

**** INFORMATION PAGE ****

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A.C.W. Local Branches:	\$15.00 per annum
Organisations:	\$15.00 per annum
Bible Society; World Day of Prayer; NSW Ecumenical Council; The Girls' Brigade; National Council of Women; P.P.S.E.A.W.A.	

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS' FEES due 1st March : \$10.00 per annum
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NEWSETTE

AUSTRALIAN CHURCH WOMEN -- NSW UNIT

ACW Website: www.acwnational.org.au

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 Jennifer Peffer Tel: 9874 4056

NUMBER 117

NOVEMBER 2008

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings.....

The speed with which the year passes always seems to surprise us. We begin relaxed in January and then the pace increases and before we know it we are contemplating end of year functions, Christmas and planning for a new year ahead – often missing out on the enjoyment of savouring each precious moment and event that takes place along the way.

Our 70th Celebration Year will soon be history and we look forward with anticipation to what lies ahead for Australian Church Women as we step into a new decade – we know that God has gone before and will guide us.

As you read this I will be getting things in order for 2009 and starting to pack for a proposed trip to the UK to spend Christmas and a special '0' birthday with our daughter and family.

It will be strange to actually have Christmas in a cold climate and opportunities to enjoy traditional activities and food and even attend

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Lessons and Carols in a Cathedral setting. In reading about traditions and songs we associate with Christmas the following really was an eye opener to me - perhaps you will also find it interesting.

Did you know that during the period 1558-1829 that Catholics in England were prohibited by law to practice their faith either in public or private? The song, The Twelve Days of Christmas, was written as a 'catechism song' to help young Catholics learn their faith. It was a coded message and what sounded like rhyming nonsense was actually a religious song that could be sung without the authorities knowing.

The song goes, "on the first day of Christmas my true love sent to me..."

The "true love" doesn't refer to an earthly suitor, but to God Himself. The "me" who receives the presents is the believer, those who form the Church..

Day 1 The partridge in a pear tree is Jesus Christ upon the Cross. In the song, Christ is symbolically presented as a mother partridge because she would feign injury to decoy a predator away from her nestlings. She was even willing to die for them. The tree is the symbol of the fall of the human race through the sin of Adam and Eve. It is also the symbol of its redemption by Jesus Christ on the tree of the Cross..

Day 2 The "two turtle doves" refers to the Old and New Testaments.

Day 3 The "three French hens" stand for faith, hope and love – the three gifts of the Spirit that abide (1 Corinth. 13)

Day 4 The "four calling birds" are the four evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, who wrote the Gospels, which sing the song of salvation through Jesus Christ.

Day 5 The "five golden rings" represent the first five books of the Bible, also called the Jewish Torah" - Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.

Day 6 The "six geese a-laying" is the six days of creation.

Day 7 The "seven swans a-swimming" refers to the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit: wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety and fear of the Lord.

Day 8 The "eight maids a-milking" represent the eight beatitudes listed in the Sermon on the Mount.

Day 9 The "nine ladies dancing" were the nine fruits of the Holy Spirit as found in Galatians 5:22-23: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

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Day 10 The "ten lords a-leaping" represents the Ten Commandments.

Day 11 The "eleven pipers piping" refers to the eleven faithful apostles.

Day 12 The "twelve drummers drumming" were the twelve points of belief expressed in the Apostles Creed: belief in God the Father, The Son and the Holy Spirit; that Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary, became man, was crucified, died and rose on the third day; that he sits at the right hand of the Father and will come again; the resurrection of the dead and life everlasting. (Adapted from writings and emails on "The Twelve Days of Christmas")

We give thanks that we have the liberty to sing and share about our faith – may this Christmas be truly blessed as we have the opportunity to enjoy and share again the Christmas Story with our families and the wider community.

God bless you each one, *Jennifer Peffer*

PASTORAL CARE:

We were saddened to learn that Life Member, *Joan Curtin*, passed away on 5th October. Joan was a catalyst in the very valuable decision that was made to include representatives from the Roman Catholic Church on the Australian Church Women NSW Unit Council. Contact has been made with Joan's family.

Thora Thomas is undergoing critical radiation treatment and *Keasi Kupu* is having chemotherapy. Please pray for both these ladies and for their families and also continue to pray for *Peg Blake*.

Thank you for your continuing prayer support for *Naline*, our daughter-in-law. She will return to hospital on 30th October for a bone marrow transplant. There is a 70% survival rate. Would you join us in praying that she will be one of the 70%?

Olive Edmondstone, Pastoral Care Convenor

70th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS OF ACW NSW:

We were blessed with a warm spring day when we gathered at Scots Church in Sydney to celebrate our 70th Birthday. The NSW Unit was formed in 1938, first known as *Women's Inter-Church Council*, changing to *Australian Church Women* after the National Executive was formed in 1965.

