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Sweat equity builds skills

By Mary Stamp

The support of extended families in the Tonasket and Oroville area limits the number of applications for Habitat for Humanity houses.

"Most hesitate to apply—even if they earn too little to pay rent or own a house. They think someone else is more needy," said Ivetta Howell, building coordinator for the Okanogan affiliate of Habitat.

"There may be 10 living in a grandparent's home, but they may not think they meet the criterion of need," she said in a recent interview during a workday in Oroville at the site of the affiliate's fourth house in eight years.

Ivetta said it's as hard to raise funds as it is to find families.

People in churches, community organizations and businesses in Tonasket and Oroville never know how they will raise the \$40,000 needed to build a Habitat house, but they have built two houses in Tonasket and are completing their second in Oroville.

Area orchards have declined and have diversified from apples to pears, cherries, apricots, nectarines and peaches. There were once four apple warehouses in each

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Danny puts in sweat equity, gaining confidence to enter a building trade.

Fig Tree job, volunteer roles are still open

While last month's job announcement drew several people to assist with the Rural-Urban Connections Project, The Fig Tree is still seeking administrative and development staff.

The writers training drew six participants with as many interested in future training to add to The Fig Tree's freelance and volunteer writer and editor pool.

Three Gonzaga University service-learning students in a public relations class are assisting the rural-urban project. Shannon Herman, Kelsey McIntyre and Angela Floyd are reviewing resources and planning a campaign to contact congregations to determine how The Fig Tree can serve them more effectively.

The Fig Tree is still receiving applications for the positions of administrative assistant and development coordinator.

It also seeks a volunteer or staff person to help with website design as it begins to transition into the interactive website and coverage for the Northwest.

For information, call 535-1813 or 323-4037.

Grassroots effort saves potluck dinner tradition

A grassroots effort led by Chrys Ostrander, former program coordinator for Spokane Tilth, influenced the state's new Food Code, adopted in September by the Washington State Board of Health.

"When it goes into effect in May 2005, it will allow anyone in Washington to host a community potluck and to advertise the potluck to the general public if desired," Chrys said.

The code defines a potluck as a gathering to which people bring food to share without compensation, charge or commercial purpose.

"It surprised the Department of Health that so many people and organizations contacted it during the rule-making process to defend our right to commune over good ol' home-cooked food whenever and wherever we want," he said.

Offering some background, Chrys said that for more than 100 years, residents of the state have cooked meals at home and brought those meals to churches, grange halls, community centers, schools, businesses, charity organizations and other venues to dine with other members of their communities who also brought food to share.

"In fact, this tradition has its roots deep in human history," he said. "Gathering around a table heaped with food that was brought from multiple homes to share and enjoy has been a form of human fellowship we have taken for granted for a long time."

Washington State had no statewide rule governing whether potluck suppers should be regulated the same way that restaurants, grocery stores and other "food service establishments"

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People connect values and votes

Advocates inform constituents on ballot issues

Believing that people of faith have an obligation to be involved in political processes, in campaigns, in voting and in influencing policies, Scott Cooper of Parish Social Services at Catholic Charities joined with Beth Potteet of the Interfaith Council in reviewing initiatives and a referendum on the November ballot.

In six training sessions in Spokane, Cheney, Colville and Pullman, they are presenting research and recommendations of the Washington Association of Churches (WAC), the Washington State Catholic Conference (WSCC) and the Lutheran Public Policy Office (LPPO).

"We need to take our values into the public arena by voting and by working with public officials after they are elected to express those values and bring them to bear on policies of the state," Scott said.

Each presented information on the initiatives and referendum before voters and discussed implications. The WAC, the WSCC and the LPPO agree on some issues, diverge on some and have mixed concerns about others.

Initiative 297 calls for cleaning

up the waste already at Hanford before adding new waste. It arises because the Department of Energy planned to cut \$1 billion from cleanup and to double the amount of radioactive waste stored there.

"It calls for treating waste in high level storage tanks that have leaked waste into the groundwater that is flowing into the Columbia River. It also says there will be no new waste in unlined soil ditches and that there will be a commitment to maintain public oversight of the cleanup process," Beth said.

The WAC and LPPO support it, and the WSCC has taken no position, she said.

"Our faith calls us to care for creation, so we need to clean up toxic materials," Beth said.

Initiative 872 would establish a "top two" primary system, like the one in Louisiana, to replace Washington's current "open, private choice" system, modeled on Montana's primary.

"The more the system encourages participating and voting, the better it is," Scott said. "The current system consolidates power in

the two major parties. The 'top two' system offers voters a chance to select among all candidates regardless of party affiliation, so both of the top two could be from the same party."

He said another initiative (318) is in the works to have an "instant runoff primary" in which voters give their first, second and third choices.

Initiative 884 is a corrective to Initiative 728, establishing lower class sizes, and Initiative 732, raising teachers' salaries.

"The problem is that neither initiative established a funding mechanism. The faith community has been concerned that funds would come from social services," Scott said. "Because of the recession, the state faced a \$2.9 billion shortfall, so the legislature decided to delay implementation of those initiatives."

The League of Education Voters, which sponsored initiatives 728 and 732, developed Initiative 884, proposing the state raise its part of the sales tax from 6.5 to 7.5 percent, to generate \$1 billion annually to go into a new state

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Religion News Briefs Around the World

Ecumenical News International, PO Box 2100
CH - 1211 Geneva 2, Switzerland Tel: +41-22 791 6111
Fax: +41-22 788 7244 Email: eni@eni.ch

U.S. pickle boycott ends with agreement

New York (ENI). A consumer boycott supported by the National Council of Churches and two member denominations against the North Carolina-based Mt. Olive Pickle Company has ended with an agreement to allow 8,000 Mexican farm workers who pick vegetables for the company to unionize.

Nigeria's church leaders denounce corruption

Lagos (ENI). Nigeria's church leaders have denounced as a pandemic the corruption plaguing their country, and argue that, for it to be tamed, there must be a spiritual and moral rebirth, as well as a social and economic revolution.

Cardinal regrets nostalgia for communism

Warsaw (ENI). A Catholic cardinal deplores nostalgia for communism in the former East Germany 15 years after the fall of the Berlin Wall. "I'm sorry so many people have forgotten how inhuman the system was under the communist regime," Cardinal Joachim Meisner of Cologne said in an interview with his archdiocese's Dom Radio. "The generation now in its 20s and 30s experienced it as children, without fully realizing the ideological and economic exploitation which existed there."

Orthodox aid agency continues work in Iraq

Baltimore, US (ENI). The International Orthodox Christian Charities, an aid agency of Orthodox Christians, remains in Iraq—working through its Iraqi staff—responding to needs of the minority Christian community, as well as majority Muslims through incessant turmoil, violence and unrest.

UN is indispensable say world church leaders

Geneva (ENI). Leaders of eight regional inter-church bodies and of the World Council of Churches, who met in Nairobi, say the existence of the United Nations remains vital to promote peace but its make-up needs to be changed in the light of present-day realities. "Coming as we do from all regions of the world, we are conscious that to many peoples and nations, especially outside Europe and North America, United Nations' governance structures do not reflect realities and needs of the world as a whole," they said.

Lutheran federation grows, addresses issues

Geneva (ENI). Membership of the Lutheran World Federation has jumped by more than 2.5 million to nearly 65 million as three new churches were accepted into membership at a recent meeting.

- The council appointed a task force to report in 2005 on "marriage, family and sexuality" amid fears that differences on these issues might become divisive. "We have to discuss these issues, no matter how difficult they might seem," said LWF general secretary Ishmael Noko.

- Noko called for global solidarity with South Asia's Dalit (untouchable) communities, like the solidarity that helped end South African apartheid.

- The Lutheran World Federation backed a call for the international community to prevent "terror, rape, torture, murder and slavery" and "the annihilation of an ethnic group" in the Darfur region of western Sudan.

