C R O S S R O A D S

A Newsletter of the Grail International Leadership Team

June 2013

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Letter from the ILT June 2013 3

Words from the Editor by *Carol Siemering* 4

U.S. Grail Talking and Doing Food Justice, *Lucy Jones* 4

Call to create a sustainable world, "The gas movement in Italy: solidarity purchasing groups", *Marina Sangalli* 6

SOLGAIA - Sustainability of the planet using solar energy! *Lidia Martins* 7

Pioneers for a Sustainable Future, *Joyce Minkler* 9

Approaching the Northern Solstice I am afraid, very afraid! *Marilyn Aitken* 10

Working to ban fracking in Colorado USA, *Judith Blackburn* 11

Marian Schwab's Visit to the Philippines, *Sandy Aristorenas-Dela Cruz* 12

German breakfast with the Grailwomen 13

President of the Federal Republic of Germany (Bundespräsident) Joachim Gauck`s visit to Duisburg-Hochfeld, *Karoline Robins* 14

Nakupenda sana!I Love You Very Much! 70-100 Gathering, *Carol Siemering* 15

ILT Contact Details

Christa Werner Feldkirchenerstrasse 2 85055 Ingolstadt Germany Ph/fax 0049-841-3799-898 Christawerner2005@yahoo.com skype: christa.werner2	**Carol Webb** 33 Gadd Street Northcote 3070 Australia Ph. 61-4-1697 0503 (cell) carol@carolwebb.org skype:carolwebboz
Cristina dos Anjos Conceicao Rua 28 Sul Bloco B Apto 1203 Condominio Encontro das Aguas 71.929.000 Aguas Claras Brasilia, Brasil Ph. 55-61-3042-2540 Cell: 55-61-9217-9740 cristina@caritas.org.br mariadosanjos@terra.com.br skype:cristina_dosanjos	
International Finance Officer **Mieneke Hage** Brahmslaan 21 2324 AC Leiden The Netherlands Ph.: 31-71-5762055 Fax: 31-71-5767608 mieneke@mienekehage.nl Skype: mienekehage	Administrative Assistant **Mary Omedo** Nieuwegracht 51 3512 LE Utrecht The Netherlands Ph. 31-74-707-4273 iltsecr@thegrail.org Skype: omedoma1

Letter from the ILT June 2013

Hello to all our dear Grail sisters,

It has been a very busy few months for the Grail and for us as ILT. We started the year with the wonderful gathering of so many in Belo Horizonte for the International Council Meeting (thank you, Grail Brasil, for the fabulous hospitality).

We hope that by this time, each one of you has had a chance to read the report from the meeting. There was so much work done, decisions and recommendations made, and now we are trying to follow up on all of that as well as the work that we committed to at the IGA in Kleinmond in 2011. There is a lot of joy in knowing that we are moving forward with commitment and hope.

Since that time, Christa, has worked with a team to plan and participate in the 70/100 gathering held near Grailville. I'm sure that many of you have heard from participants about the days that they shared and enjoyed together. And more sharing will come to all of you.

Carol had an opportunity to do some traveling in Brasil and lead a workshop for teams that work with Shirlei and Cristina. They were very stimulating days at a Marist Centre outside of Brasilia – lots of enthusiasm and Carol can now understand a lot more Portuguese! More recently Carol and a team completed the preparation for the Asia-Pacific Regional meeting and traveled to Port Moresby for two weeks. PNG was a marvelous host country, and we grew together as Philippines, PNG and Australia. Reports will soon be available from those days as well.

At this moment, the African Regional Formation Meeting has been concluded in Uganda. And so the work and sharing of all of us continues.

At the end of July, Carol will travel to South Africa for visits and then a meeting of the International Formation Team in Kleinmond, South Africa. That meeting will be followed by our own ILT meeting, and then you will hear much more from us again. Carol and Christa will travel on from there to the Celebration of Imelda's 50years in the Grail in Tanzania as well as the dedication into the nucleus of several women in East Africa.

We look forward to seeing many of you in the coming months and thank you for all the work you have been doing to grow and build the Grail and its vision. And we also offer a special thanks to Carol Siemering of the US Grail who has done this work of Crossroads.