How good it was to meet old friends, as members past and present enjoyed

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fellowship over Morning Tea and Lunch. Among invited guests we were pleased to welcome ACW National President *Jean Thompson* and National Executive members *Constance Aronson* and *Cela Cooper*.

The theme for the Day was "*Looking Back For Inspiration - Moving Forward With Expectation*" and President *Jennifer Pepper* conducted the program of praise and prayer with grace and warmth, ably assisted by Past Presidents *Carmel Keys* and *Lyn Middleton*. Winifred Kiek Scholarship Convener *Judith Cayzer* and National Life Member *Shirley Wells* led in prayer and the joyful singing was conducted by *Joan Tong*. A lovely addition to the program was the Choir, made up of current Council members.

As we "*Looked Back For Inspiration*" there was a feeling of being surrounded by a "cloud of witnesses." Secretary *Isabel Hewitt* had updated the two previous Histories of ACW NSW (1988 and 1998) with a new book, containing photos and profiles of all the Presidents of our Unit. A Power-Point Presentation also focussed on the Unit's history. It was a pleasure to see long-time member and current Treasurer, *Helen Richardson* cut the beautiful *Anniversary Cake*, made and decorated by Membership Secretary, *Martha Noel*.

Past Presidents *Joan Tong* and *Edith Ridge*, garbed as angels in white robes, asked us to imagine a time when none of us would still be here on earth, their segment being relayed from "Heaven" where two old friends had met and stopped to reminisce about ACW. As well as a "potted history" of the Unit, its *Special Days Services* and projects *Fellowship of the Least Coin*" and *Winifred Kiek Scholarship*, the special focus of their segment was on the women of ACW. They remembered Scholars who had studied in Australia and notable women from 1938 to 2008 whose contributions have been both an inspiration and a challenge. They said they could have gone on FOREVER, but more good things were to follow.

Pru Goward MP, the after-lunch Guest Speaker, encouraged us to look back for inspiration but also to "*Move Forward With Expectation*" as she told of her experiences in public life, particularly in the work of Anti-discrimination. She encouraged ACW members to keep the welfare of women and the family to the forefront of our work.

Past President *Lyn Middleton* brought the day to a fitting conclusion with a challenging address. Looking back over 70 years we see how our organisation has grown and changed and we must be open to more growth and possible change if we are to survive to the 80th Anniversary. Lyn had some ideas about this; we need to listen to her and build for the future. So everyone went home, inspired and happy.

Reported by Past President Edith Ridge

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WINIFRED KIEK SCHOLARSHIP

It was great on our 70th Anniversary Day that National WKS Convenor *Constance Aronson* was able to accompany National President *Jean Thompson* from the ACT. We had a photo taken together with the wonderful anniversary cake as it sat on the two gold coloured mats that *Nighat Gulzar* (1994 Scholar) sent as a gift earlier in the year and I will be able to send *Nighat* a copy of it.

Rachel (McManus) Otto (1997 Scholar) replied with thanks for the baby congratulations we sent her on the birth of baby *Jayden*, and included a photo of him. She said that things are going well for her in Miles in Queensland. She is doing one and a half days a week tutoring at the High School and is going to try to finish her teaching degree, consisting of sixteen weeks practice teaching at the High School where her husband *Craig* is a teacher.

Leinamau (2007 Scholar from Vanuatu) still emails to stay in touch. She remains busy around the islands. In October she attended her denominational Conference and was re-appointed to her Christian Education position.

Imelda Marcos (current 2008 Scholar from The Philippines) emails news and prayer points, including photos of herself, her class and her daughter. Let me know if you would like me to forward these to your email address. She is busy with study and work as Associate Pastor along with language study preparing for her ministry to muslim women in Dubai. Recently she was involved in a Missions Convention. Her daughter, now eighteen, is working out the processing of immigration papers to go to USA, where her father is, for studies. Imelda has till December to finish her Masters in Divinity degree.

The two new scholars from Multicultural Australia for 2009 have been announced. They are: *Inese Foiawkau*, married thirteen years to Joseph with two daughters aged six and twelve, who lives at Westmead (Sydney) and has a fine academic record with a degree in Information Technology, a diploma in Computer Studies (Fiji) and a Certificate in Pastoral Counselling. She also has a good work experience record. She is a member of Parramatta-Ermington Fijian Parish Council, of which she is the Treasurer, is a leader in Women's Fellowship, and an Advisor to the youth group. Inese intends to do a Graduate Diploma in Theology at Charles Sturt University in partnership with the United Theology Centre, Parramatta.

