

**** INFORMATION PAGE ****

ALL A.C.W. MONIES -- Affiliation Fees, Fellowship Of The Least Coin, Newsette Subscriptions, Offertories for Special Days and Donations to be sent to the **TREASURER:** Mrs Helen Richardson
33 Lynwood Avenue
DEE WHY 2099
(Tel: 9971 0278).

PLEASE NOTE:

- ⇒ For safety reasons **DO NOT** include the word "Treasurer" when addressing envelopes.
- ⇒ **ALL CHEQUES** to be made payable to "Australian Church Women NSW Unit Inc." and **NOT** to any individual person.

FEES from AFFILIATED GROUPS are due 1st March each year as follows:

Denominational Groups:	\$25.00 per annum
A.C.W. Local Branches:	\$15.00 per annum
Organisations:	\$15.00 per annum
WCTU NSW	
The Girls' Brigade	
Bible Society NSW	

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS' FEES due 1st March : \$10.00 per annum
(includes subscription to Newsette)

NEWSETTE is the journal of the NSW State Unit of Australian Church Women and is published four times a year in February, May, August and November. Annual Subscription is \$5.00.

CONTRIBUTIONS to Newsette are requested from readers and should be sent to the **EDITOR:**

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NEWSETTE

AUSTRALIAN CHURCH WOMEN -- NSW UNIT

A C W seeks:

- ⇒ to unite Australian churchwomen in their allegiance to their Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ;
- ⇒ to provide opportunities for Christian women of different denominations to worship, study and serve together.

Mission Statement

Australian Church Women believe that there is one God - Father, Son and Holy Spirit; one God, Three-In-One. We believe that Scripture teaches that salvation is only through faith in the atoning death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God's only Son.

PRESIDENT: Mrs Carmel Keys Tel: 9977 5156

NUMBER 111

MAY 2007

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Member,

The call to ecological conversion from all our church leaders points out that it should be the centre of our faith in today's world. Australia is in the midst of a drought. Weather patterns are changing and the world is facing a crisis. The care of the earth should be central to our life in Christ – God created the universe and God created man to look after his creation. This is not a new responsibility – it is ongoing.

A few weeks ago *Pastor Leinamau Sera*, from Vanuatu, one of our 2007 Winifred Kiek Scholars was welcomed to Sydney by Mina Whybourne and myself together with Rev Ian Stehbins, Principal of the Alan Walker College where she will be studying this year. We look forward to seeing and hearing more from her as she continues her studies – more details are given in the WKS Report on page 5 of this Newsette.

The Annual General Meeting of our NSW Unit was held on April 16, and thank you to those who have accepted appointment to various positions;

2.

also sincere thanks to those who have retired from office. A special welcome to *Jennifer Peffer*, our President-Elect, whom we already know as one of the Baptist delegates to the Council.

Do keep Monday May 18 in your prayers (and your diary) as we prepare for our Annual Dedication Service – details in notice below.

We believe that God delights in his creation and all the creatures of the earth and that he finds creation good. Let us take up the challenge to care for the things of the earth – they are God's gift to us.

I trust you all had a blessed Easter. God bless, *Carmel Keys*

PASTORAL CARE:

Since writing her letter above, our President *Carmel* has been enduring a painful bout with shingles, so do uphold her in your prayers. Several other members of Council need continuing prayer support. They include *Beatrice Kay*, whose husband passed away in February after a very long illness, *Rosalyn Bemrose* and her family, indomitable *Thora Thomas* who received a good report from her doctors, and in her 91st year has again gone overseas, and *Beryl Kirkwood* still recovering from the serious surgery which she underwent last year. *Heather Badgery* has been housebound following some injury from a severe fall while taking her young grand-nephew to the Easter Show.

Olive Edmonstone, Pastoral Care Convener

ANNUAL SERVICE of DEDICATION

At St Brigid's Catholic Church, Millers Point
(Cnr Kent & Argyle Streets)

On Monday 21st May, 2007 at 10.30 a.m.

