on to say that, as a boy growing up in South Korea, he had been inspired by America and its noble ideals. He is still grateful for the sacrifices made by

American soldiers and the American people in the face of communist aggression against his country in the early 1950s.

Secretary Ban stressed the important role of the United States in the world, and linked that to the value of the United Nations, which for all its flaws is still the only truly global institution in the world.

He went on to praise the UN for its efforts to address the problem of global warming and predicted that the world is on the brink of another economic revolution: “green economics.” It will be a time of new opportunities for entrepreneurs, and the world will be the beneficiary.

Ban Ki-moon stressed the value of changing the UN, shaking up the bureaucracy to make it more adaptable to this fast-paced world. “I am working for a culture of ethics and accountability at the United Nations,” he stated at the end, receiving a standing ovation from the audience.

# International Women's Day

## *Women as Peacemakers*

Reported by Susan Fefferman

*National Director of the Middle East Peace Initiative*

On March 26, the Embassy of Tunisia in Washington DC was the location for the *Women as Peacemakers* event. This was the fourth annual commemoration of the United Nations' **International Women's Day** and was co-sponsored by **WFWP, USA** and the **Universal Peace Federation (UPF)**.



*Mohamed Nejib Hachana, Ambassador of Tunisia*

The Ambassador of Tunisia to the United States, His Excellency, **Mohamed Nejib Hachana**, welcomed the guests and offered comments. "Without an education and without the emancipation of women, the globe will remain handicapped," he said. "Tunisian women have a unique role and status in the Arab world... Their emancipation and rights can serve as a launching pad for further initiatives for peace and lead to stability and prosperity for all."

The Tunisian Embassy hosted the event and provided sweets and drinks for approximately seventy guests representing the diplomatic corps, NGOs (non-governmental organizations), religious and civic leaders.

Greetings were given by WFWP, Vice President **Caroline Betancourt** and Director of UPF's DC office, **Tomiko Duggan**. Emcee for the program was **Susan Fefferman**, director of WFWP's *Women's Middle East Peace Initiative*, which has organized an International Women's Day program for the past four years.

The program continued with **Houda Zaibi Belhassen**, wife of the Deputy Chief of Mission, and a professor of women's studies at the *University of Tunis*, in Tunisia. She spoke on the unique history of women's rights in Tunisia. Beginning in the 1920's, leading Islamic scholar, Taha Haded, professed women's rights and said that the Qur'an teaches equality between men and women, and that women should not be subordinate to men. He warned against the wrong interpretation of the Qur'an as a tool of oppression. He taught against the forced and early marriage of girls.



*Houda Zaibi Belhassen*

When Tunisia gained its independence from France in 1956, the independence movement became a catalyst for women's rights. The leader of the new nation, Habib Bourguiba, was determined from the beginning to liberate women. The new government outlawed polygamy and the veil, and also "repudiation," a religious right of a man to divorce his wife. The law regulated divorce, gave women a say in who they married, and made secular education compulsory for both girls and boys from the age of six. The "Code of Personal Status" was established and has been updated regularly, so that women in Tunisia experience great freedom and social benefits.



Naila Asali

**Naila Asali**, co-founder with her husband, Dr. Zia Asali, of the *American Task Force on Palestine*, was the second speaker. She spoke passionately about the role of women in leadership. She stated, “While there have been a number of women who have led their countries, a female leader is still so uncommon and still not generally accepted; so her role is still noted as unusual, akin to a lunar eclipse or an albino tiger.”

She continued with comments on peace. “The long and sometimes arduous effort to nurture peaceful relations requires the work of all citizens. While it seems to me that any change requires as many helping hands as possible, this is particularly true when we are engaged in bringing about peace, for peace is delicate and requires that we all struggle against our worst inclinations.”

She concluded with a quote from Albert Einstein: “I do not know with what weapons World War III will be fought, but World War IV will be fought with sticks and stones.” She added, “My childhood [in Nablus, West Bank] was spent in the midst of a perceived enemy. Now, the children of Nablus have satellite television, internet, cell phones, fast food, CDs, DVDs, modern medicine, and the same hatred. They cannot move forward if they remain tethered to tribal divisions. They must release themselves so that their own children will be unburdened.”

Musical contributions were offered by Rhonda Williams, who sang “A Song for Peace” with Hebrew, Arabic and English words, and Abby Dune, who sang “Edelweiss” and a traditional Nigerian piece.

A section of the founder Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon’s 2002 WFWP International Anniversary speech was read by Maryland Chairwoman, Diane Abendroth, as guiding words for the work of WFWP.