Christine Ferguson from Victoria has a degree in Science (Physiology) from NZ and a Bachelor of Nursing (NZ) and has had work experience in a Melbourne Hospital, in The Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Services

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Council and in CWA Country Health Services. Christine's home and supporting church is St. Jude's Anglican in Melbourne. Her involvement includes Sunday School and young adult ministry, playing in and leading a music team and a home group and as a trainee pastoral worker. She would like to do a Graduate Diploma in Divinity at the Bible College of Victoria for one year in preparation for long-term cross-cultural mission. She seeks to share the Gospel with people she lives and works with in a developing country.

May we continue to pray for both these women as they prepare to add studies to their already busy lives. Christmas cards will be sent in November to those scholars with whom we are in touch.

Judith Cayzer, WKS Convener

ASIAN CHURCH WOMEN'S CONFERENCE:

ACWC Executive Secretary *Sue-Wen Chiang* has advised that at the Executive and General Committee meetings in Taiwan in May-June it was recommended funds be released from the ACWC Emergency Fund to help alleviate need in Myanmar following cyclone Nargis which struck on 2-3 May this year. The money was sent and the Myanmar delegate reported back that the money was used in taking care of pregnant and post-natal patients in the affected areas.

Our annual Multicultural Service, which celebrates ACW's affiliation as one of the 19 member countries of ACWC was held on Sunday 21st September at The Salvation Army Parramatta, taking the form of a Pleasant Sunday Afternoon Concert of Praise. It was most encouraging to see a near capacity congregation with over 230 present. The Christian faith was celebrated with praise and glory given to God through musical items - instrumental, vocal and dance - by group and individual artists and by the congregation as they followed the lead of the worship ensemble of the host church and lifted their voices in glorious hymns of praise.

The *Chinese, Korean, Fijian* and *Telegu* choirs/vocal groups thrilled us with the warmth and excellence of their performances while the Australian timbrel brigade from the host church added sparkle and the brass band, also from the host church, with their meditative selection added food for thought.

Through the generosity of the congregation over \$1,070 was given for the work of ACWC. A lovely time of fellowship was shared at afternoon tea following the concert.

Lyn Middleton, ACWC Convener

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The ACWC Concert of Praise ~ ~ ~ in Pictures



SOCIAL ISSUES -- A VERY TOPICAL ADDRESS:

The guest speaker at August Council Meeting was *Robyn Gaspari* from Australian Women's Coalition (AWC), with which, because of our affiliation with National Council of Women, ACW is affiliated, together with many other women's organisations.

And why not??? Are we not all interested in women's issues which affect ourselves, our families, and people we know?

Of particular interest is the AWC's present campaign on the need for facilities for **Aged Care**, with the necessity for a third stream of accommodation being required between Hostel Care and Total Aged Care. This is certainly an important issue - a Transition Program.

The Campaign "**Australia says No to Violence against Women**" is of particular concern as violence has economic, social and health costs on the community. Further, it is no longer just women who are abused, but children and men are also affected by this terrible scourge. Remember to observe **White Ribbon Day** on Tuesday, November 25.

Other subjects Robyn referred to were:

Paid Maternity Leave;

Women's Justice Coalition, Lobbying;

Suicide Prevention - Mental Health;

Rural /Regional/Remote programs to help in special needs of people;

Education; Poverty; Grandparenting;

All these are ongoing consultations through which the Coalition aims to help our community, especially women and families. We need to be aware and to speak up too.

Reported by Past President Carmel Keys

SPECIAL DAYS:

Reports show that more than 650 people attended this year's Fellowship Day Services in July, with offertories amounting to close on \$3500.

The Theme for 2009 Special Days Services is "*Faith in the Future*"

July - Fellowship Day: "*Our God is Ever Faithful*"

October - World Community Day: "*Faith - Yesterday, Today & Tomorrow*"

Pamela Freeman, Special Days Convener

PAN PACIFIC & SEASIA WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION:

At the **June** Winter Luncheon *Karen Miller* spoke on the work of the Benevolent Society, which had just celebrated 195 years of service in NSW. She compared how the Society was in 1813 with how it is today, with its 800 staff members and 900 volunteers. Over the years it has dealt with poverty, which has changed from the obvious needs of the barefoot children in the streets of Sydney to identifying the socially disadvantaged of today, which include *child abuse *domestic violence *aged persons needing help in order to stay in their homes *people with disabilities, mental illness or drug dependency *families at risk of losing their homes with rising mortgage payments. The Society now works with government and other groups to meet the needs in society.

In **July**, *Daphne Lowe Kelley* spoke on Chinese Relationships, Heritage and Tourism. Daphne, who is 'NZ by birth, Australian by residence, Chinese by design and American by marriage gave us a 'potted history' of her many relationships with many interesting stories. Her emphasis is on Peace of the World. The Chinese Heritage Association of Australia has proposed an 'Immigration Bridge' be built across Lake Burley Griffin in Canberra - a foot bridge linking the National Museum of Australia to the Parliamentary Triangle, which would cost \$30 million.