'Intoxication with power' makes U.S. unloved

Geneva (ENI). Most U.S. citizens want to be known as generous, peace-loving people, who cherish freedom and are committed to democracy. That is not, however, how they are seen in the eyes of the world, said U.S. Bishop Mark Hanson, president of the Lutheran World Federation. From his travels around the world, he finds that the United States is "viewed as a nation intoxicated with power."

REGIONAL ECUMENICAL & INTERFAITH NEWS

Excelsior Youth Center offers trauma, grief seminar

Excelsior Youth Center and the Inland Empire Educational Consortium are sponsoring a seminar from 8 a.m. to noon, Friday, Nov. 6, at Spokane Falls Community College Student Union Building to address "The Impact of Trauma, PTSD, Grief and Loss on Mental Health and Addiction."

Presenters are Mary Moller, clinical director at Suncrest Wellness Center, and Jeff Hastings, director of outpatient services at Excelsior Youth Center.

Participants will learn about effects of seven types of trauma on brain development, cognition, emotions, perception, behavior and social relationships of survivors, family and friends, and

about the relationship of trauma to co-occurring psychiatric, medical and addictive disorders.

They will explore a holistic approach to identifying relapse triggers and how to incorporate trauma-related issues of grief and loss to treatment.

The seminar is for therapists, counselors, medical professionals, social workers, chaplains, pastoral and lay counselors, law enforcement, fire and emergency response personnel, said Jeff.

Mary has been in private psychiatric nursing practice since 1992 and has researched trauma issues, about which she lectures throughout the country. She is also director of the nonprofit Cen-

ter for Patient and Family Mental Health Education. Suncrest Wellness Center uses a holistic approach to counseling.

Jeff has worked with chemically affected adolescents and correctional clients since 1982 at Union Gospel Mission in Portland, at a halfway house for released felons, as a probation officer, at a residential program for juvenile felons and with the Spokane County Health District Methadone Program. He is an adjunct professor with the Eastern Washington University drug/alcohol studies program and has a part-time private practice at the Suncrest Wellness Center.

For information, call 378-7041.

United Nations Day focuses on women leaders

"The Importance of Women's Political Leadership at Home and Abroad" is the theme for the celebration of United Nations Day at 5:30 p.m., Sunday, Oct. 24, at Mukogawa Commons, Fort Wright Institute in Spokane.

The featured speaker is State Senator Lisa Brown of the third district, the first woman to serve

as Democratic Leader in the state legislature.

She has been an advocate for women, children and vulnerable populations, especially related to health care and child care. She has a doctoral degree in economics and is associate professor of organizational leadership at Gonzaga University.

The event, sponsored by the Spokane Chapter of the United Nations Association, includes dinner at 6 p.m.

The chapter is also planning an "Adopt-a-Minefield Night of 1,000 Dinners" potluck at 6 p.m., Monday, Nov. 8, at the Unitarian Universalist Church

For information, call 448-0762.

Pullman symposium addresses contemplative prayer

Father Thomas Keating will present "Centering Prayer and Christian Contemplative Tradition" at the 27th annual Roger Williams Symposium Sunday and Monday, Nov. 7 and 8, in Pullman.

"The Contemplative Dimension of the Gospel" will be explored at 7 p.m., following a 6 p.m. banquet Sunday, in the Compton Union

Building on the Washington State University campus.

Father Thomas will offer two workshops on "Centering Prayer" Monday at the Community Congregational United Church of Christ, 525 NE Campus.

This Cistercian priest, monk and abbot is a founder of the Centering Prayer Movement and of Contemplative Outreach. His

publications include a trilogy of books on centering prayer—*Open Mind Open Heart*, *The Mystery of Christ* and *Invitation to Love*.

Sponsors of the event are the Common Ministry at WSU, the Evergreen Baptist Association, the Department of Religious Studies at WSU and the Honors College at WSU.

For information, call 332-2611.

Campbell Farm plans Fall Festival events for children

The Campbell Farm in Wapato concludes the celebration of its 25th year of ministry on the Yakama Reservation with its fourth annual Fall Festival from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturday, Oct. 30.

The day includes hayrides, entertainment, games, mission booths, craft tables and food.

Campbell Farm provides mission opportunities in the Yakima

Valley for youth and adults and offers ministry with children and youth in the community.

Four volunteers—from North Carolina, South Carolina, Texas and Utah—have arrived and will spend a year helping with area ministries, youth groups, farm life and the summer program.

In the summer, more than 360 volunteers who stayed there

worked on homes of low-income elderly and disabled people, painted two churches, prepared meals for the homeless at the Union Gospel Mission, sorted food bank donations, led vacation Bible schools and worked with low-income children at the local community center and a neighborhood outreach program.

For information, call 877-6413.

Love INC seeks helpers

In the Tri-Cities area, Love In the Name of Christ (INC), which listens to needy people and screens them on behalf of churches and other charitable agencies, seeks volunteers for their office.

YWCA prepares for benefit luncheon speaker

Mary Robinson, the former first woman president of Ireland, will be the featured speaker for the YWCA of Spokane Women of Achievement Benefit Luncheon at noon, Tuesday, Nov. 16, at the Spokane Convention Center.

She had a high popularity rating because of her caring use of power. In 1977, she became United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. Presently, she chairs the Council of Women World Leaders.

The Fig Tree is reader supported BECOME A SPONSOR!

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Editor/Photographer - Mary Stamp
Editorial Team
Sr. Bernadine Casey, Jo Hendricks,
Deidre Jacobson, Nancy Minard

Fig Tree Board

Sr. Bernadine Casey, Jo Hendricks,
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Jeff Hastings, MSW

LMHC, CDP, Director of Outpatient Services, Excelsior Youth Center

8 a.m. - noon, Friday, Nov. 5, 2004

Excelsior Youth Center, Spokane Falls Community College Student Union Building, Lounge A & B - 3410 W. Fort George Wright Dr., Spokane

Registration: \$25 - IEEC members free
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email: michelleo@4eyc.org or call **328-7041**

or mail to: Excelsior Youth Center, Attention Michelle Ovens
3754 W. Indian Trail, Spokane, WA 99208

Interfaith Council educates on issues, celebrates peace

Continued from page 1
Education Trust Fund. It would lower class sizes and would increase K-12 teacher salaries, higher education enrollment and scholarships, and preschool openings for low-income children.

Scott said a family earning \$20,000 would have an annual \$93 increase in sales tax, and a one earning \$60,000, about \$260.

The WSCC questions setting aside a portion of sales taxes, taking it out of the general fund.

"While the WSCC supports lower class sizes and raising teachers pay, they oppose raising the sales tax, which would compound our regressive tax system. In addition, in economic downturns, less money would be generated," Scott said.

Initiative 892 would authorize electronic scratch tickets in non-tribal businesses—such as bowling alleys, restaurants and bingo halls—for state property tax reduction. Net earnings would be taxed 35 percent, and one percent of earnings would go to address problems of gambling.

Beth said that the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act says that only tribes can operate certain gaming. Expanding to other businesses would mean there would be 18,000 slot machines in 2,000 locations. Tax relief on a \$75,000 home would be \$9.75, and on a \$200,000 home, \$26.

Opponents anticipate that it would reduce revenue to the state lottery—used for school construction—by \$33 million, she said.

"The faith community considers taxing gambling regressive—lower income people lose a higher percent of their incomes. Faith communities also oppose it because it breaks treaties establishing tribal rights to gambling," Beth said.

Referendum 55 was passed by the legislature but held up by the Washington Education Association. It would create 45 charter schools in Washington, run by private, nonprofit groups, and supervised by school districts.

Charter schools are independent public schools, but exempt from some state and federal rules, Scott said. State dollars follow students to these schools, which cannot be religiously affiliated.

"Most charter schools are for low-achieving students with learning disabilities or at risk of failure," Scott said.

The WAC opposes it, he said, because it detracts from "a strong public education system." The WSCC supports the concept of giving parents more choices but finds no "strong moral component" related to it.

In discussion, some of the 25



Scott Cooper and Beth Poteet at Country Homes Christian

at the session at Country Homes Christian Church in Spokane said the performance of charter schools is mixed and voters have turned down two other charter school initiatives. Some expressed concern that public school superintendents are to supervise charter schools, which operate under looser rules.

