

## Appendix F: Reflections from Loek Goemans

### On revisiting Grailville and participating in the U.S. General Assembly

First of all, thank you so much for letting me be an observer at the GA 2008. It was a very enriching experience for me to participate so fully in the proceedings. Revising Grail structures isn't exactly my idea of fun but with Maureen Gallagher's very able and light-hearted facilitation skills and the many hours of preparation put into the process by the leadership team together with the Council, it became an exercise in seeing the broader picture of what the U.S. Grail is ready to move into. Congratulations to all involved and very best wishes as you move from the 2000 feet view to the nitty-gritty of application at ground level.

This year marks the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of my arrival, together with five other South Africans, at Grailville and our participation in the 1957/8 Year School. What a wonderful way to celebrate! It was a joy for me to be re-united with some of the very people who introduced me to the Grail and our very special and unique expressions of being lay women with a mission: First of all Janet Kalven, who was our chaperone on the boat from the Netherlands. Upon our arrival at Grailville Fran Martin was part of the special team who took care of the six of us during our first week when we lived in the House of Joy (where I again stayed this time). I inherited a deep love for the psalms from Eva Fleischner and it was a special joy to spend some quality time with her in our spiritual practice group. Elise Gorges and her down to earth practicality was there in those days and with her I walked to the cemetery, remembering special aspects of the lives of those buried there.

What a lovely surprise to meet Angela Miller Bisel again, from whom I learnt so many of the Grailville antiphons which we still use during the various seasons of the church year, and Trina Paulus whose emails on the environment we receive with appreciation and pass on to others. And then there was Carol White who took some of us home to Chicago in the "closed season" of 1958 to experience another aspect of American life. And of course so many others.... And of the newer generation in the Grail, oh what fun to sing those old fashioned songs around the campfire with Lebe Robinson Schickel.

Another special joy was spending time with Alexa and Theresa, two of Emilia Charbonneau's sisters, and then the evening that Mary Emma Kuhn's sister Doris and daughter Susan joined us. It made a closer link between our two countries. Emilia and Mary Emma have been part of our SA Grail since 1957 and 1953 respectively.

Thank you to everyone who made my stay so special and also for the scholarship I received from the U.S. Grail Solidarity Fund.