Guest Speaker: *Major Elaine Johnson*
ACW National President from Melbourne

Lunch will be served following the Service

RSVP by Friday May 11 to *Carmel Keys*, Phone 9977.5156

Travel Directions: *Limited parking available. Buses 431 & 433 in George Street and 343 & 399 in Elizabeth Street to Millers Point Terminus which is where the church is, opposite Holy Trinity Garrison Church*

3.

HISTORIC ST BRIGID'S CHURCH, MILLERS POINT:

St Brigid's Church. Australia's oldest Catholic Mass Centre, has been standing in Millers Point since 1835 and is home to a tight-knit community of worshippers. *Sister Gemma Pearson*, a Marist Sister who has been ministering there as a pastoral assistant to the residents of Millers Point since 1990, is, incidentally, a cousin of our immediate past State President *Major Lyn Middleton*.

The small, character-filled church is open for private prayer and reflection between 10am and 2pm on weekdays and for the weekly Mass on Sundays.

St Brigid's was built with convict labour as a combination school-chapel five years before its parent church, St Patrick's, Church Hill. The application for a land grant was made by *Father William Ullathorne*, two years before the arrival of Australia's first Catholic Bishop, *John Polding*. The then Governor of NSW, *Richard Bourke*, approved the building plan for "a Roman Catholic School House, to be occasionally used as a chapel" in 1833. *Sister Gemma* says: "The Irish convicts said 'well, one day in seven is occasional' so right from the beginning it was used as a place of worship. St Brigid's school and church opened in 1836, just over 170 years ago. Although the school closed in 1992 because of falling enrolments a loyal congregation of about 50 parishioners continues to worship at St Brigid's, and many weddings are celebrated there – some 50 a year. *Sister Gemma* says "the word is getting around that this is a lovely place to get married, because it is small and intimate." She is part of an active committee working to raise funds to help maintain this historic church. Extensive work took place in 2002 and 2003 to restore it to what it was originally.

It will be our pleasure and privilege to hold our Dedication Service there.

SPIRITUAL ENRICHMENT DAY

On Monday, 16th July, 2007

10.00 am Morning Tea

10.30 am First Session

11.15 am Second Session

12 noon Third Session

12.45 pm Lunch and Fellowship

Venue and Speakers still being arranged

Morning Tea supplied Bring Your Own Lunch

4.

FELLOWSHIP OF THE LEAST COIN:

"O Lord, our Lord, Your greatness is seen in all the world...." Psalm 8:1
God's majestic glory And isn't God's majestic glory seen all around us at this beautiful time of the year. The cooler days are also most welcome after the extreme heat of summer.

We, however, are God's most valuable creation. He made us the focus of His loving care. God loves us more than any other creature or thing He has created, and we as His people, following His example to love through the dream of the Fellowship of the Least Coin, founded fifty years ago in which God's children would live side by side in tolerance, peace and harmony.

We must remain committed to this worthy dream, trusting in God's grace and guidance. I would like to share with you the continuing outcome of a 2002 FLC Project Grant to Uganda:

Home & Family Care, Mbarara, Uganda:

The project aims at helping women become self-reliant, help alleviate poverty, improve nutritional standards and the status of women in society. The objectives are met through a "Heifer" project, in which heifers are given to families, and after having calved, each family returns a female calf, which is then passed on to another family as a 'gift' that keeps on giving. The gift of the heifer is associated with improved source of income, improved family nutrition and family welfare.

As a result of the FLC grant received in 2002, many women in the community have been able to own cattle, and their livelihoods and those of their families have been enhanced – a great outcome.