"There are many perspectives to these issues," Scott said in conclusion. "Some of the proposals raise more questions than answers."

Other Initiative Education Forums will be held at 7 p.m., **Oct. 5**, at the Verdale United Church of Christ, 611 N. Progress, in Spokane Valley; **Oct. 14**, at St. Rose of Lima Church, 460 N. Fifth in Cheney; **Oct. 19**, First Congregational United Church of Christ, 205 N. Maple in Colville, and **Oct. 21**, at Sacred Heart Catholic Church, 440 NE Ash in Pullman. There was also one on Sept. 28 at Unity Church in Spokane.

The **Interfaith Council** has scheduled events to hear candidates, address domestic violence, develop peacemaking teams and celebrate Thanksgiving.

• **It is collaborating** with the Children's Alliance, VOICES, Spokane citizens for a Living Wage, the League of Women Voters and the Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane to present a Candidate Forum, "We're All in This Together: Are Our Candidates on the Same Page?" from 6 to 8 p.m., Thursday, Oct. 7, at Salem Lutheran Church, 1428 W. Broadway in Spokane.

Candidates for the third and sixth legislative districts, and from the fifth congressional district will present their positions on hunger, health care, housing, fair wages and other issues of economic justice. Forums for other districts are being arranged.

• **On Oct. 5**, the Council is

sponsoring "Creating the Circle of Caring: Faith Communities Working to End Intimate Partner Violence," with a program presenting the survivor's perspective and a panel discussing the power of faith to liberate domestic violence victims.

• **The weekends** of Oct. 14 to 16, Oct 28 to 30 and Nov. 11 to 13 are Camp PEACE training events, networking high schools, universities, citizens and agencies to train youth to be leaders in developing respect and peace

as part of peacemaking teams in their schools.

• **The Interfaith Thanksgiving Service** is set for 10 a.m., Thanksgiving day at Central United Methodist Church in Spokane.

• **The Council's World Day of Peace Celebration and Dinner** drew about 300 people on Sept. 21. It featured West African, Ugandan, Hmong and Middle Eastern music and dances, uplifting the area's cultural diversity.

"People who live the spiri-

tual path have a responsibility to model peace and to care about Sudan, Iraq and other areas of conflict," said council director Kateri Caron.

The celebration of World Peace Day, she said, was in solidarity with people around the world "gathering in silent vigils, eating, dancing, praying and expressing their desire for peace in the world, their nations, their cities, their families and their hearts."

For information, call 329-1410.



Ugandan dancers at the World Day of Peace celebration

United Nations Day

Oct. 24

Importance of Women's Political Leadership at Home and Abroad

Commons Room
at Mukogawa Institute
Social Time 5 p.m.
Dinner - 6 p.m.
Program - 6:30 p.m.

State Senator Lisa Brown

SEND \$22 adults, \$10 students by 10/15 to 6324 S. Helena, Spokane 99223

CALL 448-0762



Fall Folk Festival

The Fall Folk Festival is sponsored by the Spokane Folklore Society a non-profit organization serving Spokane since 1977.

For information call (509) 747-2640 or visit www.spokanefolklore.org

A day of music, dance, art and storytelling from many cultures

**Saturday Nov. 6
11 a.m. to 10 p.m.**

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Free Family Fun All Day!

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Activities & Crafts for Kids
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Bazaars

Bake Sales & Meals

The Fig Tree will run another composite Bazaar ad in the issue distributed Nov. 3.

Holiday Fair

9 am-2 pm, Saturday, Nov. 6
Cheney United Methodist
204 Fourth St. - Cheney
For information, call 235-6522

Cheney United Church of Christ Bazaar & Lunch

9am-2pm, Nov. 6 at 423 N. 6th
Baked Goods, Produce, Crafts
Silent Auction, Children's Activities
Lunch 11 -1:30 • Quilt Raffle

Christ Lutheran Church Craft Sale & Luncheon

9 am-4 pm, Saturday, Oct. 16
13009 E. Broadway
Fresh Norwegian Lefse • Soup & Pie

Millwood Presbyterian Church Bazaar

12 - 6 pm, Friday, Oct. 29
9 am-4 pm, Saturday, Oct. 30
3223 N Marguerite Rd.
Handmade Holiday Items & Bake Sale
Proceeds used for charities

Bazaar & Bake Sale

St. Mark's Lutheran Church
316 E. 24th Ave. - Grand Blvd. & 24th
9 am-2 pm, Saturday, Nov. 6
Coffee bar, bake sale, quality seconds and crafts

Central Valley High School Holiday Craft Fair

Saturday & Sunday, Nov. 6 & 7
821 S. Sullivan Rd.
Spokane Valley, WA 99037

St. John's Cathedral BAZAAR

at 12th & Grand
9:30 am-3 pm
Saturday, Nov. 6

Lunch available
11:30 am-1 pm

Cookies, Breads & Mustard
Handcrafted Items

Trinity United Methodist Church Bazaar & Turkey Dinner

1725 E. Bridgeport - Spokane
5 to 7 p.m.
Thursday, Nov. 11

Christmas Shoppe

Christmas gifts & Chotskies
Bookstore homemade sweets
Our famous apple dumplings
9 am-3 pm
Saturday, Nov. 6

Audubon Park United Methodist
3908 N. Driscoll corner of Garland

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Unique gifts, alternative gifts, and gifts for people who have everything

Friday, Nov. 12
10 am - 8 pm

Saturday, Nov. 13
9 am - 3 pm

First Presbyterian Church
318 S. Cedar
Maple St. Exit off I-90

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25th Season
Concerts at the Met
Nov. 14, 2004, 3 pm
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April 10, 2005 3 pm
May 8, 2005 3 pm
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of Centering Prayer Movement and of
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Send by Oct. 22 to The Common Ministry
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Priest in small Palestinian village intersects with lives of area people

Larry and Donna Roberts' 2000 pilgrimage to the Holy Land introduced them to Palestinian refugee camps and the small village of Ibillin, turning around their lives and worldview.

They and three other couples in Spokane's First Presbyterian Church have established the Living Stones of Ibillin. The group raises funds for Mar Elias Education Institutions and provides educational seminars, speakers and training for the community about life in Israel, and about Melkite Catholic Father Elias Chacour's persistent efforts to serve all the people of Israel—Muslim, Jewish and Christian.

Last spring, they invited the Rev. Don Griggs, who led their pilgrimage, and Father Elias to Spokane to tell people about their ministries.

The Living Stones of Ibillin draws 35 to 200 people to local workshops on biblical archaeology, Christian Zionism, the Israeli state, and Middle Eastern geography and history. They have about 400 supporters. The organization is one of 20 U.S. chapters of Pilgrims of Ibillin.

Study has been part of preparing three area groups that have visited Ibillin in the last five years. Groups have read Father Elias' books, *Blood Brothers* and *We Belong to the Land*.

About half who have participated are from First Presbyterian and half from local Catholic, Episcopal, Lutheran and other Protestant communities.

"I never did anything like this before. My heart and imagination have been stirred by Father Elias' vision of peace and education for all," said Larry, who moved to Spokane eight years after retiring from a high-tech marketing job in the Silicon Valley—which included extensive world travel in Asia and Latin America.

"Seeing Palestinian refugee camps—in the Middle East since 1949—changed my views about what is happening there," he said.

"Father Elias walks the walk and talks the talk—like Christ, Mother Teresa and Gandhi," Larry said. "He turns the other cheek, loves his enemies, works with enemies and is a humble person.

"He renewed my faith and opened me to a new circle of friends and associates around the world. He has opened a new world to me, in contrast with my previous global contacts," Larry said.

Inspired by the ministry in Ibillin, Don has introduced Larry and many others to the vision of peace and justice there.

"While few in Israel know where it is, thousands in the United States know," said Don, director of Pilgrims of Ibillin from



Father Elias Chacour on a recent visit in Spokane

Livermore, Calif. "They support it with their gifts and prayers that bring smiles, courage and hope to those in the schools there. Last year we sent \$175,000. Together we are stronger than the storm."

