

C R O S S R O A D S

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A Newsletter of The Grail International Leadership Team

June 2008

O

Now with you is Wisdom, who
knows your works
and was present when you
made the world;



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Who understands what is
pleasing in your eyes
and what is comfortable with
your commands.

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Send her forth from your holy
heavens and from your glorious
throne dispatch her that she
may be with us and work with
us, that we may know what is
your pleasure.



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For she knows and understands
all things,
and will guide us discreetly in
our affairs and safeguard us by
her glory.

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Wisdom 9:9-11

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Deadline for the next Crossroads - *October 15, 2008*.
Please send to Mary Gindhart at the **International Secretariat** address. Thank you.

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REPORT FROM THE INTERNATIONAL LEADERSHIP TEAM, June 2008

Looking forward to the International Council (IC) Meeting and the Network Forum which will take place from October 29 to November 7, 2008, the International Leadership Team (ILT)--Ruth Crowe, Cristina dos Anjos and Mary Gindhart--met in February 2008 at the Grail International Secretariat in Utrecht, the Netherlands. (The Grail International Newsletter #5, February 2008 has a report of that meeting).

Those who will attend the meeting later this year include IC representatives from 17 Grail National Entities, the members of the ILT and the International Finance Officer, Coordinators of the Grail Global networks/workgroups, as well as the coordinator of the Vision Statement Work Group, members of the International Formation Team, and the International Administrative Assistant, Hermien van Sloten. This meeting then brings together members of working groups who are currently taking responsibility for the

work of the International Grail. The meeting will be held in Utrecht at the headquarters of the Protestant Church in the Netherlands, which has a very pleasant Guesthouse attached.

As reported in February, the agenda includes:

- evaluation of the implementation the 2006 IGA mission goals and recommendations
- follow up in the countries of the Spirituality Forum 2007
- the ongoing work of formation by national groupings
- International Grail Formation Team report
- Grail finances and policies
- international exchange
- evaluation of Grail Global Networks/Workgroups and planning for the future
- taking a next step towards creating a new Vision Statement for the Grail in the 21st Century

The meeting will draw up a strategic plan for activities for the coming 2-3 years and decide how finances are to be prioritized during this period

The ILT, with the assistance of Hermien van Sloten in the International Secretariat, have sent preparation materials for the meeting to the IC representatives, the Network Coordinators, and National Leadership Teams (NLTs). It is very important that countries and network/workgroups contribute their responses by the deadlines set, so the meeting can have a clear picture of Grail realities and needs in the first decade of the 21st century as well as the issues and concerns following on from the Spirituality Forum.

Deadlines: Country responses to Questionnaire and Network/Workgroup evaluations and reports — **Due: June 30.**

Responses re Spirituality Forum follow-up — **Due September 30.**

Mieneke Hage has also asked for important information from **National Treasurers** — **Due July 1, 2008.**

The election process for the next International Leadership Team will also be launched at this meeting. This process will begin towards the end of 2008 and be completed in time for the next ILT to take office on the 1st January, 2010. Phily van Dijck and Josette Kersters from the Dutch Grail have agreed to be the International Election Team to conduct the process. We thank them very much for their generosity.

In July 2008 Cristina will work with the Rosaurora Espinosa and Mary Kay Louchart of the International Formation Team at the Formation Program in Belo Horizonte, Brazil. Ruth Crowe will go East Africa for the month of August to meet with National Leadership Teams in Kenya and Tanzania and to attend the celebrations for the dedications of 2 young women into the nucleus of the Grail in Uganda. Mary Gindhart will go to Europe to visit Grail teams and join Hermien van Sloten and Mieneke Hage at the International Secretariat to get ready for the IC/Network meeting. We are looking forward to these activities in the coming months.

Ruth Crowe, Cristina dos Anjos, and Mary Gindhart

REPORT FROM INTERNATIONAL FORMATION TEAM “A Tower of Babel in the Grail”

Preparations for the International Formation Program in July 2008 at the Grail Center in Belo Horizonte in Brazil are underway. Portuguese and Spanish speaking Grail women from Angola, Brazil, Canada, Mexico, Mozambique, Portugal, and the United States will attend. The program will be conducted in Portuguese and Spanish. Resource people for the program are: Rosaurora Espinosa (Mexico), Mary Kay Louchart (USA), Cristina dos Anjos (Brazil), and Maria Carlos Ramos (Portugal).

Our goal is to bring the group into the vision and mission of the Grail, to face together challenges that we face as a movement of women committed in Christian faith:

- in intergenerational dialogue and learning;

- in permanent action and reflection for a better world with justice for all
- in forging alliances and coalitions with organizations that coincide with our vision. However we will keep our identity and work to transform structures that exploit and exclude most of the population (the poor) from decision making and well being.
- in understanding our deep roots and richness that come from our different cultures and spirituality
- in our search for peace, justice and respect for our mother earth

Under this goal we worked from February to June 2008 to prepare for the program in Brazil in July. We worked day by day to deepen in the themes of the Spirituality Forum. We looked at what is happening in our countries and how culture and spirituality are our support and inspiration to work for justice. We sent reports to each other following our reflections with our local and national groups where we were sharing from our memories and experiences. We are growing and learning a lot, doing our best to understand each other, while writing in two languages. We have similarities, but big differences too.

Rosaurora Espinosa
International Formation Team, Mexico City



World Food Crisis

Grail women around the world are taking actions in the light of the present situation. GJOP Bulletins 41 and 42 have excellent articles on the World Food Crisis and are available from Alison Healey at grailsydney@ozemail.com.au. Silvia Rodriguez from Costa Rica who was a resource person at IGA 2006 recommended an article: We need to overturn food policy, now! from the NGO GRAIN. <http://www.grain.org/front/>. An excerpt follows.

For some time now the rising cost of food all over the world has taken households, governments and the media by storm. The price of wheat has gone up by 130% over the last year. Rice has doubled in price in Asia in the first three months of 2008 alone, and just last week it hit record highs on the Chicago futures market. For most of 2007 the spiralling cost of cooking oil, fruit and vegetables, as well as of dairy and meat, led to a fall in the consumption of these items. From Haiti to Cameroon to Bangladesh, people have been taking to the streets in anger at being unable to afford the food they need. In fear of political turmoil, world leaders have been calling for more food aid, as well as for more funds and technology to boost agricultural production. Cereal exporting countries, meanwhile, are closing their borders to protect their domestic markets, while other countries have been forced into panic buying. Is this a price blip? No. A food shortage? Not that either. We are in a structural meltdown, the direct result of three decades of neoliberal globalisation....