So let us not forget that 'small is beautiful' and that big things come from small beginnings. As we place our small coins aside and pray, it is not a solitary act, for we remain aware that thousands of women like us are making the same offering in every continent. *"O Lord, our Lord, Your greatness is seen in all the world...."*

Janet Lang, FLC Convener

A note, extra to Janet's report, which I felt is worth recording for our interest and information, and noted for our praise and thanksgiving ... just for **Australian** projects, between 1963 and 2005, we have received 72 grants, their value amounting in value to **\$91,663**.

Beryl McLaughlin, Newsette Editor

5.

WINIFRED KIEK SCHOLARSHIP:

Past 2006 Scholar news first: *Vivian Cheung* and her husband *Eric* with *Alexander* (8 months) are now at St Michael's Anglican Church, Vacluse, where Eric is the Assistant Minister. Pray for them in this situation; for little Alexander still settling into feeding/sleeping patterns; for Vivian accepting disappointment of putting studies on hold but to be fulfilled in her wife/mother role at the present time. She sends her love and thanks.

Now Our 2007 Scholars: Remember *Cathy Paraka* from Papua New Guinea doing her year of theological training in the Philippines; this will further enable her to present the Gospel in her ministry and workplace.

Our other current Scholar *Leinamau* arrived in Sydney from Vanuatu on March 18. Thank you to President *Carmel* and *Mina* for representing us in meeting and welcoming her at the Airport. Thanks to those who wrote to her others can too *Leinamau Seru, C/- Alan Walker College of Evangelism, 6 Lincluden Place, Oatlands NSW 2117*.

College Principal, *Ian*, and wife *Rev Margaret Stehbens*, have been caring/supervising her and her Field Placement is at Grantham Heights Uniting Church with *Rev Margaret*. My husband and I attended there for the Easter Thursday Night Service which *Leinamau* had helped to prepare ... dialogue, setting, meal ... most beautiful Easter Service we have participated in. She is in college for Certificate in Mission & Evangelism study until her 4 weeks back in Vanuatu from June 10. The financial balance of her Scholarship is now with ACW NSW and will go towards her needs through the year. I went shopping with her, as she had no winter clothes and found Sydney very cold (!) She writes a lot of letters (? *Needs nice writing paper*), does gardening, loves reading in the College Library "*so many books I would love to have back home to help us ...*" (? *Money to buy some special books*). She is a beautiful young woman with a lovely sense of humour. Keep praying for her, her mother and family back home, her safety with confidence in getting around, for supportive friendships.

Judith Cayzer, WKS Convener

SPECIAL DAYS:

The Theme for **Fellowship Day** in July is "*Heaven's Bread*" from Exodus 16:13-18. The Service is being prepared by West Australia Unit and the offertories go to support the Winifred Kiek Scholarship..

For **World Community Day** in October the Theme is "*Enough For Each Day*" (Matthew 6:11). Our NSW Unit is preparing this Service.

Pamela Freeman, Special Days Convener.

ASIAN CHURCH WOMEN'S CONFERENCE:

Our Australian representative to ACWC, *Donna Bryan*, reports that *Pat Walker*, our previous representative, received a Social Justice Award from the Catholic Knights of the Southern Cross for her service through the Catholic Women's League.

Our present Australian prayer partner from 2006 to 2010 is *South Korea* and we look forward to hearing news of their work. Please continue to pray for the women of Hong Kong, our previous prayer partner, in their ministry of a crisis centre for women who are victims of sexual violence.

Recently **Mongolia**, the newest member of ACWC, held a seminar which 46 women attended. At the seminar they networked with other Christian NGO directors and a Health Department Director who attended. *Shu-We Chieng*, (ACWC Executive Secretary from Taiwan), will visit Mongolia in May and also represented ACWC at the 50th Anniversary of the Christian Conference of Asia in Indonesia in March. **East Timor** women are considering membership of ACWC so remember them as they witness in their uncertain political arena.

We are asked to prayerfully remember Christians in **Bangladesh, Thailand, The Philippines** and **Indonesia** where political upheavals cause problems in addition to the many natural disasters they suffer. The next Executive Meeting of ACWC will be in **Bangkok** in June - pray for safety in travel for those attending, including *Donna Brian* from Australia.