That "storm" includes uprooting olive trees to clear land for Israeli settlements, the wall separating Israel and the West Bank, checkpoints and a curfew that puts Palestinians under house arrest, Don said.

"In the midst of the storm, there is a servant of God, a compatriot of Jesus, a prophet in our times," Don said. "Elias Chacour was born in Biram near the Lebanese border in a Christian village where his family lived for generations. In 1948, his family was removed from their village and they became refugees in their own land. Now in Biram his family's homes are in ruins, but residents have restored the church."

Elias—known to many as Abuna or "father"—went to an orphanage school in Haifa, continued his education through graduate studies, and became a priest and teacher. He was assigned to serve the Church of St. George in Ibillin, north of Nazareth.

He soon realized his priestly duties were not enough to bring peace. Children needed to be educated. So he started a kindergar-

ten in 1970. Now the three-story kindergarten building has space to care for 270 children. Those children go on to elementary school, high school and colleges, which Elias has built over the years.

Marsam Bawarde Elementary School started in 1977 with one grade. Now there are 300 children in grades one to seven. It uses the first floor of the Mar Elias Technical College. Abuna's dream is to raise \$150,000 to build an elementary school.

The Living Stone's goal is to raise funds for a computer lab for 25 students.

Mar Elias High School was founded in 1982, built without a permit. About 1,300 students come from 70 villages in a 50-mile radius. Last year, 315 graduated.

The Mar Elias Technical College graduated 120 students in 2003.

Mar Elias University was established in October 2003, built on top of the auditorium for the Church of the Sermon on the Mount.

In his talk in Spokane, Father Elias asserted: "Together we can overcome evil with good, hatred with love. Together we can inspire the oppressed to be a sign of hope. Together we can convert

those who oppress to become allies with victims.

"I marvel seeing what has been done on a small hillside of the Mount of Ogra. God has given me power to climb the mountain. We have moved the mountain through a joint effort from all over the world. We have become living stones," he said, "making a peace bridge. I want to build bridges between present enemies that were once old friends.

"Only when Palestinians look at a Jew and see what God created and when Jews see that we, too, are beautiful people, we can call each other brothers and sisters."

Father Elias sees Jesus as a country man who hung around with young people, went to weddings, funerals and banquets, loved the land and saw the land and people full of lessons, which he turned into parables about the kingdom of heaven. He lived what he taught and said those who followed him needed no army or weapons. They were poor, peasants, fishermen, loving him and assured of his unconditional love for them.

"When I sit under a fig tree, I remember him. When I go to the village to collect water, I remember him. When I clear land to plant, I remember him. It takes a month to clear a small field of big stones. It's easier to make a child than to plant the earth, sweating and toiling to clear the land, carry water from far away, dig small holes and plant trees and vines.

"When I see modern bulldozers in a field uprooting 900 to 2,000-year-old trees and knocking down buildings, I cry as I cry when young people suspected of being terrorists are killed," he said.

"Jesus did not say sit quietly and avoid conflict. He said to risk our lives to save lives of the poor," said the priest who learned that as a child, sitting on his mother's lap and listening to stories of David, Moses, Jesus and Mary.

"I did not understand those stories or the Sermon on the Mount until I learned about Jews in concentration camps and saw Palestinians in refugee camps.

"Did Jesus live in the clouds or with people under the Roman empire? When people were hun-

gry, thirsty or suffering injustice, he entered their lives, because he knew that out of justice comes peace and security."

As a priest in a little-known village where 8,500 children of God—75 percent under 28—live without roads or electricity, Father Elias lives among his people under a military regime. Poor Palestinians stay in or around their villages.

Simple efforts to collect and distribute books or organize a summer camp for children have been hindered. When the mayor blocked the camp, Father Elias told the mayor he would make his life difficult. The next two evenings, he took two busloads of children to the mayor's house to pound on drums. He told the mayor he would stay until he had permission to organize a camp for the children. It was granted.

"We are not allowed to close our eyes. Before we started the schools, only 19 teens were going to high school, and girls were illiterate," he said.

Without his bishop's blessing and denied a building permit, he proceeded to build. He hired an attorney and contacted the Dutch princess to raise funds in the Netherlands for the school.

"I do not accept denial," he said. "I continue to pray for peace and justice in Israel."

Now there are 4,000 students, learning about peace and justice—60 percent Muslim and the rest Christian, Druze and Jewish. There are 290 teachers, 100 with doctoral degrees and 92 with master's degrees.

"When people do evil, I speak out to restore justice, because I am responsible for what happens to my brothers and sisters, including for what happened to my Jewish brothers and sisters in concentration camps in World War II. I am not guilty for what happened, but I can be responsible by being ready to ally with every Jew and with every non-Jew to stop any other holocaust."

In the last century, Armenians, Jews, Cambodians and many others were slaughtered. Palestinian refugees have endured massacres in refugee camps, Father Elias said.

Continued on page 5

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Despite economy, Okanogan Habitat finds funds for four homes

Continued from page 1
community. Now there is one in each. The area is economically depressed, but the affiliate has raised the funds, she said.

Ivetta, a member of the Tonasket Community United Church of Christ, said area churches contribute to fund raising.

In addition to her church, other area churches on the Church Relations Committee or assisting are the Seventh Day Adventist, Assembly of God, Free Methodist, and Holy Rosary Catholic in Tonasket; Immaculate Conception Catholic, the Free Methodist, the United Methodist, Country Full Gospel and the Episcopal Church in Oroville; the Church of the Brethren in Ellisforde; Emmanuel Lutheran in Havillah and the Community Church in Loomis.

Each year they hold a fund-raising house tour. Last year the Havillah church arranged for Thrivent Financial to match up to \$800 in donations for the salad lunch and house tour. They raised \$1,000 from the 70 participants, so had a total of \$1,800.

Women in the churches make



Ivetta Howell oversees work at Habitat house.

and raffled quilts. Men made and raffled a storage shed.

On Sept. 19, the churches held an interdenominational service, featuring a guest speaker and music from area churches.

"We build on faith, never knowing when we will receive funds

from memorials, donations and fund raisers," Ivetta said.

Income also comes from homeowners paying their mortgages.

They draw from the churches to recruit volunteers.

Vern Ritter heard an announcement at church that Habitat need-

ed volunteers, so he called and has come each work day.

About eight people are regular volunteers, working Thursdays and Saturdays.

Youth groups and others in churches join in to help when it's time to paint.

Interested people have found many ways to share their skills.

For example, Ruth and Bill La France are among those who bring refreshments.

Last year, a reading teacher motivated students to read, saying the elementary principal would donate a certain number of minutes of work on the Habitat house for every book they read. He worked 200 hours in the summer. Other teachers joined him.

Midway Tile Supply is the source of building materials, giving a price break. A local contractor, Bob Thompson, drew the plans, excavated and poured cement. A plumber, an electrician and a window installer donate their time.

AmeriCorps volunteers have also helped with Habitat houses.

When the local AmeriCorps director left, the homeowner of the third house became the new AmeriCorps director. Another homeowner, who had been a janitor, gained confidence and skills through building his house. Now he is head of the maintenance department at the hospital in Tonasket. A local contractor hired the

other previous homeowner.

"Most just need a hand to get going, and their lives improve," Ivetta said.

The owners of the current home in Oroville, Danny, 46, and his wife, Georgia, grew up in the area. They were living in their mothers' homes. They have two older children in the military and a fourth and a sixth grader at home. He is on disability because of heart problems. She is working two jobs.

He is putting in the 500 hours of "sweat equity," under the careful eye of volunteer builders, Vern, Pete Liesmaki, Gene Howell and others. They make sure he doesn't overdo as he pounds nails.

"I lost my dad two years ago, but I've gained five dads working on the house," Danny said.

He said he is learning skills he can apply to a future trade, perhaps cabinet building. He had helped his mother with remodeling her place, but never had built a house from the ground up.

"I hope to find ways to give back to Habitat," he said.

Ivetta, who moved to Tonasket in 1965, has been involved with Habitat since it started.