....We need policies that support and protect farmers, fishers and others to produce food for their families, for the local markets and for people in cities, rather than money for an abstract international

commodity market and a tiny clan of corporate boardroom executives. And we need to strengthen and promote the use of technologies based on the knowledge and in the control of those who know how to grow food. To put it another way, we need food sovereignty, now – the kind that is defined and driven by small farmers and fisherfolk themselves.

Social movements around the globe have been struggling to promote such a reversal of strategy, only to be dismissed as unrealistic and backward by those in power, and often violently repressed. The glimmer of hope in this crisis is that the situation can be reversed. Peasant organisations have concrete proposals about what needs to be done to resolve the crisis in their countries, and governments should listen to what they are saying. Already some governments are talking of a policy change towards food self-reliance. Others are starting to question the fundamental rationale of pushing for more free trade. Neoliberal hawks at the top of the global food policy pyramid have lost whatever credibility they may think they once had. It is time for them to move out of the way so that the visions of food sovereignty and agrarian reform that come from the grassroots can take their place and get us out of this hellish mess.

Going further: *Overview: FAO, World Food Situation:* <http://www.fao.org/worldfoodsituation>

Spirituality

Training Religious Diversity for Grail Women *by Ine van Emmerik*

Here I am, a Certificate of Completion in front of me, for the Religious Diversity and Anti-Discrimination Training for Adult Educators, handed to me in

Toulouse, on February 29th. It is signed by Robin Sclafani, director of CEJI.

We know Robin as a member of the Grail in North-America, who is living in Brussels at the moment. She is the initiator of a vivid Grail group in that city.

In daily life, Robin is director of CEJI, a Jewish NGO that is based in Brussels. This organization is active in the field of antidiscrimination. One of their programs is a train-the-trainer course for adult educators. CEJI developed this program with a large network of European organizations. I enrolled in the course at Aspet, a little place near Toulouse. We were hosted by La Ligne, one of the partners in the training program. I was joined by Eveline Bruijn, a young friend of the Grail. The Grail in the Netherlands successfully applied for funding from a European Union program.

For a whole week we were trained in a rich range of materials that we can use when we facilitate religious diversity programs. There is a large manual with all the materials in it. Members of the group came from many countries: Italy, Germany, Turkey, Romania, England and the Netherlands. (Two women from the Intercultural Alliance, a Dutch NGO, were also there.) They were rooted in many traditions: Jewish, Christian (Catholic and Protestant), non-believers (atheist, agnostic), Buddhists, and Muslim.

On May 30th, Eveline and I presented some of our experiences at the Grail house in Utrecht, telling about the program and sharing an exercise with the group. Afterwards, we will discuss how we can apply this material in a way that fits the goals of the Grail in the Netherlands.

In the European Grail meeting in Germany this coming August, Portuguese Grail member Patricia Camisao will do a presentation on this subject. She was also trained by CEJI, last year.

Grail Network Reports

HUMAN TRAFFICKING NETWORK

by Ton Brouwer, May 2008

Since November 2007 I received the following information on trafficking of women from the different Grail member countries:

Australia— Mary Robertson wrote that there has been little mention of trafficking in the Australian media for quite a while, although a report from the Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women late last year suggests Australia's anti-people trafficking measures should be reviewed because there is too much emphasis on law enforcement instead of

protecting victims. Assistance services are linked to trafficked people's visa status, so if they decide they don't want to help the police or if the police don't find their case interesting or the person doesn't have enough relevant information, then the police can just revoke the visa at any time and the person is sent back to their country.

Mary sent an article called "*Trafficking in Lives, Prostitution Fueling Exploitation of Women*" by Father John Flynn, LC, Rome, Dec. 3, 2007. (Zenith org.) It is published in the GJOP Bulletin 40.

Kenya — Pauline Makwaka sent an article, "*Child Thieves on the Prowl*" which was published in News Extra on April 16, showing that the Coast Province is becoming a human trafficking gateway. It will be included in an upcoming GJOP Bulletin.

Mozambique — Abida Jamal wanted to present a topic related to Grail Networking in their Annual Meeting (27/30 March). She asked me, being the contact person on human trafficking, to send her any information related to the Network, including some activities. Abida hopes that after her presentation the Mozambique group will get involved in the Grail International Network and Human Trafficking Network, because trafficking is a big issue in her country.

South Africa — Loek Goemans is invited by her family in the Netherlands to visit them from May 15 – June 5. During that time she will visit the office of the Dutch Foundation of Religious Against Trafficking in Women (SRTV) and meet staff members and volunteers. She is pleased with the Newsletter "*Transactions*," which is published by the Dutch Foundation and sent to all the Grail coordinators on Trafficking in Women twice a year.

Loek attended a weekend on Counter-Trafficking Training with facilitators from the International Organization for Migration (IOM) (March 11-15). Sr. Sandra Jardim from Mozambique was one of the participants of the workshop. Loek put her in touch with our Grail contact persons in Mozambique, Manuela and Abida.

Tanzania – Sophia Paul Shayo moved from Kisekibaha to Dar es Salaam where she is working at a vocational school for girls. She wrote that she is trying to get used to the new post. She is also looking for information about Women Trafficking.

Uganda — Josephine Nakagolo sent thanks for the Transactions Newsletter and forwarded articles which urged governments to strengthen laws on human

trafficking. Ton passed the articles on to the African coordinators on Human Trafficking.

The Netherlands — Since October 2007, Mieke Borgdorff has been my companion in the Human Trafficking Network. I am very pleased to share my responsibilities for the Human Trafficking Network with a younger Grail member. Mieke is a member of the Dutch Foundation of Religious Against Trafficking in Women (SRTV). Phily van Dijck is a member of the SRTV board.

Grail/UFER Linkage Group to UN Report

Denise Milice, a 16 year old from Mozambique, attended the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) meeting at the United Nations in 2007 and returned for CSW 2008. She was recommended by the Grail in Mozambique to receive the Mary Purcell Travel Grant to attend CSW 2007. The theme for CSW 2008 was Financing for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women.

My experience in CSW 2008, by Denise Milice:

“First of all I am thankful for the opportunity that was given to me to again represent the group of Grail adolescents in Mozambique. Once more I felt that to take part in this event and talk about our opportunities was gratifying for we realise that we exist and are recognised overseas.

Last year I received an incentive (Mary Purcell \$100 grant for a ‘back home’ project) and I effectively created a strongly bonded group that today wishes to grow more and more, in a healthy and autonomous way. The group had as its main theme (from CSW 2007) ‘Elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child and empowerment of women’.