Uzma Farooq, Director, Muslim Women’s Organization of DC; Abby Dune, Nigerian singer

The next part of the program was a “Toast to Peace,” which read:

*As the family is the cornerstone of peace, may you dedicate yourselves to creating families of true love and fidelity, and raise children of integrity to do the same. Let us create a family of peace, a neighborhood of peace, a nation of peace and a world of peace. Let us each stand as an example to others and with a mother’s heart for peace, let us heal the pains and sorrows of others. Let us rebuild trust and unity through reconciliation. And create bridges that transcend the barriers that have divided humanity to join us all in one family of humankind.*

The final part of the program was the appointment of three women as Universal Peace Federation *Ambassadors for Peace*. They were speaker **Houda Zaibi Belhassen**; **Bernadette Lockette**, founder of “*Stop Court Ordered Child Abuse*,” (SCOCA) an organization that monitors the placing of children in abusive family homes; and **Nevine Hassouna**, *Mosaic Foundation*, whose husband is the Ambassador for the League of Arab States in Washington, DC. She has been the principal organizer of the Mosaic Foundation, a charitable and philanthropic foundation supported by the wives of Arab Ambassadors.





*L-R: Susan Fefferman; Reiko Jenkins; Caroline Betancourt; Naila Asali; Houda Belhassen; Tomiko Duggan; Yasue Erikawa; Nobuko Peemoeller; Fiona Victoria*

## Ohio WFWP Adopts A Refugee Family

Reported by Gwenn Bair, WFWP Ohio Regional Chairwoman



In March 2008, the WFWP Chapter of Columbus, Ohio, invited Nga Nguyen to speak at their monthly meeting. Mrs. Nguyen, a Vietnamese immigrant who works with **Us Together Refugee Services**, spoke about the urgent need for sponsors for her agency's "Adopt-A-Family" program.

*Gwenn Bair*



The eighteen women in attendance at the meeting were inspired by the prospect of helping refugee families and decided their chapter should become a sponsor. Monthly donations were set aside to be used when a refugee family was assigned to the WFWP chapter, which Mrs. Nguyen said could take up to six months. Many were disappointed that they might have to wait so long, but fate had a surprise in store.

*Refugee family with Kayo Derflinger*



*Recent meeting on marriage and family of Ohio WFWP members and families with Mrs. Debby Gullery, National Director of WFWP, USA's Marriage and Family Initiative.*

After only one month, on April 27<sup>th</sup>, WFWP Regional Director Gwenn Bair got a call from Mrs. Nguyen saying, "I'm really sorry to drop this on you so suddenly, but your family will be arriving from Burma in three hours. Can you go to welcome them at their new apartment?" So Gwenn hurriedly took her 8-year-old daughter, Wyndra, and drove to the apartment to await the family's arrival.

At 10:30 pm, looking exhausted and a little dazed, the mother, father, and three children arrived at their new home. Gwenn and Wyndra did their best, despite the language barrier, to introduce themselves. The family had been living in a camp on the border between Burma and Thailand for the past 14 years. The oldest daughter, Kwae Kwe, is 14; daughter Mu Si Si is 12; son Gaydo Soh is 6. The father's name is Myit Lwin and the mother is Ru Ru. Having traveled halfway around the world, they carried all their worldly possessions in a few sturdy plastic bags, and were obviously grateful to be in Ohio.

The *Us Together* agency provides each new family with an apartment, necessary furniture (bed, couch), a few towels, and some food staples. Their basic needs are met for

about eight months. After that time, they are expected to find some form of employment to begin supporting themselves.

This family's exodus from Burma (also known as Myanmar) was made just a few days before typhoon Nargis hit their country, causing a devastating loss of life.



*A refugee camp near border of Thailand and Burma*

Here are a few facts from BBC News about Burma/Myanmar:

*A largely rural, densely forested country, Burma is the world's largest exporter of teak and a principal source of jade, pearls, rubies, and sapphires. It is endowed with extremely fertile soil and has important offshore oil and gas deposits. However, its people remain very poor and are getting poorer.*

*Burma has been under military junta rule since 1962; the regime stifles almost all dissent. The economy is weakened by widespread corruption. It is seen as a pariah state by the West, which maintains sanctions against it. China is its main ally.*

Several WFWP volunteers have been helping the newly arrived family with daily tasks. For example, they had to teach them how to use the gas stove, how to open and close venetian blinds, and how to regulate the thermostat. Gwenn took the family on their first shopping trip, putting a calculator in the older girl's hands and directing her to keep track of the cost of the purchases.