"By building Habitat houses I have met people I would never have had contact with," she said. "It feels so good just to help someone and to know we are making a difference in someone's life."

For information, call 486-2458.

Taiwanese-born pianist performs benefit concert

Pianist Hsia-Jung Chang, the daughter of a former Barton School student, presented a benefit recital of Chopin pieces on Oct. 5 for the volunteer adult literacy program at First Presbyterian Church.

As a child in 1974, Hsia-Jung came to Spokane with her family from Taiwan. At 17, she won the Greater Spokane Allied Arts and Music Festival Young Artist Award and performed with the

Spokane Symphony.

After graduating from Shadle Park High School, she completed bachelor's and master's degrees in piano performance at the University of Houston, and moved to New York to complete a doctorate in piano performance at the Manhattan School of Music.

Her parents are Ho Lan and Danny Chang. Her mother, Ho Lan, who attended Barton School, is a singer-guitarist who toured the

Northwest, performing Taiwanese folk songs and chamber music.

When she enrolled in Barton School to improve her English, she began to pursue painting and cooking, opening Ho Ho Teriyaki in the Flour Mill.

Barton School director Mildred Scheele said that over its 35 years the school's students from 65 countries have "reflected world events and U.S. immigration policies from the coming of 'the boat people' to the recent breakup of countries such as the Soviet Union and Ethiopia."

For information, call 747-1058.

Priest fosters understanding among Jews, Christians, Muslims

Continued from page 4
"This is a complex situation," he said. "Our life in Israel is a procession of funerals and bulldozed houses, followed by desperation and retaliation, but that does not justify what suicide bombers do. It's a crime. No one has the right to end the life of another. It just piles crimes on crimes, making more people criminals."

Father Elias believes education is the way to do away with brainwashing that invites boys and girls—humiliated by the lack of opportunities, the wall and checkpoints—to end their lives and the lives of others.

"We have to be responsible and believe we can do something to make a difference," he said.

So Father Elias seeks to build understanding among Jews, Christians and Muslims.

"I refuse to be one-sided," he said.

"To help Palestinians," he advised, "do not take sides that encourage revenge or justify hatred that reduces Jews and Palestinians to pieces. Do not send weapons."

"God removes fear that can lead to darkness," Father Elias assured. "The light grows as people become partners in life."

For information, call 448-0554.

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Alliance sifts through complex issues to make sense, take action

Because options for health care and players in the health system abound and compete, Karen Hyvonen brings to bear her experience as teacher as she works with the Spokane Alliance's Health Care Research-Action Team to discern winnable proposals for action.

"Many are dazed by the complexity. We need to simplify presentations of the issues," she said. "To create an ideal system is daunting with the many competing interests—insurance companies, technicians, nurses, doctors, hospitals, drug companies, high tech firms, researchers, governments and patients who want more than they can afford."

Several years ago, Karen's pastor at Westminster Congregational United Church of Christ in Spokane urged members to learn about the Spokane Alliance and to see how the church might become more involved.

That led some members into leadership training, a decision by the congregation to become a member and participation of church members in "listening seasons"—small group discussions about their concerns.

Churches adopt some issues as their goals and forward issues too big for them to influence alone to the alliance, which, with input from other institutions, determines priorities for action.

Health care, sustainable jobs, environment, STA accountability and taxation are issues alliance research-action teams study in depth to propose actions for members to rally to support.

Karen chose to focus on health care and was the one from the team presenting their proposals at the recent Fall Leadership Rally.

The Health Care Research-Action Team, which formed in 2001, is addressing concerns of member institutions about costs, quality and access.

Victories include 1) helping pass the Prescription Drug Bulk Purchasing Bill and minimize cuts to funding for the state's Basic Health Plan; 2) convincing the Spokane Valley City Council to increase its contribution to Project Access for low-income prescription drug benefits from \$5,000 to \$25,000, and 3) organizing Eastern Washington opposition to Premera's effort to switch from nonprofit to for-profit status.

In October 2003, Karen joined 150 in the alliance, walking door-to-door in several neighborhoods to connect people with Health for All, part of the Health Improvement Partnership (HIP), which helps match people without health insurance to appropriate coverage. They visited more than



Karen Hyvonen

1,000 households and tripled the number of contacts Health for All normally receives in a week.

The alliance also promotes Project Access, a local effort to connect physicians and hospitals who volunteer their services with patients who meet certain criteria and have no insurance.

"Initially, we have focused on health care access and prescription drug costs," she said.

The team learned that employer-based health insurance began after World War II; that the government-sponsored health care debate began in the 1950s, and that the Medicare national health care program for people over 65, began in 1965.

Among the problems the team has recognized are: 1) increased prescription drug and insurance premium costs, 2) 550,000 uninsured in Washington, 3) \$19 million in uncompensated care in Spokane County, 4) low Medicare reimbursements in Washington, and 5) political posturing of major players that creates gridlock.

The team also found:

- Rising costs pressure individuals and institutions.
- Many uninsured are employed, the uninsured drive up costs in the whole system, uncompensated care leads to layoffs and financial stress.
- Many doctors are refusing to serve Medicare patients.
- Reforms require citizens and consumers to become major players in health care politics.

Statements of national UCC, United Methodist, Catholic and Lutheran churches help motivate. They say health care is a basic

right that must be affordable, accessible, available and accountable, and that government has a role in ensuring access. The U.S. Catholic bishops have called for a national health insurance program as part of the "sanctity of human life" and the dignity for all people, "who are made in the image of God." Lutherans call members to "faithful moral discernment" related to participation and policy-making in health care services.

Alliance criteria for health care issues are to increase access and affordability, improve equity, have cost-sharing between public and private sectors, minimize bureaucracy, regulations and profiteering; promote consumer responsibility and be "winnable," Karen summed up.

This fall, member institutions will look at three universal health coverage reform options: tax-financed coverage, market dependent coverage, and a mix of mandated employer contributions and government safety nets.

At the fall rally, the team presented action options related to Project Access expansion, mental health equity and local treatment funding, Premera nonprofit status, reimbursement rates for Medicare, prescription drug purchasing pools, more choice for small business insurance, Basic Health Plan expansion, Care for Kids benefits, risk-pooling to reduce costs, more local medical training programs, reducing barriers to children's access to Medicaid and urging Congress to pass a Health Care Access Resolution.

"For the coming year, we hope to do something more cohesive,

actions that together move toward positive systemic reform that deals with the big picture," Karen said.

Karen, the mother of three grown children, sees need for strong national leadership on health care: "The lack of leadership leads to patchwork solutions," she said.

"Most people in our church understand the need to address issues. We have a sense of responsibility to care for our neighbors, and see this as integral to caring.

"While many people from church traditions see self interest as a broader concept than what affects one as an individual alone, I think many who are not from church backgrounds have a similar broad understanding of what that means," Karen said.

"Because many churches focus on building community as part of their mission, they may find it natural to share personal, purposeful conversation in various settings—a core piece of alliance life as we identify the passions and values of members," she said. "The alliance provides a step beyond a food bank, so people might not need a food bank."

"Involvement has brought energy to our church. While everyone is a member by virtue of being part of the congregation, 15 have participated in the Leadership Institutes, about 25 attend assemblies, 40 have participated in listening seasons each year and 10 are part of a core team. Others joined the STA Campaign and green-building initiatives.

Beyond winning issues, Karen appreciates that the alliance's goal is to help people be more effective in the public arena: "We work only on issues people agree to act on. We can work on other issues in other venues using skills learned with the alliance."

As people who do not know each other become acquainted and talk "about substantive issues out of the values we have as individuals and share as a church, she finds they experience a fellowship and connection that goes "far beyond the coffee hour after church."

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Organizing spiral winds from relationships to reflection to action

Describing the Spokane Alliance's move from organizing to acting to reorganizing as an "organizing spiral," Steve Paulson of Westminster Congregational United Church of Christ (UCC) summed up some of the alliance's victories that have built its capacity to reach out to "do something bigger and better."