With much love and prayers for many blessings,

Cristina, Christa, and Carol

Words from the Editor by *Carol Siemering*

This theme for this issue comes from the words of our vision statement

"**We are called to create a sustainable world, transforming our planet into a place of peace and justice. We acknowledge that we are part of the whole of creation, striving to live simply and to nurture a culture of care for all the earth."**
You will find articles on this as well as sharing on other happenings our Grail sisters wished to share with you.

U.S. Grail Talking and Doing Food Justice, *Lucy Jones*

Inspired by and following up on the Grail Women in the Americas meeting of July 2012, the U.S. Grail has begun to explore the topic of Food Security and Food Sovereignty. There are some Grail members who have been working on these issues for many years and in various ways. There are some who want to learn more and would like to be part of a study. We surveyed the membership in January and received responses from 35 members about their involvement in food justice issues. Some are involved with community gardening, community-supported agriculture, food pantries and soup kitchens, farmers markets, and/or disaster emergency food provision (such as following Hurricane Sandy). Some are involved in food advocacy, such as the U.S. Farm Bill, at the United Nations, or at local or statewide levels. Many labor in their own gardens, using sustainable, ecologically appropriate methods, such as dry land or high altitude organic gardening.

In two recent conference calls, we have heard from 8 Grail women and their activities and concerns that represent some of the wide range of regions in the U.S. From South Florida to the Pacific Northwest and from Ohio to the Northeast, our climates and seasons vary but our concern for our local and global neighbors and the land, water and air of this planet are vivid for all of us. We are just beginning to formulate plans for how to continue to support each other and learn more about the important issues in food justice and to share information with and gather information from all of the U.S. Grail. We have created a facebook page called "Food Justice-US Grail" as one means of sharing information and we are reading two papers, as well as two books, recommended by Sharon Joslyn, to get a grounding for our continuing conversation and to invite a wider circle to read and join in the study. Links to the papers in pdf can be found at the facebook page. The books we are reviewing are The Politics of Food: The Global Conflict between Food Security and Food Sovereignty by William D. Schanbacher and A Place at the Table: The Crisis of 49 Million Hungry Americans and How to Solve it, edited by Peter Pringle.

The Grail members who responded to the survey are involved with an impressive list of advocacy organizations and issues, such as Bread for the World, CARE International, the Cornucopia Network of New Jersey, the Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association, Cincinnati Regional Food Policy Council, Green Umbrella Food Action Network, the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development and Commission on the Status of Women, Grassroots Environmental Education, Just Food, Weston Price Foundation, Bioneers East, Food and Water Watch New York, Washington State Campaign to label GMOs, Northwest Earth Institute, Ecumenical Advocacy Days, and local food co-ops, farmers markets and informal neighbor plant and seed exchanges.

The following excerpt from the Nyéléni March 2013 newsletter (find it at Nyleni.org) may give you some helpful history about the concepts of Food Security and Food Sovereignty:

At the *World Food Summit* in 1996, La Via Campesina (LVC) launched a concept that both challenged the corporate dominated, market driven model of globalized food production and distribution, as well as offering a new paradigm to fight hunger and poverty by developing and strengthening local economies. Since then, food sovereignty has captured the imagination of people the world over - including many governments and multilateral institutions - and has become a global rallying cry for those committed to social, environmental, economic and political justice.

Food sovereignty is different from ***food security*** in both approach and politics. Food security does not distinguish where food comes from, or the conditions under which it is produced and distributed. National food security targets are often met by sourcing food produced under environmentally destructive and exploitative conditions, and supported by subsidies and policies that destroy local food producers but benefit agribusiness corporations. Food sovereignty emphasizes ecologically appropriate production, distribution and consumption, social-economic justice and local food systems as ways to tackle hunger and poverty and guarantee sustainable food security for all peoples. It advocates trade and investment that serve the collective aspirations of society. It promotes community control of productive resources; agrarian reform and tenure security for small-scale producers; agro-ecology; biodiversity; local knowledge; the rights of peasants, women, indigenous peoples and workers; social protection and climate justice.

The Grail has something to contribute to this global conversation and movement as we seek to become better informed, more energized and deeply involved in our local, regional and global communities in ways that support and sustain the land, the plants and animals and the people who are interdependent and interconnected in more ways than we can ever know. There will be more to share in the months and years between now and the next meeting of the Grail Women in the Americas.