The children will begin school in the fall, so Kayo Derflinger and Annette Yamakawa, WFWP members, are helping them learn as much English as possible. Gwenn's little girl, Wyndra, joined the effort and taught a session on phonics. A local Burmese immigrant serves as translator for the family and coincidentally also works at the same business as Gwenn Bair's husband, Roger.

The family is a member of the Karen, a minority hill tribe in their native country. They are also Christians and asked, through the translator, to be taken to a church. WFWP members took them to an evening church program, and will give them an opportunity to visit other churches.

Furthermore, Paula Nourse, a WFWP member, collected good quality clothing and dishes to give to the family from her Methodist church's rummage sale. Others have

accompanied them on shopping excursions and helped them out with household necessities.

As a token of their appreciation, the family recently gave Gwenn and Kayo beautiful handwoven vests, a handicraft for which the Karen hill tribes are well known. A connection has been made, beyond the barriers of language and culture. Gwenn says, “In WFWP, we already have a foundation of heart and love for people of all nations. This is a wonderful way to substantially serve and support people coming to America with perhaps the same dreams as our own ancestors. You quickly get to feel connected to a whole nation through the doorway of one family.”

Kudos to the Columbus, Ohio chapter for living up to the WFWP motto: *All People Belong to One Human Family*. They are showing how to “**live for the sake of others,**” the fundamental principle of WFWP, which is the only way for lasting peace to become a reality in this troubled world.

## WFWP Chapter at University of South Florida Offering Service Project in Haiti June 15-30th

(WFWP, USA city leader for Tampa, Florida, Evelyne Drake, came to the US from Haiti 38 years ago. She has helped the University of South Florida WFWP chapter to organize a tour and service project in Haiti.)

The Women's Federation for World Peace student club of the University of South Florida, Tampa, will be co-sponsoring a service project in Haiti this summer from June 15<sup>th</sup> to June 30th. Participants will be responsible for their own airfare, but the rest of the expenses -- lodging, food, and travel within the country -- will be covered by the International Relief Friendship Foundation (IRFF). The project is still open to interested parties, both men and women. See contact information at the bottom of this article.



*Haiti is located in the Caribbean on the same island as the Dominican Republic*



*L-R, Dr. Mary Joseph Rene, Evelyne Drake*

The trip will be filled with work and fun. First of all, the group will travel to the capital, Port-au-Prince, and stay there overnight. Each day of the first week, they will travel to one of three towns -- Delmas, Petionville or Mont Rue -- to work on cleaning and painting primary school buildings. Also at each school, they will help to develop a library with donated children's books from WFWP. Finally, they will set up a tent in Port-au-Prince to aid and guide underprivileged children.

During the second week, they will travel to the northern port city of Cap-Haitian, Haiti's second largest city, with gorgeous beaches and seaside resorts. There, they will distribute over-the-counter medicines, toothbrushes, toothpaste, and instructions about dental hygiene. Free dental exams will also be offered by a dentist.

On a recent trip to Haiti, Evelyne Drake met Dr. Mary Joseph Rene. Dr. Rene is a gynecologist and will be offering physical exams as part of the WFWP service trip.

Evelyne also met recently with Mr. Fritz Joseph, mayor of Cap Haitian, who is eager to work together with WFWP and IRFF in developing projects to serve the people of his city. He will meet with the service project participants, as well.



*L-R: Evelyne Drake, Mayor Fritz Joseph, two local ministers*

At the end of the service trip, there will be time to enjoy the beautiful scenery. The group will travel to historic sites such as the Citadel, a huge fortress built in the early 1800s and considered to be one of the wonders of the world; Milot, the small tourist town at the base of the Citadel; and of course, Cap-Haitian. Then they will head back to Port-au-Prince for some sightseeing there, which will include the National Historic Museum.

You are invited to join this great opportunity to see Haiti and to make a difference in the lives of Haitians. The project is open to men as well as women.

Call **Evelyne Drake**, WFWP coordinator, at 813-909-3172 with any questions. Please respond ASAP if you are truly interested.



*View of the Citadel, Haiti*

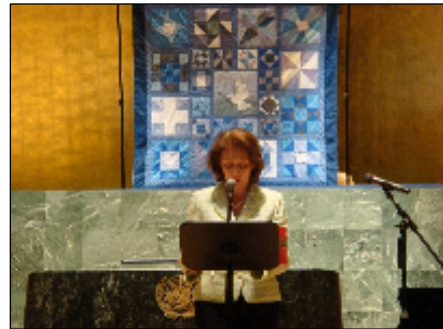
## UN Group Honors International Women’s Day with *Women for Peace* Celebration



Ban Soon-Taek  
(Mrs. Ban Ki-moon)

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International Women’s Day, celebrated annually on March 8. The central responsibility of women to work together with men in building peace is being recognized in many places, including the United Nations.