"The Spokane Alliance seeks to help people make connections and take actions as caring neighbors," he said. "We bring people together, share common concerns and act on them."

About 40 at the Fall Leadership Rally learned about the alliance's membership campaign and how to present on issues important to them as part of the "Learning Season" this fall in preparation for a Jan. 17 Action Assembly. A Dec. 13 internal assembly will prioritize action for the public assembly.

The alliance seeks to recruit 15 new member institutions, raise \$15,000 at a major donor breakfast and draw about 1,000 to the assembly.

It seeks first to strengthen institutions, such as churches, empowering them to be effective in the community in creating change toward developing a livable, sustainable community.

Tom Robinson of Covenant United Methodist Church said the alliance will recruit new members based on

its successes with the Spokane Transit campaign, helping hold Premera to its nonprofit mission and the green building promotion among schools.

Currently 14 churches—Baptist, Catholic, Lutheran, United Methodist and United Church of Christ—are among the 32 member institutions.

The current research and action teams on Sustainable Jobs, Health Care, an STA Accountability Team and a Tax Equity Exploratory Team.

"Learning season" sessions include meetings in member institutions to share their experiences about jobs, environment, taxes, government services, health care and other issues. Discussions surface people's "passions and interests."

Wim Mauldin, co-organizer with Joe Chrastil on the alliance staff, said issues addressed arise from member institutions as they build relationships that change the "culture" within their institutions. The alliance provides a process through which institutions discern what issues their members want to change.

Karen Hyvonen of the Health Care Research-Action Team led an overview of health issues. That team's findings are reported in an article on page 6.

Pam Griffin of the United Food and Commercial Workers #1429, spoke on

holding the STA accountable for use of funds raised in the recent ballot measure to increase sales taxes by .3 percent.

Paul Bramson of St. Ann's Catholic Church and on the Sustainable Jobs Team outlined the need to address rising energy prices and develop the local work force with sustainable jobs that provide living wages and respect the environment.

Alliance successes include its Green Building/Learning program's 2003 campaign securing commitments from Spokane Public Schools to implement green building standards and adopt standards for using apprentices in construction, and the Stewardship Works campaign to increase conservation in existing buildings.

That team proposes approaching eight other school districts on green building; offering Stewardship Works classes to commercial building owners; creating a Sustainability Center to provide technical assistance on green building; developing a sustainability-focused Science Center; addressing regional water quality and conservation, and research to support biomass and alternative energy sources.

The Rev. Joanne Coleman Campbell of Liberty Park United Methodist presented proposals of the Tax Equity Exploratory Team, which include forming a

Tax Equity Research-Action Team. The group defines regressive taxes as those taking a larger percent from lower-income people and progressive taxes as taking a small percent from them.

"Tax equity and fairness are good for the system by distributing the tax burden in a fair and equitable way," she said.

This team, formed in 2003, said that in economic downturns the state's regressive tax system often leaves unfunded or underfunded social services that affect the quality of life—education, economic development, and health care.

"Washington has one of the most regressive tax systems in the nation, relying heavily on sales and excise taxes, property taxes, and business and occupation taxes," Joan said. "So people in the lowest 20 percent of incomes pay 17 percent of their incomes in sales and property taxes, while the highest 20 percent pays three percent or less. Reliance on the sales tax leads to high volatility."

"Our member institutions seek fair and equitable taxes, stable and balanced taxes, clear and transparent, and adequate to meet government obligations in a fair and just manner," Joan said.

The alliance will hold a Capacity Building Campaign breakfast at 7 a.m., Wednesday, Oct. 20 at the Ridpath Hotel. For information, call 532-1688.

Discussions surface people's passions and interests.

State food code permits potlucks without costly licensing requirements

Continued from page 1
are. It was left up to the counties to interpret the Washington Food Code. Some counties require potlucks to be operated like restaurants, making it illegal for most foods served at potlucks to be cooked at home.

"The new wording will permit organizations to hold potlucks without having to conform to costly licensing requirements or spoiling the fun by outlawing home-cooked foods," he said.

"The current wording does not single out publicly advertised potlucks for any greater scrutiny than any other type of potluck."

Chrys describes the effort as a "struggle to decriminalize potluck suppers."

"Previously a nonprofit organization, charity, political group, book club or church was breaking the law in some localities if it advertised a potluck to the public without notifying the public health authority and complying

with state and local food service establishment rules.

In 2002, a group of concerned people and organizations went to the Washington State Department of Health (DOH) to bring "some sanity to their attitude towards publicly advertised potluck suppers," Chrys said.

"After numerous heated, tedious meetings at which we reiterated over and over that our freedom to invite our communities to potluck suppers was something

that should not be regulated, we thought we had emerged victorious," he said. "On Feb. 5, 2003, the stakeholder group—including representatives from DOH, local health authorities, food industry representatives, farmers and just plain folks—reached consensus on language exempting potlucks from regulation."

This consensus was re-confirmed at a DOH meeting on March 4, 2003. However, a DOH "Core Group" removed the language that included "publicly advertised" potlucks in the exemption.

In the rest of 2003, the potluck advocates mounted a campaign with emails and web-based information, organized phone calls and attended DOH hearings around the state to assert: "Potlucks, whether advertised to the general public or not, should be exempt from Food Code regulation!"

"They heard us," Chrys said. "I was told that DOH received more comments on the potluck issue than any other aspect of the food code. As a result, DOH reinstated the wording that includes publicly advertised potlucks in the exemption. This is the wording that is in the newly adopted code."

Among the organizations backing the effort along with Spokane Tilth were People for Environmental Action and Children's Health (PEACH), the Washington State Grange, Potlucks for Peace, the Ballard Alki Lodge #170 of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows and several churches.

"In October 2002, Spokane Tilth, a Chapter of Washington Tilth Association, was threatened with prosecution for announcing that we wanted to honor our local farmers by hosting a harvest celebration and community potluck supper that featured locally-grown foods that participants would prepare at home and bring to share at a community facility," Chrys said.

"We felt this was an excessive intrusion by government regulators into a non-commercial activity that is really a private affair among neighbors," he said. "We received messages of outrage and encouragement to fight against this injustice from many individuals and groups around the state."

Chrys lives at Tolstoy Farm near Davenport and is a grower of organic produce and botanicals.

For information, call 725-0610.

Relief agencies collaborate on post-hurricane aid

Relief agencies of the faith community seek to have funds on hand for immediate response to natural disasters, displaced people and war's ravages. Then they appeal for more funding to meet additional needs, beyond monies raised through CROP Walks or through regular or special offerings.

As recovery continues in the southeastern U.S. and the Caribbean, response includes working with regional and community ecumenical partners to assess needs and provide short- and long-term material and spiritual assistance, to restore livelihoods and to support caregivers.

Because the hurricanes hit Florida's agricultural economy hard, many small citrus growers are out of business, and farm workers have lost jobs. CWS

staff say the trees will take years to regrow, creating hardship for more than 25,000 citrus industry workers.

Many elderly and poor people have lost their homes.

A sampling of hurricane responses from agencies' websites indicates:

- **Church World Service (CWS)** is providing health kits, medical assistance medicine boxes—with supplies to treat common illnesses for 1,000 people for three months—blankets and other assistance.

- **Catholic Relief Services** has committed \$640,000 to help Caribbean people have clean water and food. With other humanitarian partner agencies and parishes, it has teams in the region assessing need and delivering assistance.

- **Baptist World Aid** is sending

funds to support relief ministries of local Baptist groups.

- **Action by Churches Together** is working with the Lutheran World Federation to distribute food and other relief items through 20 churches in the Protestant Federation of Haiti.

- **World Vision** is distributing food and providing emergency supplies such as family survival kits, water purification tablets, blankets, plastic tarps, water containers and clothing.

Local congregations and denominational websites offer information on donating to assist

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Organizations in region schedule variety of events

Christ Kitchen plans nativity auction

Christ Kitchen, a community of women who meet Thursdays at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Spokane to package mixes for baking or beverages, seeks artists to create nativity scenes and donate them to auction as part of a luncheon at 11 a.m., Monday, Nov. 1, at First Presbyterian Church, 318 S. Cedar. The nativity scenes can be previewed at a Harvest Party from noon to 3 p.m., Sunday.