Call to create a sustainable world, "The gas movement in Italy: solidarity purchasing groups", *Marina Sangalli*

Over the last five years I've been personally committed to a new movement of ideas and action aimed at creating a new awareness around food production and consumption of what is called GAS , Italian solidarity purchasing groups. Similar movements are widespread in the USA (CSA :Community Supported Agriculture), France/Brussels (AMAP) , Japan (Teikei) and many other countries.

In practical terms a GAS means that a group of families and/or individuals decide to get together and organize themselves in order to buy directly from the producers, bypassing the long distribution chain. The producers are selected using criteria such as biological production, zero mile distance, direct contact/acquaintance with the producer, fair pricing, support of social projects (i.e. products made by prisoners, people with mental or physical disabilities, etc.)

The GAS Group meets regularly, usually every 1-2 months, in people's homes, in order to plan the next orders, assess the producers, exchange experiences (i.e. ways of cooking and preserving food) and propose new projects/contacts.

Solidarity underpins the group's function. Someone is responsible for each food category (vegetables, meat, fish, cereals, pasta, etc) and keeps in touch with the producer(s), gathers orders from the group and assembles it according to the producer's needs, organizes the delivery and distribution, payment and reimbursements/feed back. Producers bring the goods either to the address of an individual GAS member or in case of larger volumes, to a garage belonging to someone in the group.

If someone cannot be there to collect the goods, somebody else does that and stores the goods in the interim. Sometimes we have to go to collect the goods at a certain delivery point in town (eg: that happens with oranges coming from Sicily) and we organize a collection drive with 2 or 3 cars .

We started with food but have expanded and included shoes &bags, washing & cleaning products, cosmetics and most recently, ethical banking and insurance.

The movement in Italy has spread throughout the country: there are now 500 GAS groups in Italy. Many small bioproducers can now rely on a strong demand which enables them to better plan production and become independent of the regular distribution market.

Direct contact also "produces" good relationships and trust. We as consumers become more knowledgeable and realistic about the work of the producers and our children, especially those born and raised in cities, gain direct experience with how vegetables are grown and animals are bred.

The groups are kept small on purpose, usually a maximum of 20-25 families, to preserve the social aspect of the movement. After reaching this size, many GAS groups help others start up new GAS groups and offer their advice and share experiences with other interested parties. The group offers an ideal opportunity to build a community and local network in towns or cities where people typically do not know each other, let alone their neighbors, and may feel particularly isolated. The GAS groups can help link up people and groups from different geographic, social and economic backgrounds. , whereas normally speaking we don't know our neighbours and feel isolated most of the time, linking to people and groups who live in different part of town.

Local networking also allows for the possibility of committing to local actions for environmental goals or protest. Several willing and able members of my group, for instance, have been involved in protesting against expulsion of Roma families whose children were attending schools in our area. We also raised funds for the Roma project by selling "solidarity wine".

Since the GAS Group started, I involved other women from the Grail/Milano group and linked up with another Grail member, Rosy rom Pirapora, Calabria (in southern Italy). We now regularly (twice a year) order her products, which include olive oil, jam and marmalade, pickles and Tropea onions. Rosy has met with our GAS group in Milano and has had a chance to talk about bio-agriculture in Calabria.

GAS groups help restore the link between the food we buy and eat in cities and the way it has been produced in the countryside. We feel very strongly that food needs to be produced in an ethical and environmentally respectful way. Building relationships around it brings us joy , respect , trust and hope for the future.

SOLGAIA - Sustainability of the planet using solar energy! *Lidia Martins*

SOLGAIA is a Grail initiative, in the region of Coimbra, Portugal. It began in 2012 as a preliminary experimental phase.

The social context:
The Portuguese population – like other countries of southern Europe - lives an escalating impoverishment as a result of the implementation of social and economic ultra neoliberal policies.
Currently unemployment is widespread, the social rights of citizens are increasingly restricted (social benefits and access to health care), wages and retirement pensions decrease systematically with the application of new fees and increased taxes on labor income.
The cost of living increases daily, including the cost of essential goods, such as water and energy that are being delivered to lobbies.
The consumerist model where our current society lives is unsustainable. We need a new paradigm. It is absolutely essential to change many aspects of our daily lives.

The answer:
As Grail women and citizens, we feel the challenge that calls for a responsible intervention - without forgetting the systemic framework in which this option is part.
We propose the experiencing of new ways of life, in us and in others, that can generate more sustainability for people and the environment.