This year the annual service for ACWC will again take the form of a sacred concert with Asian artists. It will be at *Hurstville Salvation Army* (Dora Street) on Sunday 21st October at 2.30pm - 4pm including afternoon tea. Flyers are available and were included with the Fellowship Day mail out. Please publicise this and encourage churches and groups to attend, also pray for cooperation and guidance in the planning.

Beryl Kirkwood, Retiring ACWC Convener

(ACW Council is seeking someone to take Beryl's place as ACWC convener - is this something you could undertake, or someone you could nominate?)

MINISTRY IN MYANMAR:

All went very well for the Bible Teaching Conference - thank you so much for your prayers. All teaching for women in the Anglican Church in Myanmar is done through Mothers' Union, and *Marilyn Bennett*, the Diocesan President had a lot of organising to do. Buses were arranged to bring women from Taungoo Diocese about 200 miles north and from the

Delta region 100 miles south; other women travelled by bus and train for 48 hours from Kachin State on the border with China, and others from Yangon (Rangoon) Diocese itself. Altogether 160 women attended. They slept on their mats in Marilyn's church hall, ate three meals a day on tables in the grounds, performed their ablutions in the open with women around them. The cook, a member of Marilyn's church, cooked three meals a day for the 160 women and two meals for us three visitors, plus two interpreters, the Archbishop's wife, the Bishop's wife from Taungoo, and other visitors.

For each of the four days of the Conference, we left at 7 am for the 35 minute car drive to the venue. The first session began at 8.30 am, continued till 12 midday, then resumed at 1.30 pm till about 4 pm; then questions could be asked, notices given, photos taken and we were free to talk to the women casually till 5 pm. Between 5.30 and 7.30 dinner was served, often with visitors - one evening three visitors from Winchester Diocese UK who were travelling to other dioceses in Myanmar.

I gave 8 Bible talks on 1 Peter, *Marge Mills* gave 8 on Genesis 1-12 and *Judy Cameron* 6 talks on the Epistle of James. Some women brought their small children, who sat quietly. The women listened intently, took notes all the time, and at the closing ceremony were able to sum up the main teaching from all our talks. They avidly photocopied all our material to use in their parishes and villages. They told me they used my last year's material on Colossians extensively. They showed overwhelming gratitude for the opportunity to come to the conference and receive the teaching.

In the second week (when Marge and Judy had gone home) I saw first hand some of their villages and the appalling conditions they lived in. Although they dressed neatly and were educated and intelligent it was so humbling to see where they live, work and minister. I came home greatly challenged as they appear quite content and just continue to serve the Lord

That week I spoke to the clergy wives and for one day gave some talks to the students at the Anglican Theological College - its newly-appointed Principal was a former student of Bill's at Trinity College, Singapore whose wife was a member of my student wives Bible study group there. I also spoke to another ex-student of Bill's who now heads up the Youth work for all the dioceses in Myanmar.

My overall impressions are that they are hungry for good Biblical teaching. The theological library is very small with few books, and not many translated from English. The church is free to carry on as long as they don't openly evangelise, speak against the government or write anything that sounds the least subversive.

Norma Dumbrell

8.

SOCIAL ISSUES:

Climate Change and its effects are being experienced by people around the world – drought, erratic weather patterns, damage to the environment, loss of different species – these are the issues of our day. Al Gore's documentary "An Inconvenient Truth" has created a global awareness of the urgency of this crisis. Al Gore speaks of this concern as an ethical and a moral issue. The Catholic *Earthcare* booklet says "This human-induced accelerated climate change suggests a lack of understanding for the integrity and the cycles of nature and raises moral and spiritual questions for us as Christians and calls for radical change in our way of life."