The Nativity Event will tell the story of Christ Kitchen and women who gather to pray, study the Bible and package food products. In the process, they gain self-confidence, said director Jan Martinez. For information, call 448-4421.

Latter Day Saints will exhibit creches

The Spokane Stake of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints seeks people to share their Christmas nativity scenes in an exhibit that reflects the diverse cultural perspectives of artists around the world. The second annual "Christmas Creche Exhibit: Nativities from around the World" will be held from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m., Dec. 2 to 5, at the stake center, 1620 E. 29th Ave.

"In the 17th century, families in Naples welcomed friends into their homes each December to share beloved creches they had made or collected," said Jan Shelby, chair of the event. "We are following that tradition to share the Christmas spirit."

Creches will be returned to the owner following the exhibit. For information, call 443-1608 or email mshelby999@aol.com.

VOICES organizes Congress on TANF

VOICES is organizing a Congress on TANF—Temporary Assistance to Needy Families—as welfare reform. The event, "From the Other Side of the Desk: Grassroots Expertise in Welfare Reform" will be held Nov. 12 and 13 at Salem Lutheran.

Voices for Opportunity, Income, Child Care, Education and Support (VOICES) will gather people affected and interested—community members, social workers, TANF workers, customers, survivors, students and others—to gain a better understanding of how the welfare system works and how it could work better.

With rules constantly changing, VOICES members will share what it takes to live in poverty and emerge from it. They recognize that they each hold a piece of the solution to poverty in their personal stories. For information, call 326-4135.

Hispanic month continues in October

El Centro de Spokane, the Hispanic/Latino Bilingual Resource Center, is sponsoring "An Intro to Latin Culture," a month-long series of benefit dinners with Hispanic art, crafts, music and speakers from Spokane's Hispanic community. National Hispanic Heritage Month is celebrated each year Sept. 15 to Oct. 15.

Two of four dinners—the others were earlier—will be at 6 p.m., Fridays, at the East Central Community Center, 500 S. Stone St. The Oct. 8 dinner features Caribbean food and culture, and the one on Oct. 15 is a Latin Festival. Proceeds benefit El Centro de Spokane, a nonprofit agency that provides information in Spanish to assist the area's growing Hispanic population with issues of transition. For information, call 455-6706.

'Classical' concert has justice twist

Frankhauser family concerts are classical concerts imbued with their desire for justice in the world. They add spirituals, folk songs, sacred songs with a global consciousness and old-time gospel tunes.

John, Mary, Kresha, and Katie Frankhauser have been active in the Spokane musical arts community for more than 20 years. John and Kresha sing opera. Katie plays oboe.

"We perform music that acknowledges injustices and suffering of people around the world," Kresha said, "melding that theme with our various musical styles."

They will perform at 7:30 p.m., Friday, Nov. 5 at First Presbyterian Church, 318 S. Cedar. For information, call 448-0805.

Groups rally churches in 'Mayday for Marriage'

The Greater Spokane Association of Evangelicals (GSAE) and Mission Spokane are gathering people from hundreds of area churches for the "Take a Stand for Marriage: Mayday for Marriage Rally Inland Northwest" from 2 to 4 p.m., Sunday, Oct. 10, at the Spokane Veterans' Memorial Arena.

The groups call "for believers to fill the arena as they did for the 1996 Reconciliation Sunday, in order to send a message that they value marriage," said Dan Grether of Mission Spokane.

The rally, organized by the newly formed Coalition for Authentic Marriage (C-FAM), will present speakers on the biblical basis for "authentic marriage"; some legislative, legal and educational implications of redefining marriage; historical roots of Christian influence in American public policy, and youth concerns

and hope for marriage.

The event will include prayer, worship and video testimonies.

"Participants will learn what can be done to preserve and strengthen marriage," Dan said.

"Marriage is a God-given and time-honored institution that has held cultures and nations together through thick and thin. Today, as never before, this fundamental building block of societies world-over is being challenged," said the Rev. John Tusan, GSAE director.

He cited Harvard sociologist Pitrim Sorokin who said that "no culture has survived once it ceased to support marriage and monogamy."

The Rev. John Repsold, one of the organizers of C-FAM and pastor at Fourth Memorial Church in Spokane, commented that "the church of Jesus Christ

has throughout Scripture and throughout its history, been called to set a standard of love, morality and justice that mirrors the divine standard that uplifts core values such as authentic marriage."

C-FAM was formed in late June as a result of a letter from the GSAE to address creating a healthy marital environment in the greater Spokane area.

Concerned Christian men and women began meeting and decided to form C-FAM to educate people to uphold the present definition of marriage as a life-long legal and covenantal relationship between one man and one woman.

That includes providing action steps and practical outlines for creating healthy marriages, John Tusan clarified.

"We want to make a positive statement about marriage," he said.

"We are looking at long-term ministry through C-FAM that will deal with the complexities of marriage from dating to relationship building, creating healthy marriages and providing resources for the challenges of marriage.

"We want to create an attitude of compassion and understanding, showing the love of Jesus to those who are longing for hope and peace in a troubled world," John said.

For information, call 487-7429.

Speaker series examines church in today's world

The Catholicism and the New Millennium speaker series at Gonzaga University will examine today's consumption mindset and the gospel message of hope in talks are at 7:30 p.m., Thursdays, Oct. 7 and Nov. 11, at the Cataldo Globe Room.

Vincent Miller, assistant professor of theology at Georgetown University, will discuss "Consuming Religion: Christian Faith and Practice in a Consumer Culture" on Oct. 7. He will look at how consumerism threatens to change religion into a consumer product in a society that many see as "filled with mindless, selfish shoppers."

"The Gospel of the Americas" is the theme Jeannette Rodriguez, associate professor of theology and religious studies at Seattle University, will explore. She will reflect on what message of hope and faith Our Lady of Guadalupe, the patron of the Americas, offers in this time of war and chaos.

Habitat-Spokane's Auction is Oct. 23

Habitat for Humanity-Spokane will hold its ninth Annual Auction beginning with a silent auction and dinner at 5 p.m., followed by the live auction at 7 p.m., Saturday, Oct. 23, at the Masonic Temple, 1108 W. Riverside Ave.,

For information, call 534-2552.

In talks during September, John Whitney, SJ, provincial for the Oregon Province of Jesuits, spoke on "The 'Jesuit' University," and Patricia Beattie Jung of Loyola University in Chicago, spoke on "Gay Marriage and Civil Unions: A Catholic Perspective."

For information, call 323-6715.



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All Saints Day Open Labyrinth Walk

Sunday, November 7 - 1 to 4 p.m.

The Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist, located on the corner of 12th Ave. & Grand Blvd., will be open November 7 at 1 p.m. for prayer and reflection. The labyrinth will be available in the North Transept for walking meditation.

For more information contact Karen Robbins at (509) 455-5795 or email at robbins.k@worldnet.att.net.

Gathering in Spokane forms international organization for Anuak

By Deidre Jacobson

An international gathering of 20 met Sept. 17 and 18 at First Covenant Church and formed an organization to prevent the extinction of the Anuak people.

"We witnessed the birth of a new organization, the Anuak Justice Council (AJC), an organization that seeks to earn the trust of Anuak worldwide and the respect of heads of governments," said John Frankhauser, one of the organizers.

The AJC will become a non-profit organization, but in the interim will operate under Immanuel Urban Ministries. In its first year, the organization seeks to raise \$50,000 to support the efforts of several advocates who have been going to the United Nations, appealing to Genocide Watch and keeping people informed.

Agwa Taka, a 14-year Spokane resident and member of the indigenous Anuak tribe of Ethiopia, had a vision of unifying those who cry out for justice on behalf of the Anuak.

The Anuak have been persecuted in their homeland for many years. The persecution results from tribalism, racial prejudice and the discovery of oil and other resources on Anuak land.

Refugees have fled over the past 20 years, resettling all over the world. The largest U.S. group resides in southern Minnesota.