Among the various solutions and possible paths we have chosen to elect the use of solar energy as a strategy to reduce family and community expenses, improving food quality and simultaneously promoting other alternative and sustainable lifestyles.

The first steps:
The preliminary phase was the team preparation and the construction of solar ovens. The team worked on the theoretical framework, and its scope, that supports the initiative and realized that this initiative contains within itself opportune theoretical and practical elements because it is potentially challenging in different areas: economic, social, environmental and cultural.

The dream:
Promoting greater environmental awareness and love for planet Earth. Creating contexts for the experience of new life styles and practices, which contribute to greater harmony and sustainability. Sharing knowledge and develop bonds with people and institutions across different regions of the planet, towards a global citizenship.
With just small changes we could make a big difference!

In practice we want to:
Promote the development of young women and Grail women, locally and internationally, with the goal of spreading good environmental practices.
Disseminate knowledge on Clean Energy.

Decrease economic and environmental costs.
Introduce the practice of solar cooking.
Disseminate the experience in family and community spaces, particularly among social solidarity or public institutions that support elderly and impoverished families.
Involve, through partnerships, institutions and young women with technical and scientific knowledge in the solar field.

The beginnings since April 2012:
We built and experience three models of solar ovens (see pictures) and verified their efficiency.
We held five, theoretical and practical, experimental workshops with groups of women. Of these, one was with Spanish women who traveled to Condeixa/ Atadoa.
We held two workshops with young groups and other two with families.
We created, we adapted and we made nutritional quality recipes with zero energy cost.

We established partnerships with recycling businesses to obtain material for the construction of the ovens.
We developed a meaningful collaboration with the engineering department of the Technical University of Algarve.

About Us:
Helena Reis - Responsible for workshops with children, youth and families, and also for computer matters; **Celeste Lameira** - Responsible for workshops with rural women; **Susana Matos and Manuela Afonso**- Responsible for fund raising for study visits, the formalization of partnerships and the organization of other workshops besides solar power: permaculture, renewable energy, social economy, community experiences.

How we work:
With volunteers - including SOLGAIA team - and with donations from friends and institutions.

Workshop– August 2012
Project Time

PHOTO 1

Helena Reis (first on the left),
Susana Matos (second on the left)
Celeste Lameira (first on the right)

PHOTO 2

Manuela Afonso
(first on the left, in the background)

Three models of solar cookers

PHOTO 3
Funnel Model

PHOTO 4
Box Model and Parabolic Model

Pioneers for a Sustainable Future, *Joyce Minkler*

Rural Kentucky, USA. I live and work in a beautiful but economically poor rural area, which, in the past, was composed of small subsistence family farms. In recent years more and more of these farms have been sold to companies and developers. Factories have been built which provide employment when times are good and lay off workers when times are bad. Kentucky is rich in coal deposits, and so coal companies have a major influence on the area's economy and, using mountain top removal techniques, devastate the environment in the eastern part of the state.

I live in a unique part of Kentucky that was settled by Catholics in the late 1700s. It is a culture all of its own: simple, friendly, politically conservative, community and family oriented. Right now companies are trying to buy up land to run an unsafe natural gas pipeline through farm and woodland areas just miles from my home. People don't know what to make of this.

Over the past two years I have been deeply involved with a community based group called "New Pioneers for a Sustainable Future." This group. begun in 2005 by a Dominican Sister and now involving many citizens in the area, promotes education and action around sustainability issues, saying "a sustainable community is a community working together toward environmental responsibility, economic vitality, social cohesiveness, and spiritual vibrancy for the sake of those who will come after us."

Through the work of this group, local people are beginning to reclaim their heritage as stewards of their ancestral lands and to appreciate and defend the integrity of their way of life. Education around sustainability issues is preparing the way for direct political action as the environmental crisis deepens. We want to believe that it's not too late to change the disastrous path we are on.