ACW members are reminded that their representatives to PPSEAWA, *Sr Joan Bird* and myself will take orders for copies of a delightful book, *Platters For Peace*, with recipes from many countries and text concerning Peace, cost \$20. This would make a good Christmas present and also contribute to PPSEAWA's funds.

Edith Ridge, ACW Representative to PPSEAWA

THE GIRLS' BRIGADE:

During 2008 several of our larger Companies have gone into recess and we hope that some of them will re-open. Companies close for many reasons - too costly, leaders not committed to long term service or, sadly, sometimes a new pastor wants a clean sweep and to do different things. But also it is a real thrill to see new companies forming, a recent one of which is at Wee Waa, such a long way from its nearest company; they have been meeting all last term and are still very excited about all the girls in the area they are reaching.

During the April school holidays, some 40 primary school age girls attended a State Camp at Morisset and all had a great time with the theme of '*Going Bananas*.'

On Saturday 27th September, 9 girls were presented with their Queen's

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Award at Government House, with lots of photos being taken with the Governor, *Professor Marie Bashir* which will hold a special place in the girls' memories. The girls were invited to introduce their parents to the Governor and all enjoyed morning tea on the colonnade. The day concluded with an evening meal at Girls' Brigade House in Toongabbie and each girl was able to invite 5 guests to enjoy this time with them. The awardees were presented with their certificates at the dinner.

As we enter our final term for the year many companies will be frantically trying to finish any incomplete badge work and prepare for their final parades and presentations for 2008.

Ruth Dickenson, Girls' Brigade Representative

NSW ECUMENICAL COUNCIL:

The AGM was held in June at Thornleigh-Hillcrest Uniting Church with the focus coming from Revelations 22:2b... "and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations." President *Rev Tara Curlewis* stated that healing integrates community and enables unity. The evidence of various churches working together is showing signs of bearing fruit. We live in a world characterised by brokenness, and we offer healing and hope. However, such vision is continually being challenged by lack of resources.

Some questions to be considered are:

- a. Do our churches share the ecumenical vision for future ministry in NSW?
- b. What do the churches expect of the NSW Ecumenical Council?
- c. How are such visions to be resourced?

The Council is involved in programs that bring healing in the areas of justice, peace and reconciliation. A new web site is being developed to keep people informed of the Council's activities.

General Secretary *Rev Dr Jonathan Inkpen* threw out a challenge to consider what ecumenism might look like in 2013. How does ecumenism impact on the challenge of communicating the gospel in new ways: cross-cultural relationships; and our ongoing care for creation?

Aimee Kent and *Robyn Goodwin*, young women recently introduced to ecumenical gatherings, in Australia and overseas, enthusiastically shared their individual spiritual journeys, and how they are now encouraging their peers to become involved in aspects of the ecumenical movement.

Bishop Michael Malone spoke of the process which culminated in the liturgical signing of the Diocesan Covenant in Newcastle on 2nd April.

Further reports from the Social Justice Commission emphasised key

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priorities such as Indigenous Disadvantage, Care for creation, and peacemaking. As from September 2008, work carried out by the Partnership for Development Commission on behalf of Christian World Service will be done under the banner of *Act for Peace*. Points raised touched on climate change as it affects communities living in the Pacific region.

Seminars have been held at Paddington and Tamworth, to highlight the issues regarding refugees and asylum seekers, for whom the *House of Welcome* provides ongoing support, including volunteers visiting clients; a newsletter; providing safe housing; some financial support for those not permitted to work.

A prayer symposium is scheduled for November 8, 2008, at St Andrew's Orthodox Church, Redfern.

Pamela Freeman, ACW Representative to NSW Ecumenical Council



Advent!

When the Lord in glory comes,
not the trumpets, not the drums,
not the anthem, not the psalm,
not the thunder, not the calm,
not the shout the heavens raise,
not the chorus, not the praise,
not the silences sublime,
not the sounds of space and time,
but his voice when he appears
shall be music to my ears;

***but his voice, when he appears
shall be music to my ears.***

When the Lord to human eyes
shall bestride our narrow skies,
not the child of humble birth,
not the carpenter of earth,
not the man by men denied,
not the victim crucified,
but the God who died to save,
but the victor o'er the grave,
he it is to whom I fall.

Jesus Christ, my all in all;
***He it is to whom I fall,
Jesus Christ, my all in all!***

Christmas!

... And so we pause this time of year to think (some for the only time), of him who lay within a lowly manger, far from home, and cradled only by the humble hay. We sing our songs of praise, some build a crib, and dare to carve a figure that is his; a touching thing, a child - all will agree, and Jesus was a child - so Jesus is.

... And so a King is locked in babyhood,
to stay forever quaint, diminutive,
as in a myth men tell from time to time. ...

O living, risen, reigning Christ - forgive!