This year, I came to understand that the gender issue is really a matter to be addressed and that we can only talk about emancipation of women and girls when girls have access to Education and Funding.

A few things I learned:

--when we talk about funding in the field of gender it is not enough to know the source of the resources but we also need to know for which purposes and how to use them. For that end it is necessary to build capacity among the beneficiaries of the funds

--that there are many documents that have been ratified by our governments (Paris Declaration, Millennium Development Goals), but that are not implemented for lack of monitoring.

--it is important to emancipate the girl child in order to be able to join the workforce in non-traditional careers in the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math.

CSW 2008, was also very important because I had an opportunity to meet some girls and women I knew from the previous year. (One of the most touching reunions was that with Mary Purcell. She was very happy to know that I created a healthy group.)

It was very gratifying for me to have made interventions in two CSW 2008 Workshops, because my capacity to work in public grew even more, and positive and negative critics have only helped me to grow and mature. I also gave an interview to UNICEF. The interview gave me more courage to pursue my work because many who hear my story and that of the group of Grail young people motivated me to continue to work. It was another opportunity to challenge myself in terms of learning English.

Once again, I am grateful for the warm welcome we received from the members of the Grail in New York and I give thanks for their support of our group. This was an occasion to get to know other people who fight for the same cause. I saw that mutual respect and team work are critical to harmony and unity.” (See *Country Report, Mozambique for work in 2008 with Young People’s Group.*)

Country Reports

GERMANY EFFATA Weekend

At this year’s Effata weekend the topic was Woman and Jewish Religion. It took place in February in the town of Speyer, situated at the river Rhine, which centuries ago used to be a stronghold of Jewish life. We were fortunate to have with us a competent resource person on this subject, the vice-chair-woman of the Orthodox Jewish community of Duisburg, Mrs Jochebed Herrmans.

She is a vivid and eloquent woman, and we enjoyed listening to her. She celebrated with us the opening and the closing ritual, combined with a supper of the Sabbath, as done in Jewish families, presided over by the wife and mother. We got an idea about some of those 600 rules regulating daily life of a faithful orthodox Jew as well as those to be observed at the synagogue. It seems that commandments are not just a burden, but can also be a challenge to use your common sense in applying them to serving God. Mrs.

Herrmans has a good sense of humour. We admired her openness and untiring readiness to share with us.

We became aware of the difficulties to carry on Jewish community life due to a dwindling practice of religion in day-to-day life by individuals and within families, similar to the observable trend among Christian communities nowadays in our country. In Germany after World War II Jewish communities were very few and rather small in membership, but during the nineties there was an influx of emigrants from the former Soviet Union, so the communities grew considerably in membership. But those newcomers, not being familiar with the religion of their forefathers, apparently lacked enthusiasm to take up a life ruled by hundreds of religious rules, and lacked a felt need to adhere to a formal religion.

Our weekend meeting was enriched by the local setting of Speyer, with a dominating Episcopal cathedral, which had been erected in the Middle Ages with the financial contribution of the Jewish community of that time. Our city guide is a dedicated historian of Jewish life there. From the 11th up to the 16th century Speyer had a prospering Jewish community and became famous because of their wise and learned men. Mr. Bruno, our guide, gave us an excellent tour of the remnants of the synagogue from the middle ages and of the perfectly intact mikveh (Jewish bath); but he was equally familiar with the history of the later Jewish community of the nineties up to middle of the 20th century. His motivation as a guide is to make everyone aware of what Jews and Christians have in common and to foster mutual understanding and respect.

Speyer happens to be the place where EDITH STEIN spent 8 to nine years of her professional life after her conversion to the Christian faith, originating from a Jewish family. We had a most inspiring visit to the convent where she had been employed as a high school teacher in the nuns' girls' school. The sisters there cherish a lot of material things in remembrance of her and valuable documents, a crowning of a perfect weekend for us.

—Friedel Steven

IRELAND

The International Grail In Ireland?

Chapter One

“Who would have thought that spring would come to Ireland in mid-February, bringing flowering trees, daffodils and primroses? Who would have thought that Carol White’s dream of introducing

the International Grail to Irish women would have blossomed into two presentations and several small visits with individuals in a two-week time period? Who would have thought that Brazilian Grail member Mary Guimaraes, speaking entirely in English after having only a few months here to learn the language, would have joined a panel with Carol and me in describing our experiences in the Grail, and how the Grail is different from other groups working for social justice or ecology or peace?

I am still smiling, and probably will be for a long time, at the faces of the Irish women whom I met during those two weeks, at their listening intently to what we spoke about, at their participation in rituals with us, and at their humour and vitality. Ireland is a magic land – can you see that I’ve come under its spell? This was, in fact, my fourth trip to Ireland, and I wasn’t starry-eyed but quite realistic about our plans. But somehow I knew that if we worked hard at preparation, our meetings would go beautifully, and I believe they did.

Carol had been busy for weeks, spreading publicity with the help of emails, phone calls, and good friends who posted her flyer on their website and gave copies of it to groups and individuals who might be interested. Although the response was not enormous, the word is out there now. There are enough women interested in exploring the Grail for us to feel hopeful that something will come of it.

In our panel presentation we tried to illustrate Grail vision and values by telling our own stories. Carol began with a quick summary of Grail history, then Mary told of her experience of community and support in Brazil, and of the work there, along with other groups, on the River Project. Then came my story of meeting the Grail and growing into fuller and more challenging participation through the years after retirement from teaching. Carol finished with some of her youthful experiences that have shaped her whole life.

In both of the larger gatherings we had a table covered by a patterned cloth from India with a centre circle on which rested a large cup, and smaller circles surrounding it with “Grail cup” candle holders with tea lights in them. Each time it was a beautiful focusing point and spoke of Grail rituals the three of us had experienced over the years.

Carol has invited those interested in learning more to meet in her own cosy living room on 15th April. If a group develops, she hopes to have one or two of the young Dutch women come in the autumn to give a European flavour to those exploring – different

again from Brazil and the US. Hopefully this will help to emphasize that, if there is to be an Irish Grail, it will need to have its own character, coming from the spirituality they find among themselves, yet connecting with the spirituality of the International Grail. Indeed that is how I ended my own sharing: ... from what I know about Ireland, and from what I know about the Grail, I can dream about Ireland becoming the newest country to have a Grail group: a group that joins personal spiritual search with work in the Irish culture and need, and moving outward to unite with an international effort to transform the world."