Approaching the Northern Solstice I am afraid, very afraid! *Marilyn Aitken*

"I am afraid!" The Franciscan sister who is my neighbour justified her actions. Returning from Mass, she met a puff-adder near the convent. As a cold-blooded reptile, it was following its calling, basking in the noonday sun. It hissed its warning to her not to step on it and she replied by calling a man, also straight from Mass, to kill the defenceless creature. I cried! We had all been living peacefully with that snake for more than 2 months watching its daily appointment with the sun. The puff-adder with its stunning black and gold markings is a particularly beautiful image of its Creator. I am becoming very impatient with people who wantonly destroy the creatures, the soil, the forests and other biodiversity where they live. To me they are in the same league as murderers of human beings. I am mourning the Puff-adder's death. So is the heron that has lost a possible meal. But the rats are rejoicing that their arch-predator is dead. They can multiply unhindered as they continue to occupy my ceiling.

It's at times like this that I become very "homophobic" in the real meaning of that word – "afraid of human beings". My fear is becoming chronic as I read the emails that pour into my computer every day, and watch the TV pictures of human actions – 2 000 elephants slaughtered by Central African Republic rebel soldiers, the cutting down of forest homes of critically endangered orang-utans in Indonesia to make way for palm oil plantations, and the removal of vast areas of the amazing Amazon biodiversity to provide furniture and grow soybeans to feed the human greed of the Global North. It is not only animals and insects that are suffering; indigenous people are being left homeless; the wholesale destruction of millions of people and their priceless habitat in northern Syrian towns and villages, boggles the mind. How do arms manufacturers sleep at night?

A recent scientific measurement taken at Mauna Loa in Hawaii, records that the atmosphere has now passed the 400 ppm (parts per million) extreme danger zone for "cooking" the earth. Climate Change results are everywhere to see in the record floods in Europe and Asia, the droughts in Africa, the fires in Australia, and the hurricanes in the Caribbean and the USA, but the activities that cause Greenhouse Gases continue to grow in magnitude as the human species rushes towards global suicide.

Rats become meals for snakes; snakes are eaten by birds …. and so goes the food chain, with the creatures at the bottom breeding prolifically to provide enough food to keep the cycle going. Human beings at the top of that food chain are the acme of the evolutionary process, having developed brains to analyse their situation and make drastic changes to their lifestyles, their human-centred behaviour and values, and to stop breeding as though they are at the bottom of the food chain. I shudder when I hear the statistics that the human population is now 7 billion largely poor people, and well on its way to a totally unsustainable 10 billion by 2050. Human predators - armies, diseases and natural phenomena - will doubtless keep the human population in check, but each one of us can play our part to create equilibrium on Earth.

Having spent most of my life living out of an anthropocentric (human centred/dominated) worldview and being engaged in activities that promoted human well-being only, I am now challenged daily to find myself instead in the strands of the vast Web of Life. I devote my time to promoting an ecocentric (earth-centred) worldview, working for the health of all the creatures who reside with me in that web. I am involved in projects to preserve frogs, birds, wetlands, grasslands, and indigenous trees. I am teaching those I interact with to admire and preserve all creatures and to recognise them as our siblings in the great Family of Creation, instead of enemies to be senselessly killed.

When I feel the wind, the rain and the sun, eat the food from the soil, marvel at the changing seasons, look up at the moon at night, and the stars in the vast universe, I

realise with deep gratitude that I am part of this magnificent Mystical Body of Christ. I give thanks for all the humans who have seen the Light (to name a few – Jesus of Nazareth, Hildegard of Bingen, Charles Darwin, Thomas Berry, Donal Dorr, Miriam McGillis, the Audreys Schomer and Sorrento, Trina Paulus, Emilia Charbonneau and Hanna Remke, and all the scientists, botanists, zoologists, entomologists, and birders) and who have helped me, and continue to help me trace my Being to the Ur-Being of Creation. I commit myself to continuing to spread their Gospel of interconnectedness and interdependence in every one of my actions that "all may have life and live it to the full."

Working to ban fracking in Colorado USA, *Judith Blackburn*

Beautiful Colorado is under threat from the oil and gas industry's determination to extract every last ounce of fossil fuel. Most of the world's easily accessed oil has already been harvested. The remaining deposits are more difficult, dangerous and expensive to extract, whether buried deep under the ocean or in shale deposits a mile or more underground. A new technology called directional hydraulic fracturing is what they're using in Colorado. It involves drilling deep and then sideways for a mile or more, pumping millions of gallons of water laced with sand and toxic chemicals under high pressure to fracture the shale so that it releases oil and gas, which then returns to the surface to be transported or piped away. The fluids used must be removed from the water cycle permanently and are often injected underground for storage, a process that has sometimes resulted in causing earthquakes.