Mrs. Snezana Kerim



Madeleine Kristoffersson

As representatives of WFPW, which is a non-governmental organization (NGO) in general consultative status with the UN, WFPW, USA’s President **Alexa Ward** and Vice President, **Yasue Erikawa**, attended the program in the famous General Assembly Hall. Rather than the usual political competition, however, this gathering celebrated the transcendent beauty of music and dance. It featured a multicultural production of performers from nine continents, showcasing the richness of world cultures. The purpose, according to the program, was to “demonstrate how women, irrespective of their cultural differences, are able to succeed in joining hands and uniting to accomplish their peaceful mission together.”



Indonesian Dancers

Dancers representing Europe, the Americas, Indonesia, and Asia gave beautiful performances. Soprano, Madeleine Kristoffersson, performed a thrilling song from Verdi.

In promotion of education for women, scholarships were granted to five women from different continents to attend the University for Peace in Costa Rica.



*Russian Dancers*



*Mrs. Ban Soon Taek,  
wife of the Secretary General*



*Bal d'Europe, French Quadrille Dancers*



*Mrs. Snezana Kerim, wife of the President of the  
General Assembly*

The patron of the event was **Ban Soon-Taek**, wife of United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon. She spoke to the assembled group about the progress of women throughout history. The other featured speaker was **Snezana Kerim**, wife of Dr. Srgjan Kerim, current president of the UN General Assembly.

After the meeting at the General Assembly Hall, the guests walked across the street to a reception at the Turkish Mission on First Avenue. There Mrs. Ward and Mrs. Yasue Erikawa were able to meet Mrs. Ban and other hosts of the event.



## **Persistence Pays Off**

### **WFWP Chapter founded at University of South Florida**

Reported by Evelyne Drake



*Evelyne Drake*

For more than three years, Evelyne Drake, WFWP city leader for Tampa, Florida, tried to establish a chapter on the campus of the University of South Florida. Often utilizing a book-table at the student market, she would go to the campus two or three days a week, speaking to students and handing out literature. However, for most of those three years, few students showed much interest in what Evelyne was promoting. Everything changed last autumn when a young woman named Marie Thomas, a student majoring in International Studies, passed by Evelyne's table and asked for more information.

After learning in detail the goals and worldwide activities of WFWP, Marie asked how to become a member. She was told that they were seeking a student to serve as president of WFWP on the campus. Marie happily accepted the position, and then went on to work with Evelyne to draft an organizational constitution. Requirements included finding a faculty advisor and having at least five students as members.

Marie Thomas found five students and a faculty advisor right away. She submitted the constitution to the university and it was accepted. Following this success, WFWP held meetings and organized a program with a Sisterhood Ceremony. Evelyne guided the new members throughout the process, but Marie and the other students took the bulk of responsibility for creating the event. They secured the meeting room, made flyers, got a screen and a laptop to show slides of the school in Kenya, and printed a beautiful program.



*Participants in the Sisterhood Ceremony at the University of South Florida, December 1, 2007*



The Sisterhood Ceremony took place on Saturday, December 1st. Twenty women were present, including thirteen new contacts. Florida WFWP Chairwoman Barbara Masuyama came from Miami to give the keynote speech. The students gave her a certificate of appreciation for coming.

*L-R: Evelyne Drake, Barbara Masuyama, Marie Thomas*

Then four young ladies were appointed Ambassadors for Peace, including Marie Thomas and the four other officers.



*Participants in the Bridge of Peace Ceremony came from five continents of the world.*

Evelyne Drake is happy that WFWP now has an opportunity to offer young women an alternative to those women's organizations that tend to stress conflict between men and women. "We want to encourage women to become the best that they can be, and to work TOGETHER with men to make this a better world," she said.

She went on to say, "WFWP stresses a beautiful ideal of building up one's individual character while single, then becoming a wife, and mother within a healthy marriage. This is truly not the focus of most women's groups today."

Describing her happiness at finally establishing a WFWP chapter at the University of South Florida, Evelyne said, "I'm very uplifted to see young people standing up for what is right and I feel hope for America."

Congratulations to Evelyne, Marie Thomas, and all the new members of WFWP in South Florida.