— *Mary Gene Devlin*

Chapter Two

"I had been talking about the Grail to the friends I've made since I arrived here nine years ago, and I always think of the work I do as Grail work in my Grail life. But it is just about impossible to "be Grail" in a visible way by yourself! So having Mary Gene here in February, with whom I could plan, meet people, and do the presentations, finally allowed me to show people what this is about. A further bonus was the presence of Mary Guimaraes, heroically struggling to tell her fascinating story in English (as we two struggled to help her) – a living demonstration of what "international" means when it comes to communication.

We did, indeed, gather in April with a stated goal of "Exploring the International Grail Movement," and it was a fine evening. The nine women who joined Mary Guimaraes and me were an impressive group – active professionals, some single and some married, several involved in some form of creativity, and all apparently interested in ritual/celebration as an important part of spirituality. I would guess their ages to be thirties, forties, fifties, and one self-declared eighty-year-old! When we talked about our lives and our reasons for being there, many common threads appeared: intense spiritual search, a desire for personal transformation/growth, working for societal change but feeling the potential for burn-out in the absence of a supportive community. Feminism was so taken for granted that some didn't even mention it, but after they had viewed "In Search of The Grail", the recent U.S. Grail documentary, they started asking almost angrily why the Grail had never been established in Ireland, "where women have been so terribly oppressed for so long!" (I didn't really know the answer to that....)

The question mark in the title of this piece should probably be printed in red, and rather large, because

much remains to be seen: Will these women in whom an interest has been sparked continue to be drawn to the Grail? Will they bond with each other? Will I be able to keep the flame going without Mary Gene and Mary Guimaraes (who returns to Brazil next month)? Nevertheless, we all agreed to several points. First, as Mary Gene noted, if the International Grail is to develop here, it must have its own Irish identity within the whole range of Grail national identities, and we will have to create that identity as we go along. Second, no one (except Mary Guimaraes and yours truly) is now committed to anything except exploration. But the third was that all nine (and now a tenth!) committed themselves to meet again in May to continue this exploration.

So, may I ask for your prayers for the future of the Grail in this Celtic land? There remain many rivers to cross, but I do feel we have made a good beginning."

— *Carol White*

KENYA

Our beloved country Kenya cries for Peace and Justice.

"When you spread out your hands in prayer I will hide my eyes from you even if you offer many prayers I will not listen. Your hands are full of blood. Wash and make yourselves clean. Take your evil deeds out of my sight. Stop doing wrong. Learn to do right. Seek justice, encourage the oppressed."

Isaiah 1: 15-17

My dear grail sisters, all over the world, this is the situation in Kenya. Thanks for your prayers and concern. Special thanks to go to the ILT and Anne Hope and Sally Timmel for their support.

In Kenya, people's once happy homes and lives have suddenly turned into misery.

A single mother by the name Frida staying in the Christ the King Parish Kitale church says "I slept outside for three days in the open with my children without the benefit of a blanket. My sickly toddler has pneumonia." She recalls, "I lived in a 3 bedroom house. It was brought down to ashes. They should have killed me with my three children rather than to let me suffer like this. I should have not voted." cries Frida .

The Grail Kitale has given her shelter, food and moral support. It is so saddening that so many Kenyans are still living in Internally Displaced Camps (IDPs). Life in these camps is so depressing.

People scramble for food rations, others complain loudly that food is not enough, children cry while elderly adults whimper. Soon food is exhausted and many miss food. Another long day of hunger begins. For people who were one day self reliant, life here is untenable.

The violence in our motherland, Kenya, has exposed dreadful polarization. What has happened to Kenyans will take a long time to heal, but we must realize that incitement and unbridled ethnic hatred are a recipe for anarchy.

The tragedy in Kenya is that we have systematically destroyed many institutions and people who command authority.

Thanks to Kofi Annan and the International Community for the mediation talks. Now there is light at the end of the tunnel.

We are praying that every Kenyan will hold honest counsel and dialogue with their personal souls in order to eliminate tribal hatred, which has been seen as the root cause to the current problems. The Grail Team in Kitale has been working together with the parish to support the displaced families in the district.

The Grail members organize a one-day family intervention seminar once a month where women and single mothers come together to talk about their problems and together to find solutions to their wounded hearts.

I conclude by saying that the biggest asset a country has is not beauty, tea or coffee but its people. The people are blessed with intelligence, talent and humility which took the forefathers much time and effort to build. Let the words of Isaiah sink into the hearts of the Kenyan people so that peace and justice may be restored.

— *Elemina Musundi*

MEXICO **Preparation for July 2008 Formation Program**

Everyone from Mexico who is going to the Formation Program in July 2008 at the Grail Center in Belo Horizonte, Brazil now has her visa. All have been involved in a process which has included sessions together and interviews with other Grail women. All are making arrangements with their families and work places for the time they will be away.

— *Rosaurora Espinosa, Mexico City*

Work of The Grail Morelos and Valle de Mexico, 2007 (English Translation)

The Grail in the regions of the Morelos and Valle de Mexico, in 2007, achieved work that is fundamental and rarely seen among the women of these areas. We have made short, mid- and long term advancements in spiritual and material growth, sustainability, and organization .

This is the result of the hard work of the coordinators, the participating women and, the community groups with which they worked. It begins with the design and adaptation of our workshops of sensibilization and empowerment and continues with project collaborations that help meet their needs and provide an important support for the lives of these women.

For more than 20 years, the work of the Grail in the regions of Morelos and Valle de Mexico has undergone a process of transformation caused by the changes in government and climate. In each case, we have been able to capitalize on experience and necessary sharpness to obtain success in this work.

Today our organization offers us important strategic advantages. In being committed to the women's groups and accompanying them in their processes, we are defined and set apart as a symbol of new hope, a new way of doing work, and by having transparent ethics. It develops thinking women who are committed to their communities in a way that is sustainable and congruent. This is our commitment and responsibility.

As for what was previously mentioned, the communities that have benefited are: Cuentepec, Indigenous community that speaks Náhuatl, Coatetelco, Totolapan, San Sebastián La cañada, San Andrés Cuautempan, Colonia Otilio Montaña, colonia Lomas de Jiutepec and la colonia Ciudad Industrial del Valle de Cuernavaca, Barranca Honda, and colonia Carolina.

ACTIONS:

Formation of Leaders:

A) Internal Formation:

- Forum about spirituality in Palmela, Portugal, 1 woman benefitted.
- Human rights, 3 women were trained as spokespersons on the issue.
- Participated in the 51st commission on the status of women, one woman benefitted.
- Participated in the meeting of the Young Women of the Americas, which took place in Francisco Morazán, Honduras, one woman was benefitted.