Although natural gas burns cleaner than coal, the process of extracting it leaves an even bigger carbon footprint due to the massive amount of trucking needed as well as the health problems traceable to the release of methane and other toxic gases at the well site. And the chances of polluting precious fresh water supplies are enormous. Oil and gas corporations have vastly exaggerated the economic benefits of their industry as well as the amount of reserves available for extraction. They have also misrepresented their intentions, which are not to promote energy independence for the United States, but to export their product to higher-paying markets abroad. Furthermore, the focus on fossil fuels inhibits our transition to sustainable renewables. For all these reasons, the headlong rush to promote fracking needs to be slowed down, if not stopped altogether.

This past year I have devoted myself almost full-time to preventing (or at least postponing) this wholesale blighting of the landscape that brings with it acknowledged health risks and potential devastating consequences to our scarce water supplies. Spurred on and supported by Grail sisters to the east, Joy Garland and Kate Twohy (who are fighting this same battle in New York), I have joined up with other concerned neighbors to research the issue of hydraulic fracturing and the laws governing it, to organize educational events for the community, and, finally, to initiate a petition drive to let voters weigh in on banning fracking within Longmont city limits.

We formed an issues committee named "Our Health, Our Future, Our Longmont," and by dint of hard work from a team of volunteers, we were able to garner adequate signatures to put the proposed ban on hydraulic fracturing and deposit of its wastes on last November's ballot. Our Longmont was outspent by the industry 40 to 1 in their effort to convince voters that they would somehow benefit from rampant oil and gas development. However, Longmont became the first city in Colorado to ban fracking within its city limits by a vote of 60% to 40%. At this point our city faces a lawsuit from the state, which presumes authority over municipalities in regulating energy extraction. Meanwhile, we are working with activists in other Colorado communities to rise up as we did and also to influence our legislators and our governor toward more sustainable statewide laws and policies.

Personally this work has been a great challenge to me. I've had the goal of maintaining balance in my life even as I plunged in whole-heartedly to make a difference in the world. Only one of three Grail members in Colorado, I've had to build a completely new network. In resolving the interpersonal conflicts within our group that inevitably arise when the stakes are high like this and in strategizing with our core group to mobilize the community, I have been privileged to be able to draw

on all the trainings, leadership experiences, and spiritual understandings that Grail participation has offered me over the past 40 years of my involvement. And because the work so closely ties in our mission and vision toward sustainable living, I'm definitely considering this Grail work.

Marian Schwab's Visit to the Philippines, *Sandy Aristorenas-Dela Cruz*

It has always been a privilege and joy for the Grail in the Philippines to be acquainted with Grail women from other nations. Learning their culture and the ways they manage and carry out the Grail mission and vision in their own communities inspire and encourage others to make better their own conduct of Grail activities. The Grail Philippines welcomed Marian Schwab, Grail member from USA, last April 2, 2013 and she stayed in the country for two weeks. Marian had a number of encounters with members and friends of the Philippine Grail in the city and provinces. She met first the members from Manila headed by Jeanette Loanzon. She then took a trip to Cebu and Samar provinces, where she got together with participants of "Paglaum" and "Pagbubuo", leadership trainings sponsored by Grail Philippines for young women. It was a delight to hear Marian share her thoughts about "Women of Faith and Women in the Bible." Everyone got the chance to listen and reflect on numerous bible texts about women in the bible. Everybody was able to express their own idea and opinion on what they could have done or thought of if they were the ones mentioned in the stories of women in the bible. This experience made each participant understand in more worthwhile ways how one's faith can be expressed and practiced. Marian was able to explain and relate bible ideas with current events which involve women from different parts of the world. It was certainly a meaningful manner of showing how beneficial it can be to read and be guided by the bible in living a moral and virtuous life. Before Marian left, she met with the Grail members in Manila, namely (Right-Left as in the photo below) Jeanette Loanzon, Jeng Rodriguez, Monica de Leon, Marian Schwab, Sandy Aristorenas-Dela Cruz and Christine Garinganao, and conferred about the means to help Grail grow more in the Philippines. The members shared their hopes and dreams for the group and Marian provided a possible and strategic way of making these into reality. Everyone realized that each must be self-reliant and courageous enough to handle and implement activities and programs of the group. Genuine support and dedication to work for the cause of women and the poor remain as valuable measures of sustaining the group. The Grail Philippines is very much grateful for the time, inspiration and guidance Marian Schwab gave the group and looks forward for another meeting with her.