How do we as Australian Church Women reflect on this issue and determine a Christian response to a concern which in Australia today is often seen only as an economic or a political issue? Our Creeds express a belief in God Creator of Heaven and Earth. Care of our environment is an essential part of our faith commitment for God entrusted the earth to our care as a gift of His creation.

We often experience God's presence in our quiet times admiring a sunset, sitting by the sea and giving thanks for the beauty of creation. Many of the Psalms are ancient expressions of praise for the elements of creation and are just as meaningful to us today as they were for our biblical ancestors.

The Earth is our common home, a gift from God and human life is irrevocably linked with the Earth. In a spirit of dialogue we need to learn from informed scientists and unite the efforts of our church communities in addressing the causes, effects and solutions regarding climate change. Ecological education provides the background for wise and moral decisions. We need the strength of God's Spirit to be co-creators to renew the face of the Earth as we work other in reverence and love to protect and sustain God's sacred handiwork.

Catholic Earthcare booklet "*Climate Change – Our Responsibility To Sustain God's Earth*" is the source of many of my thoughts for this report. Please contact me (9769.1211) if interested to obtain a copy.

Sr Joan Bird fmm, Social Issues Convener

PAN PACIFIC & S.E.ASIA WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION:

At the first meeting for 2007 the speaker was *Margo Wagner* whose topic was "Friends of Farm Families." This group of 6 women, working from their homes, gathers and distributes goods to four centres, mainly in North West NSW. They collect clothing and household goods which are sent to assist rural people feeling the effects of a long and disastrous drought. The

9.

four centres operate their own shops and sell the goods at very low prices. When disasters like house fires happen, the families are given replacement goods to set them up again.

The first centre opened 10 years ago in Tambar Springs – it is called 'The Wellness Emporium'; 9 years ago the second shop opened at Nundle and is called 'The Old Church Boutique'; the third shop 'The Olive Branch' is at Binnaway, and the latest one, at Pilliga, is "Betty's Boutique."

All this work is done by volunteers, though Friends Of Farming Families is a registered charity, which enables them to access reduced freight costs. Goods must be clean and of good quality – stained clothing or broken equipment is thrown away – it never leaves Sydney! Underclothes are not accepted – the committee buys new underclothing. Old stock from the shops goes further "outback" and is donated to needy families there. From their profits the shops support their local communities, so schools and pre-schools benefit. At Pilliga they were able to buy a Defibrillator for the local nursing post and pay to train two people to use it in an emergency.

On March 9th at the International Women's Day Luncheon the speaker was *Hind Karouche*, a member of the Muslim Women's National Committee and other Islamic groups. Proceeds of that day were allocated to two PPSEAWA projects:

1. United Nations Trust Fund in support of Actions to Eliminate Violence Against Women – a Unifem Project in S E Asia and the South Pacific.
2. PPSEAWA's work in promoting peace and understanding in the Asia Pacific region.

Edith Ridge, ACW Representative to PPSEAWA

UPDATE - NORTHERN BEACHES REFUGEE SANCTUARY:

Last 6 months of 2006 very busy. Paid our 932nd airfare. We have assisted 474 people from Sierra Leone, 378 from Sudan, 15 from Somalia, 7 from Rwanda, 3 from Iraq, 1 from Ethiopia, 15 from Afghanistan, 32 from Liberia, 3 from Guinea, 1 from Zimbabwe and 3 from Ghana. We have helped people to each State and Territory. We expect to help close to 600 people come to NSW – this is about 25% of all Special Humanitarian Visas coming to NSW in 2007. We are very grateful to the donors as we can only help so many due to their generosity.

David Addington.

(I can supply copies of this letter with its amazing stories – Editor)

10.

BIBLE SOCIETY NEWS BITES:

In Sydney. As a nation hooked on sport, the Christian testimony of one of Australia's top sportsmen is powerful indeed. The Bible Society and Athletes In Action sold some 1800 tickets for a major basketball game at the Entertainment Centre between Sydney Kings and the South Dragons.