B) External Formation:

- Exchange and interreligious talk, with the joining of a volunteer from the Lutheran Church of the United States, for community practice.
- Updating and Training in making of articles of clothing for women, and children, weaving, knitting, embroidering, painting, and arts and crafts using recycled paper and corn husks, 40 women benefitted.
- 25 women were trained in popular and folk music.
- 12 young women and men were trained in the making of Prehispanic musical instruments.

Gender Equality:

- Participation in the construction of Public Politics for a program about Gender Equality in the Secretariat of the Environment and Natural Resources, 3 women participated.
- Participation in the "Third Meeting of Rural Women, Farm workers and Indigenous," 3 women benefitted (one was Indigenous).
- Citizenship and Old Age, 3 women trained in these issues.
- Strengthening of families and dignifying of women, 12 women benefitted.

The Environment:

- Construction of 10 systems to get rain water, 10 Indigenous women benefitted and trained in this process.
- Construction of 1 communal oven to cook clay pieces, 60 potters and Indigenous women benefitted.
- Trading in construction of 1 fire pit that conserves firewood, 1 Indigenous woman benefitted.
- Permanent workshop on Nutrition, 15 women benefitted.
- Permanent workshop on the making of compost, worm-compost and planting of fruit gardens, 45 women benefitted.
- Training in the elaboration of adobes, 4 Indigenous women were trained.

Fair Business

- Organization of the 7th Cultural and Artesian Fish Fair, where 40 artisans and small producers from the region of Morelos participated. More than 500 people per day visited this event!
- Organization of "Atlakahualo" Ritual to ask for good weather during the farming season. This event was important for supporting more than 15 artisans and small producers, since they sell their products directly to the visitors.

— *María Luisa Mejía Lagunas (English Translation by Laura Pagoada-Mellado, with input from Marie Therese McDermit and Mary Kay Louchart)*

LABOR DEL GRIAL MORELOS, Y VALLE DE MÉXICO, 2007

El Grial Región Morelos y valle de México, han logrado en este año 2007, un trabajo medular con los grupos de mujeres de estos lugares, poco visto, ya que hemos avanzado en un crecimiento espiritual y material, sostenido, ordenado y de corto, mediano y largo plazo.

Detrás de estos resultados, existe el esfuerzo tanto de nosotras como coordinadoras, así como de las mujeres participantes de los grupos de las comunidades con las que se viene trabajando. Y comienza desde el diseño y adecuación de nuestros talleres de sensibilización y capacitación hasta el acompañamiento en las gestiones de proyectos y necesidades; logrando apoyos muy importantes, para la vida de estas mujeres.

Desde hace más de 20 años el trabajo del grial región Morelos y Valle de México; ha sufrido un proceso de transformación provocado por cambios en los planes gubernamentales y climáticos y en cada uno de ellos se han podido capitalizar la experiencia y agudeza necesarias para tener éxito en este trabajo, hoy por hoy nuestra organización nos ofrece importantes ventajas estratégicas.

El estar comprometidas con los grupos de mujeres, acompañándolas en sus procesos nos definen y distinguen como una marca que representa una nueva esperanza, una forma de hacer el trabajo, con ética de manera transparente, desarrollando mujeres pensantes y comprometidas con sus comunidades de manera sostenida y congruente. Este es nuestro compromiso y responsabilidad.

Por lo anterior mencionamos las comunidades beneficiadas: Cuentepec, (municipio de Temixco) comunidad indígena hablantes del Náhuatl, Coatetelco (municipio de Miacatlán), Totolapan (cabecera municipal), San Sebastián La cañada (Totolapan), San Andrés Cuautempan (municipio de Tlayacapan), Colonia Otilio Montaña, colonia Lomas de Jiutepec y la colonia Ciudad Industrial del Valle de Cuernavaca (del municipio de Jiutepec), Barranca Honda (municipio de Tlaltizapan) y colonia Carolina (municipio de Cuernavaca).

LÍNEAS DE ACCIÓN:

Formación de Líderes

a) *Formación Interna:*

- Foro sobre espiritualidad en Palmela Portugal y una mujer fue beneficiada
- Derechos humanos, 3 mujeres capacitadas como promotoras y multiplicadoras en el tema.
- Se participó en la 51ª comisión on status of women, convocada por la organización de las naciones unidas, en nueva Cork, beneficiándose una mujer joven.
- Se participó en el encuentro de mujeres jóvenes de las américas, realizado en la comunidad de Francisco Morazán en honduras, don se benefició una mujer.

b) *Formación externa:*

- Intercambio y diálogo interreligioso, con la incorporación de una voluntaria de la Iglesia Luterana de USA, para la práctica comunitaria.
- Actualización y capacitación en Prendas de vestir para dama y niño y niña, deshilado, tejido, pintado y artesanía en papel reciclado y hoja de maíz. 40 mujeres beneficiadas.
- Se capacitaron 25 jóvenes en música popular y folklórica.
- Se capacitaron 12 jóvenes (mujeres y hombres) en elaboración de instrumentos prehispánicos.

Equidad De Género

- Participación en la construcción de Políticas Públicas para el Programa sobre Equidad de Género de la Secretaría del medio Ambiente y recursos Naturales, tres mujeres participantes.
- Participación en el "Tercer Encuentro de Mujeres Rurales, Campesinas e Indígenas, beneficiándose 2 mujeres (una indígena).
- Ciudadanía y Vejes, 3 mujeres capacitadas en los temas
- Fortalecimiento familiar y dignificación de la mujer, 12 mujeres beneficiadas.

Medio Ambiente

- Construcción de 10 Sistemas para captar Agua de lluvia, 10 mujeres indígenas beneficiadas y capacitadas en el proceso.
- Construcción de 1 horno comunitario para cocer piezas de barro, beneficiándose 60 mujeres alfareras e indígenas.
- Capacitación para la Construcción de 1 fogón ahorrador de leña, 1 mujer indígena beneficiada.
- Taller permanente de Nutrición, 15 mujeres beneficiadas.
- Taller permanente de elaboración de composta, lombricomposta y siembra de hortalizas, 45 personas beneficiadas.

- Capacitación para elaborar adobes, 4 mujeres indígenas capacitadas.

Comercio Justo

- Organización de la 7ª Feria del Pescado Cultural y Artesanal, donde se beneficiaron directamente más 40 artesanos y pequeños productores de la región morelense. Cabe hacer notar que más 500 personas por día visitaron este evento
- Organización del Ritual "Atlakahualo" para pedir buen temporal, y este evento sirve para apoyar también a más de 15 artesanos y pequeños productores, ya que ellos venden directamente sus productos a los visitantes.