German breakfast with the Grailwomen

Xia Hui, Nikolina Pusic - translated by Gerda Kaufmann

On Sunday, November, 11th, 2012 at 10 am five Grail women and 7 international women students came together at the Grail center in Mülheim. For the first time international students (from China, Cameroon and Bangladesh), with 2 companions of the student organization from the University Duisburg Essen (UDE), were invited.
The hostesses had set up a nicely decorated long table with German bred in a basket, 3 different kinds of home-made jam, cold meat, goose-fat, cheese, eggs… as if it were made for a king in the early morning. The guests were impressed by a big "Weckmann" (bread figure) 50 cm high, a traditional symbol for the feast day of Saint Martin. The texts of 2 Martin-songs were distributed and we all sang, accompanied by the accordion of Mrs. Schaumburg-Lowitz.
While telling their personal stories, many questions were asked. Mrs. Ferraguti provided a big map of the earth for the Chinese students to point out the different regions of China, where they come from. There was an interesting discussion, comparing the name giving customs for children in Germany, Cameroon, Bangladesh and China, and how the English or French speaking areas of Cameroon work, and how family life is with a single child or with 10 brothers and sisters. All topics were good for sharing, laughing and learning. Time was passing quickly. At 11:11h Mrs. Kaufmann put on a mask and declared the opening of carnival. We sang and rocked. A nice joyful event!
At the end everybody agreed that a second breakfast should be planned for January 20th, 2013 to learn more about each other. There was also a decision taken between Mrs. Schaumburg-Lowitz and the 3 Chinese students to organize a common meeting of their dance groups.

Feedback of students:

I did not know that a breakfast in Germany can be as long. How to eat a soft egg properly was new to me, because it is totally different in China.
During the breakfast we have talked about many things with the Grail women. Nearly all of them have passed the age of 70, but they look much younger. They are active and passionate. They are not only occupied with their life and that of their family, but also with the whole society and the world where we live together. It is never too late for them to learn. They always enjoy it. On the contrary many Chinese woman, surely the older ones, live their lives tediously, they are dependent on their husbands and children.
After our meeting I am reflecting how my life should be, when I become an older woman.
Nan Zhang – translated by Gerda Kaufmann

Dear Ladies,
Last Sunday I enjoyed very much the breakfast with you. We have talked about many different themes and did get to know each other better. Even though I had tasted a typical German breakfast before, I did not know how to eat the various sauces and a soft egg in an eggcup in the proper way. The most important is that I learned from you that I just should find our by trying what is good and useful for me!
I am looking forward to the next meeting and would like to spend more nice time with you.
With friendly greetings,
Manman Chang- translated by Gerda Kaufmann

President of the Federal Republic of Germany (Bundespräsident) Joachim Gauck`s visit to Duisburg-Hochfeld, *Karoline Robins*

On the 26th of November 2012 Joachim Gauck the Bundespräsident made his inaugural visit to North-Rhine-Westphalia in Germany. In Hochfeld he visited the centre on Immendal to get information of the close cooperation in the work of a Network Project (Netzwerk)

The basis of the Network Project is the regional government's model project "Leave no child behind" ("Kein Kind zurücklassen"). Eighteen regions and towns are involved in this project; Duisburg is one of them. The aim of the project is that all family, youth and child counselling centres, educational centres, training and health centres, schools and so on can provide a safety net for children. Its intent is that all children should be given the opportunities and assistance they require.

The visit by the Bundespräsident Joachim Gauck and Ministerpräsidentin Hannelore Kraft was awaited with excitement in Hochfeld and was meticulously prepared.

Joachim Gauck and Hannelore Kraft were welcomed in the entrance hall of the Kindergarten with a song sung by the children.

Afterwards there was a discussion with the MP for Duisburg Bärbel Bas the local chief youth officer, workers from centres located on Immendal and three mothers who live in Hochfeld. Silvana Ferraguti and Karoline Robins represented the International Initiative Hochfeld.

Apart from presenting the Network, current developments were discussed for example; the arrival of Bulgarian families to the district. The mothers told of their experiences, and also of their worries. The discussion, which was only meant to be 25 minutes, went into more detail and took more time then planned.