Kings captain, *Jason Smith*, told his story of someone whose very identity was found in basketball, before he found Jesus. He then sat for nearly an hour signing testimony cards and chatting with fans about basketball and Jesus. To top it off, the Kings won!

The night was judged an overwhelming success with all the schools and churches involved very keen for another event in the future.

Another Testimony – from *Professor Ian Harper*, Australia's Fair Pay Commissioner: "I wasn't raised as a Christian although sent to Sunday School and attending a Church School. I happily survived the 16 years after leaving school without God intruding into my life. I married and was caught by surprise when my wife became a Christian. I was absolutely furious! Interestingly, the vicar of her church was, like me, an economist. As I engaged in discussion with him, I realised that I had never read the Bible seriously. Now, the picture of Jesus I found was quite different from the one I vaguely carried in my memory. I felt my resistance waning and woke up to a shocking truth – my faith in the worldly philosophy of economics had become my religion! On Christmas Day 1989 I knelt before God and asked Him to forgive me. I had a sense of joy that my mind could finally affirm as true what my heart for some time had been willing to accept."

Chaplains: Free Scripture material is supplied to chaplains ministering within hospitals, prisons, seafarers' missions and the emergency services. *Rev Paul Drury*, Chaplain at Parklea Correctional Centre appreciates Bibles in many different languages he receives and the generosity of supporters who provide them.

Schools: It is planned to put a small 'Megavoice' Audio Player into the hands of every child who attends a Sunday School or a Scripture Classes in NSW State Schools. This is a solar-powered machine with the entire New Testament stored on a tiny computer chip.

In Laos: New Life At 90! "It's never too late to change your life" says 90-year old *Maetu Manh*. This depressed, lonely woman of 10 years ago is no longer recognisable. Her transformation began under a tree at the edge of a rice paddy. Ill, widowed and abandoned

11.

by her five grown children, Mrs Manh had withdrawn from the world. Then watching workers in the rice fields, she became intrigued by a young woman who didn't sit with the other harvesters to eat lunch; alone, she read a book under a tree.

The young woman explained she was a Christian and was reading the New Testament, which was the Word of God. Wanting to find out more, Mrs Manh quietly sat beside her and read over her shoulder. When the young woman returned to the fields, she left her book, in which Mrs Manh was now deeply absorbed. She sat reading for hours under that tree, not daring to tear herself away from its life-giving words.

That night she resolved to end her isolation and live fully, following Christ. As she learned more and experienced the love and acceptance of other Christians, she was able to forgive her children for abandoning her. Later one of her daughters returned home and now lives with her.

From Bible-A-Month Partners & Bibles@Work News

AND SOME FROM CHRISTIAN BLIND MISSION:

From South Africa. Nobel Prize winner *Archbishop Desmond Tutu* is thankful for support for the Tygerberg Children's Hospital in Cape Town of a donation of \$36,000 for the early diagnosis and treatment of children with Tuberculosis Meningitis. TB is one of the worst epidemics affecting children in the world and without treatment can be fatal or cause severe lifelong disability.

From South America. Football superstar, *Pele*, is active in helping people with disabilities in the world's poorest countries. After he visited a CBM sponsored school for hearing-impaired children in Sao Paulo, Brazil, Pele said "I play in the CBM team."

From Sudan: *Abuk Ngor* was blind for 7 years and walked 8 days to reach the CBM Eye Clinic. Her operation was a success and her joy overflowed when she saw her two youngest children for the very first time!

From Kenya: For *Fatuma*, 71 years old, a moment of complete joy realizing she can see, after being completely blind from cataracts.

From Tanzania: *Salim* only 4 months old, blind from cataracts. Her operation goes well and her mother *Rhema*, who sold cashew nuts to pay for the bus trip which took 24 hours to get to the hospital, can't wait to take off her baby's eye patch and know she can see.