— *Maria Luisa Mejia Lagunas*

MOZAMBIQUE

Grail-Mozambique Young People's Group

After returning from CSW 2008, we met April 5th to plan the Grail-Mozambique Young People's Group activities for the year ahead. After evaluating the 2007 activities, we made some changes in in how the group organizes itself. We will meet on Saturdays. We divided up the responsibilities among the youth: a moderator, one in charge of games, another in charge of the minutes, and all taking turns being in charge of the snacks.

Some themes for the current year: Vices (drugs and others); Sexuality (several aspects about sexuality); STDs and HIV/AIDS; 14 vs 80 (Relationships between parents and their offspring/ conflicts of generations); Higher education (courses to be pursued, jobs...) The themes are investigated by us and shared without intervention by anyone who is not a member of the group, save in cases where the group needs better clarification or in cases where we do not reach consensus.

Other activities include: 1) visits to Orphanage Madre Teresa of Calcutta, 2) drama, which we'll take to various schools, 3) singing and dancing, and 4) possibly planning a future handicraft fair.

— *Denise Milice*

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

News from Crescentia Lementi:

".... Late last year I did some backyard gardening at the Grail House in Wewak. We have harvested

delicious water melons, beans and greens (aibika). Most of the Grail women come to buy our aibika.

Last year I brought a drum oven. Rose Panawe, another Grail member, and her cousins take care of it for the women's group in her village. The women use it for baking bread and biscuits which they sell to make some income. The drum is made using a 44 gallon drum and cement.

I have also accompanied Monica Moka, Grail member, to the Wewak Deanery meetings discussing plans for the World Youth Day—especially how local youths can participate in the World Youth Day in Australia and through their wider experience contribute to their communities when they return.

Monica Lumine, coordinator of the team working on new National Grail Structures in consultation with Grail members throughout PNG, met at the Grail Centre with other team members, Sabina Ewwa and Angela Bugatar recently. The new Structure document will be presented to the PNG National Assembly in 2009 for affirmation. Monica is a school teacher working in East New Britain and she stayed with us in Wewak for 2 weeks.

We had an e-mail communication breakdown from December to February. I could not get through to Ruth Crowe about my project or the projects or outreach for the women in Manus and Wewak. Last week, in mid-February, Mieneke Hage re-established contact and money was sent to Grail members Bernadette Hamo and Connie Francis in Manus to proceed with their projects.

In July 2007 I was invited by the President of the East Sepik Council of Women to attend a one week Governance Workshop at the Council's Centre. Many women came from the rural areas in the Wewak district.

I also attended a two week Hospitality and Tourism workshop which was organized by our Provincial Government at the Sepik Centre of Hope for people working in hotels, motels and guest houses. The Grail was given a special offer by Mr. Anton Sakarai, a colleague of Sabina Ewwa. I participated well and contributed a lot during the two weeks".

TANZANIA Dedication and Commitment Celebration

The Grail in Tanzania celebrated the Nucleus Dedications of six members and the Commitment of two members at Kisekibaha on January 3, 2008. This

year's celebration will be a memorable and historic event since it attracted hundreds of visitors including: almost everyone in The Grail in Tanzania; three International Grail members: Frances Martin from the USA who represented Ruth Crowe, the International Grail Nucleus Reference Person, Mary Gindhart from the USA and Ton Brouwer from the Netherlands; Bishop Jacob Koda of Same Diocese and Bishop Gervas Nkalanga (emeritus) of Bukoba; several priests, nuns and brothers; and parents, friends and neighbors.

Frances Martin brought the greetings and best wishes of Ruth Crowe and the whole International Grail and she received the Nucleus Dedications of Asteria Romald Massawe, Avelina Raphael Kimario, Devota Christian Shirima, Gaspara Romani Samba, Jovitha Eligi Msambure, and Severa Sabas Batao and the Commitments of Gaudensia Shayo (a nursing student) and Hyasinta Mdonja (a high school student). Ton Brouwer brought congratulatory messages from Grail members from all parts of the world.

In his homily, Bishop Koda recognized The Grail apostolate: teaching catechetics, rendering health services, teaching in schools, and running bookshops and women development projects. The bishop said that Grail members can render their service everywhere, especially to the places where people fear priests and nuns. He spoke of The Grail's work, Training for Transformation (TFT) and praised the writers of the TFT books, Anne Hope and Sally Timmel. Bishop Nkalanga encouraged The Grail to use the privilege of being close to people to bring them to a life of service to God as dedicated and committed lay persons, priests and nuns. He expressed his worry on the decreased number of people interested in these ways of life.

Parents, friends and neighbor cheered the event and came forward after Mass dancing, singing and carrying presents for the eight women who had made the public acts of dedication and commitment within The Grail. Thanks to all.

—Asteria Romald Massawe

UGANDA Golden Jubilee The Grail Mushanga Health Centre, April 19, 2008.

I am really happy to share with you our joy in having celebrated the Golden Jubilee of the Grail Mushanga Health Centre. The Health Centre is located in

Mushanga Catholic Parish, Bushenyi District, Mbarara Archdiocese, Uganda -East Africa. Life is a gift which we must cherish and protect so that we can fully enjoy it, bearing in mind that we have to praise and thank God for this priceless gift.

We are grateful to all of you, our sisters, for the good atmosphere you created for us before the function took place. We received Grail members and friends, financial, material, and spiritual support, including your best wishes by emails, telephone calls, and letters. All these contributed to making our celebration a success.

This day was honoured by many distinguished guests. The main celebrant was His Lordship Bishop Lambert Bainomugisha. In his homily, he stressed the ministry of healing and appreciated the work done by Grail members in this Diocese. He himself said he was treated from there in the early 80's. Many people commended the good work done, especially in the early 70's. Then, the health services were very few and many lost their lives due to malaria, sleeping sickness, worms, malnutrition, and measles. Those who were able to reach Mushanga often survived. Now, we want to add dental care services to our care. We were blessed by various groups of people, including Grail members and friends who came from other parts of Uganda and abroad. They included Gunda Dirauf from Germany who came in February for the continued support of Grail partnership and sustainable agriculture farming programme, Edwina and Heinz Karl a couple from Germany who helped in photography and video coverage. They are Grail friends known both here and in Germany, especially to Christa Werner and others.

Carla van Thiel, who worked at The Grail Mushanga Health Unit for many years and has been supporting it in various ways, came with a team of Marja, a friend and Anneke, the sister of late Geraldine Huising who also contributed a lot to the Grail in Uganda. Later, Irene the founder of Mirembe Foundation and her brother Thomas also joined the team. All are from the Netherlands. Olav van Vliet, a son of the Grail friend Tini in the Netherlands and married to a Kenyan Grail Member Maria Omedo, also was present.