A reception with 170 invited guests was held in the evening in the old turbine building in the Duisburg industrial museum park (Duisburger Landschaftspark).
The guests mainly included volunteers involved in migration work.

In my opinion the visit was a success for all involved. It is of course a great honour to welcome such a prestigious guest and to be listened to while explaining one's work or describing everyday work experiences. Instead of the frustrated and resigned groups of social workers he was expecting; the Bundespräsident was very impressed by the dedication he found in and around Immendal.

Nakupenda sana!I Love You Very Much! 70-100 Gathering, *Carol Siemering*

Floor: Carol Siemering, Helen Gomez, Barbara Rowe,Trina Paulus, An van Tol, Prisca Nakitto, Mary Ferrer Nabukenya, Sharon Joslyn, Joyce Minkler

Seated: Shirley Beaupre, Fran Martin, Virginia Bergfalk, Anne Hope, Sally Timmel, Ann Burke, Mary Amimo, Audrey Sorrento, Elise Gorges, Demmy Kangye, Carolyn Gratton, Francine Wickes, Mary Gindhart, Janet Kalven

Seated: Marie Therese Coyle, Alice Dougan, Eva Fleischner, Peg Linnehan, Stephana Tikalsky, Una Mae Hargrave, Ceci Figueroa, Marita Estor, Sheila Hawthorne, Phily van Dijck, Christa Werner, Ruth Gallant, Monica Nguku, Theresa Wilson

Standing: Chris de Leeuw, Vivian Corres, Ada McDonald, Loek Goemans, Mary Clifford, Duanne Welsch, Thoko Makhanya, Elly van Leeuwen,Debora Schak, Nusia Matura, Pat Dolan, Teresinha Tavares, Gerda Kaufman, Ton Brouwer, Thembe Ngobese, Mary Emma Kuhn, Nancy Cooney, Anne Mercier, Tomasia Santa Clara Gomez, Carla van Thiel, Mary Therese McDermit, Alicia Cameroa, Mary Kay Louchart, Lenie Schaareman, Donna Ambrogi, Daphne Tighe, Pauline Makwaka, Honorata Mvungi

What a privilege, what a pleasure to have been a participant at the 70-100 gathering! Although I was unable to be there for the full time, I would like to share some of my impressions about it. This is not a "report" and it reflects only the time I was there and I know other marvelous things occurred after I left.

First and foremost the absolute joy of being with my sister Grail members from around the world. How amazing! What beauty! just look at the panorama that was taken of the group and you can see what I mean. And each of these women has a story…her story in life and her story in the Grail and it was marvelous that many got to speak about their lives in the Oral History Project which was a video project headed by a team consisting of Pam Cobey, Beth Rosen, Beth Wasmer and Nancy Richardson.

The Mass of Pentecost in the oratory at Grailville that first Sunday was another example of this awesome gathering. The music, beginning with the Veni Sanctus Spiritus sung before the Mass and all throughout bringing us all together so beautifully. Then the we prayed the Our Father together at the same time in our native languages which gave us the feeling of the gift of tongues experienced at that first Pentecost. We were bound together daily by the morning meditations in the wood lined chapel. There were other rituals and prayer services as well.

And who could forget that phenomenal celebration of the 100th birthday of Janet Kalven!
Complete with a video of her in her early days and riding on a sled at 99! Songs, dances, gifts were bestowed upon her and she was crowned in flowers.

We had another most precious thing, thanks to those wise planners: Carla van Thiel, Christa Werner, and Joyce Minkler— time! Time to be together, to talk, to walk the labyrinth, to pray together, to dance together. It's true that our "free time" in the afternoon was filled with presentations most of us couldn't resist—films of the early days in Australia, updates on current situations in different countries, Anne Hope's trip to Italy where her father is so beloved, and Marian Schwab's remarkable description of her trip to the Philippines using a multitude of scarves on different chairs and a blank screen to describe her journey (I guess you had to be there!). I understand that these wonderful presentations continued through the next week. These supplemented the topics we discussed in the morning.

What moved me the most was having so much time to get to know my Grail sisters. My heart was so filled. This is what I learned to say from my Kenyan sisters "Nakupenda sana!"—"I love you very much!" This is what I felt for all who were there including all the wonderful women who were "backstage"—the helpers.