Margaret Amol, a Grail member from Kenya, also made the journey to be with us.

Grail members from Kampala, Masaka and Mushanga Regions came in big numbers. We were also pleased have Mary Goretti Busharizi, who has worked tirelessly for Grail in the past years, and is well known to many of us.

We received a number of communication from individuals and teams of the Grail. They included messages from the ILT – Ruth Crowe and Mary Gindhart, Mary Kay Louchart, Sharon Joslyn, Angelica Contreras, Christa Werner, Angelina Weis, Marita Estor, Fran and Bill Warner, Grail Tanzania and Kenya, and Ruth Chisholm. We are asking those who are able to reach Friedel Steven to extend our appreciation, because most of the information in the history of Mushanga Health Centre was received from her. Thanks for keeping the records and thank you again for all the services that were put into starting Mushanga. We are sure she was with us in spirit. A combination of all these has strengthened our bonding.

Religious leaders from Catholic Church, Anglican Church, and the Moslem Community were represented. The local and central government leaders were also represented.

The guest of honour was Major General Kahinda Otafiire, Minister of Local Government and Chairman for National Resistance Movement, Bushenyi District. He boosted the function of the fundraising. The area Member of Parliament, Hon. Dr. Elioda Tumwesigye gave us the dental chair equivalent to 15 millions according to our budget. In his words he said " saving a life is the highest ethical act one can ever do to mankind. Mushanga Health Centre has over the past 50 years saved lives of tens of thousands of people from Sheema and beyond. It needs all our support to save more lives for generations to come". This contributed a lot to the day. We must say thank you Lord for this unity among your people in this area.

We are very grateful to you all for the love, care, guidance, and concern you have showed us in this celebration. Let us join hands and pray for stable and committed staff at this health centre and other Grail projects.

Your contributions – your ideas, time, money, materials, and physical support will not go unrewarded by the One who makes all things possible.

– *Angelica Nsiimenta, Member of the National Leadership Team*

USA

"Greetings! I am writing to share some news of my work. We had our bungalow remodeled and it was on a historic district tour recently and the GreenBuilt Tour the following weekend, along with the adobe remodel that won the Su Casa Magazine/Build Green

NM Remodel of the year award. Over 200 people attended each venue and we received great feedback. Tomorrow I depart for Washington DC for a week of plastering on the Builders Without Borders eco-strawbale demonstration exhibit at the US Botanic Gardens!

The U.S. Botanic Garden (USBG) is on the National Mall, one block from the U.S. Capitol. They are producing an exhibition, called "One Planet — Ours! Sustainability for the 22nd Century," to showcase earth-friendly techniques and technologies including urban orchards, a solar greenhouse, photovoltaic panels, a vertical wind turbine, a green roof, and rainwater harvesting. Over forty organizations from around the country will participate in the exhibition. Tying it all together will be "Cool Globes," an exhibit of more than 40 sculptures of "whole-earth" solutions to the problems of living unsustainably.

The Builders Without Borders exhibit will be on the east side of the Botanic Gardens, next to the Conservatory. The green building display will demonstrate energy-efficient design and eco-friendly building techniques including strawbale, bamboo, timber-frame, cob, and earthbag construction, with natural, decorative plasters.

The exhibit will be on display from Memorial Day through Columbus Day—Saturday May 24 through October 13, 2008. For more information, check out the Builders without Borders website: www.builderswithoutborders.org."

— Rosie Morin

Obituaries

In loving memory of our Grail sisters:

Anneliese Rupp (Germany) 1924 – 2008

Anneliese Rupp died January 12th 2008 in Bonn, where she had lived since her youth. She met the Grail more than 50 years ago in Bonn, in the house of Dr. M. Alberta Lückner, then President of the German Grail. With her interest in religious and social-political questions Anneliese found her place in this movement of Christian Women. She participated in many Grail activities. She was a faithful member of the regional affinity group and attended our monthly meetings in the Grail-Centre in Mülheim even in 2007.

Anneliese was a quiet person and surprised listeners, when she talked about her various commitments. She was very generous in sharing her time, energy,

money and creative ideas with people around her and internationally.

In her professional life as social worker she became familiar with the needs of young people and later with those of the older generation. At the age of 76 she moved into her own small apartment in a Senior Citizen Residence. Around Christmas 2007 Anneliese suffered a cerebral lesion and lost consciousness. After some weeks of hospitalization returned to her home and was cared for there.

One of Anneliese's long lasting interests was connected with Poland and the activities for victims of the Concentration Camps of the Nazi Government. She accompanied the Polish guests when they spent vacation time in Germany. She travelled to Poland four times and was a member of the Maximilian-Kolbe-Association for some 30 years ...

Anneliese enjoyed travelling and sightseeing. She loved to organize expeditions in different places. She was a humorous and well informed guide in Bonn and other cities of the Rhine Valley.

— Gerda Kaufmann

Joan Dilworth (Scotland)

Joan joined the Grail in Scotland in the 1940s. Her professional training and subsequent work was mainly in the area of youth/community leadership and community development.

From 1955 she was almost continuously in Africa, with some time out for study and as part of the staff of the Uebergen and Mülheim programs for the formation of overseas volunteers. Assignments in Africa included participation in grassroots education programs for women in Uganda and the establishment of the Uganda Social Training Centre ; a survey for the Church in Tema, Ghana; 4 years as community development adviser at the Pastoral Institute, Ibadan, Nigeria; and finally work in the urban community project in Ajegunle, Lagos, (Nigeria). Her special interest during this time in Africa was to help develop the Grail among women there.

Joan served the Grail Movement in the International Presidency Team from 1980-1988.

Together with Ann Burke from the USA and Gerda Kaufmann from Germany, Joan coordinated Grail activities worldwide from the international secretariat at the Grail Centre in Mülheim an der Ruhr in West Germany.

Joan 's idea about the task of the Presidency Team was mainly:" to tune into, to encourage and accompany whatever exists or any coming into being which is moving toward our vision." Indeed Joan's gift of languages and communication skills was as striking a characteristic of her work as her resourcefulness and readiness to tackle many different jobs. Without e-mails or mobile phones she succeeded in organizing the coming together of delegates from all Grail entities around the world for the regular International Council Meetings and General Assemblies. South African Grail members will remember the hotline Joan had established for those women and families who needed international help under the Apartheid regime. Grail history can be traced in the many letters Joan has written to update the co-members of the team.

In 1989 Joan returned to Edinburgh and was able to spend more time with her mother and brothers and the wider family. Rita Westlake and Ann Mathews and a number of friends from the earlier Grail days in Scotland helped her to get a foothold on Scottish ground again. Back in Scotland, she worked with the Justice and Peace Organisation, the Namibia Support Group and did voluntary teaching of English/ Literacy to foreign women. She became a good friend of a Pakistani widow with three small children.

In the 1990s Joan continued travelling to Germany and the Netherlands and participated in European Grail meetings. She also welcomed guests from the whole world and communicated with long letters. In April 2003 her memory problems were obvious to her friends who then started to take turns to help her cope in her own flat and worked with Joan's family towards a solution for Joan's future. In February 2006 Joan moved to St. Raphaels and later to Marian House. Joan's mental capacities deteriorated over the years, but she was supported by visits from family and friends. Toward the end, her caregivers noticed that her smile came more often and it seemed that Joan could accept her situation. Now her life is accomplished. She was called by God to Eternal Life. We who have known Joan throughout her long life are very grateful for her many contributions and the happy witness of her living faith.

— Gerda Kauffman

Hillegonda (Gon) Kocken (Netherlands)
1924-2008

Hillegonda (Gon) Kocken died peacefully. Her Benedictine brother was with her. Gon was the sixth child in a family of 10. She cared for the children

in a children's home and worked as a governess in Brussels and Paris. During that time she decided to become a nurse and during those studies she got to know about the Grail and the possibility to work in a team in the Missions. After following the course at the Missionary School in Ubbergen, she left in May 1957 for Uganda and returned in 1961. She then asked to join the nucleus of the Grail and followed the training at the Tiltenberg. In 1963 she left for Egypt, where she made her dedication on 2nd February 1965. In 1977 she had to return to the Netherlands for health reasons. Egypt, however, continued to occupy a special place in her heart.

Gon has suffered quite a bit, physically as well as psychologically, but she was very much loved by the people she cared for. She had a much wider interest than would usually appear and on certain occasions she would surprise us all with a beautiful text or poem. Her funeral service was in Nijmegen, where she was also buried. May she now enjoy the beauty of God's everlasting love.

Ton Brouwer and Josette Kersters

Gabrielle Miner
1919-2008

Gabrielle Miner joined the Grail in 1941. From 1944 until 1959 she worked at Grailville, Philadelphia, and Burlington, New Jersey. She was Librarian and Dean of Women at Pius XII College in Basutoland in Southern Africa from 1959 to 1965. Returning to the United States, she worked as a Librarian at Lincoln University in Pennsylvania and Central State University in Ohio--African American colleges-- as well as doing Grail work in Philadelphia and at Grailville.

In her retirement, she lived in New Mexico where she edited *Gumbo*, the newsletter of the Grail in the United States and was an active volunteer with the Hemispheric Center for Peace and Justice. When her health failed, she moved back to Ohio, near Grailville. One of her last prayers was, "Pray for all humanity".

Josepha Gall (Netherlands)
1912-2008

Saturday, 28th June, Josepha Gall, at 96 years of age, was called by the Lord. We are sad to lose our oldest Grail member worldwide (a title she was very proud of!), but grateful that now she is receiving her well deserved award.

A nucleus member of the Grail since 1935, Josepha put all her practical, creative and artistic talents at the service of the Grail in Great Britain, South Africa, and Lesotho. She worked especially as a youth leader and librarian. Surely the many friends in those countries will be able to tell stories about the time she lived with them. Her great joy was to receive these friends in her small apartment at the Begijnhof in Amsterdam. In the beginning of this year she moved to another, more comfortable apartment there, but shortly after that doctors discovered a lung tumour. The illness spread and she was in great pain.

Until the very end Josepha kept a keen interest in the Grail and tried to attract new members. On 13th June she invited all Dutch nucleus members for a farewell meeting and prayer (It was nice that Loek Goemans could be present as a representative of the Grail in South Africa). A week later she received the sacrament of the sick in the presence of family and friends who had mostly cared for her these last weeks so that she could remain at home till the end.

We imagine Josepha now sitting at the Eternal Banquet prepared by the Lord whom she has so faithfully served. Please join us in a grateful (Russian) Alleluia for Josepha's life.

Love, Josette Kersters and Ton Brouwer

Announcements

Congratulations to Robin Sclafani and Ton Brouwer!

■ **Award winning Religious Diversity Program**

The Religion Project--a Religious Diversity program of CEJI (A Jewish Contribution to an Inclusive Europe), a Jewish NGO based in Brussels, Belgium, in collaboration with a number of European partners, including the Grail--is responsible for CEJI being honored with the 2008 Gold Award from the European Commission as the Best Adult Education program in Europe. As the Director of CEJI and the Religion Project, Robin Sclafani received the award on June 13, 2008 in Slovenia. This is the program that Ine van Emmerik speaks about in her article in this issue of Crossroads.

■ **Ton Brouwer Honored**

Ton Brouwer became a 'Member in the Order of Oranje Nassau'. The honors were conferred near the Queen's birthday. On the day she received the honor in the Netherlands she had to wear the insigne all day! Her brother-in-law worked on this. He started 1 1/2 year ago. Ton had no idea. Only ten people were allowed to attend: 7 family members and 3 Grail members (Josette Kersters, Phily van Dijck and An van Tol). It was quite an emotional day for her. She

Meet Hermien van Sloten

My name is Hermien van Sloten and for almost a year now I have filled the position of administrative assistant to the International Leadership Team 12 hours each week. The main activities at the moment are: collecting information for the database, composing the monthly e-newsletter, maintaining the website <http://www.thegrail.org> and preparing for the IC/Network Coordinators meeting in October.



The office is on the top floor of the Grail house in Utrecht, the Netherlands. I live in Amsterdam and it takes me about an hour to get there by train and folding bike (the bike folds up in the train).

I met the Grail in the late seventies through the Zen programs that were organized at De Tiltenberg by Mimi Maréchal. Gradually I started to participate in women's programs and learned to know other Grail women. I joined in 1991. From 1992 till 2005 I lived in the U.S.A. where I visited several American Grail members (Pilgrim's Place in Claremont CA). In the Dutch Grail I help organize the Zen programs and theme walks and I 'manage' the office. Outside work hours I read and discuss American and English books, play the piano and take care of my (90 and 92 year) old parents and my American cat. The ILT regularly meets in the Netherlands and it is very easy to communicate with the ILT members via e-mail. Ruth and I even 'skype' together: via the computer we talk while seeing each other (at 0 cost).