On Dec. 13, 2003, genocide was implemented against the Anuak in Gambella Province, with the murder of more than 400 men and boys, the rape of women and girls, and the burning of Anuak homes. The atrocities continue.

Freelance journalist Doug McGill reported on May 16 that "scorched-earth raids" carried out from January through April have destroyed a dozen Anuak villages in Gambella.

More than 10,000 Anuak have fled to refugee camps in neighboring Sudan and Kenya, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

John has read and heard many dramatic stories of Anuak heroism

Evangelical Association sets Candidate Forum

The Greater Spokane Association of Evangelicals will present a Candidates Forum from noon to 2 p.m., Tuesday, Oct. 12, at Union Gospel Mission.

More than 25 Republican and Democratic candidates have been invited to address issues of concern to the church community.

"We want to hear them, we want them to hear us, understand that we are here and we care about who our next leaders will be," said organizer Penny Lancaster.

For information, call 922-4825.



Akway Omot, Mary Lou McDonough, Agwa Taka and John Frankhauser continue efforts for Anuak.

as they fled various government-supported the massacres.

One of the stories by the new AJC chairperson Obang Okello, who lives in Mahomedi, Minn., are available on the web at www.bethel.edu/alumni/alumcoll/Focus/Spring/Spring2000ObangsOdyssey.htm.

The Ethiopian government denies these allegations while evidence mounts. Keith Snow, investigative reporter, documented his findings in multiple reports and confirms that several human rights organizations, including Genocide Watch and the World Organization Against Torture, have researched the Anuak stories and declared that the Ethiopian government is using ethnic cleansing against the Anuak.

Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, two of the largest human rights groups, say they are aware of the Anuak crisis, but their attention has been diverted to Darfur.

In spite of mounting evidence of genocide, the international community is slow to respond, said Doug, who reported on May 17:

- The primary reason is that in 2000, Ethiopia reached a peace accord with the breakaway state of Eritrea after a bloody 15-year war of secession that cost more than 100,000 lives. The peace has given Ethiopia a breather from intense international scrutiny.

- Second, the country has faced a severe famine combined with growing poverty for more than a decade, and attracts more than \$500 million in aid funds, as well as significant amounts of in-kind services and sympathy annually from aid groups.

- Finally, after 9/11 the United States has identified Ethiopia as a key partner in the war on terror. Its strategic location between Sudan and Somalia, both of which harbor radical Islamist terror groups, has caused the U.S. to look the other way as its repressive measures have greatly increased.

Anuak and their friends

throughout the world have rallied to cry out against the atrocities, bring pressure on the government of Ethiopia to end the genocide and provide assistance to the remaining people in the area and in the camps.

Inspired by the years of work and ministry with the Anuak Community on the part of First Presbyterian Church, the Rev. Lawrence Hudson of First Covenant Church and chair of Immanuel Urban Ministries, previously helped the Anuak of Spokane launch the Anuak Baare Hope Ministry in response to the Dec. 13 massacre.

Since the genocide, the Ethiopian government has closed the doors to humanitarian aid in the Gambella region, blocking World Relief and other aid agencies that want to help.

During a conversation on aid to the region, Mary Lou McDonough of the World Relief office in Spokane suggested a meeting to discuss unifying the Anuak in North America. The process began on Aug. 17 at First Covenant Church with Peter Omot, from Nairobi, Kenya; Agwa, Akway Omot, Alock Nyiguw of the Spokane Anuak community; regional director David Holter and Mary Lou, from the local World Relief office; Gayle Havercroft and Lawrence.

At this meeting, Agwa presented the vision of bringing the Anuak leadership in North America to Spokane to coordinate efforts.

The Anuak delegation arrived in Spokane in September. They represented such groups as the Anuak Community Association of North America, the Gambella Relief Association and the Mankato East African Justice Mission. There are Anuak living in 38 states and throughout Canada.

Obang Metho, from Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, founder of

the Gambella Relief Agency, had been poised to begin work in the Gambella region with a \$250,000 Canadian grant for humanitarian aid when the genocide occurred, preventing his work and rescinding the grant.

After the genocide, he received an outpouring of calls, emails and letters from Anuak throughout the world requesting his help.

Working almost completely on his own, he began the process of calling human rights agencies, attorneys and government representatives. He persevered through the systems, eventually speaking about the injustice to US, Canadian, Norwegian and other governments as well as the United Nations, Genocide Watch and the European Union.

Through his efforts, international relationships were developed. With modest support from

individuals and churches, he has labored without compensation.

The September meetings in Spokane established the Anuak Justice Council. The executive board includes Obang Okello, chair; Agwa, vice chairperson; Obang Metho, Peter and Akuthi Okoth (Chicago), members at large; Emily Greving of Davenport, Iowa, secretary, and John as treasurer.

The group developed preliminary goals with its primary function to be protecting Anuak life, spreading the truth about the Anuak situation, and rallying political and financial support.

Further goals are to serve justice, assist the Anuak who are in need, advocate for Anuak self-determination, end false imprisonment and return displaced people.

Lawrence said that "without Agwa's vision of bringing his people together, his sense of community and his love for his people, this couldn't have happened. He has helped keep small groups of Anuak residing all over the world in communication."

"It is a privilege to be a part of this mission, an international conference in our little church," said Lawrence, who saw God moving in the gathering. "It's exciting to be part of something God is doing."

"Worldwide there are only about 150,000 Anuak left, and we are fighting to save a people," he said. "I pray I will see a day in my lifetime when Anuak children will run free in Gambella, their parents no longer living in fear."

For information, call 747-2818.

Pastors' Reading Group

The purpose of the Pastors' Reading Group is to help pastors explore vocation and ministry through the reading and discussing of books related to these themes. A book and a light breakfast are provided to participants at no cost. First session begins Tuesday, October 19, and meets one Tuesday morning a month from 7 to 8:30 a.m. at Whitworth College. Fall book: *American Jesus: How the Son of God Became a National Icon* by Stephen Prothero of Boston University.

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National Council lists principles to study for evaluating candidates

In the confusion of political ads, debates and candidates' sound bites, the National Council of Churches' (NCC) Justice and Advocacy Commission has offered the following 10 principles that outline values and ethics affirmed by its constituent churches and a wide range of the faith community:

- 1) War is contrary to God's will.
- 2) God calls us to live in communities shaped by peace and cooperation.
- 3) God created us for each other, and thus our security depends on the well being of our global neighbors.
- 4) God calls us to be advocates for the most vulnerable in our society.
- 5) Each human being is created in God's

image and is of infinite worth.

- 6) The earth belongs to God and is intrinsically good.
- 7) Christians have a biblical mandate to welcome strangers.
- 8) Those who follow Christ are called to heal the sick.
- 9) Because of the transforming power of God's grace, all humans are called to be in right relationship with each other.
- 10) Providing enriched learning environments for all of God's children is a moral imperative.

These principles serve as a call to look at candidates' stands for peace and for promoting nonviolence, global coopera-

tion, economic, racial and environmental justice, fair immigration policies, assessable, affordable health care, restorative criminal justice and equal educational opportunities—concerns of many people of faith. There is a study guide available to congregations at www.nccusa.org.

The NCC has joined with a Sojourners magazine promotion of an ad campaign that declares "God is not a Republican or a Democrat." More than 60,000 people have signed it, as the parties and candidates try to jockey for the votes of people of faith.

Succumbing to the fears and half-information put out to influence is, in fact, contrary to faith. Even in a time of ter-

rorism, our security is not in one party or presidential candidate. For people of faith, security as lies in God and faithful living that epitomizes the verse that "nothing can separate us from the love of God."

We can so easily become wound up in pushing for the "right" laws that we may hate those with other views. This should be a time of national dialogue, of listening to concerns of people from around our communities, around our state and around our nation. It should be a time of expressing our opinions and hoping that those opinions will increase understanding in the process of articulating them.

Mary Stamp - Editor

An obsession with fear can blind people to the dawn of hope

Dawn has always intrigued me—that moment when a burst of light penetrates the darkness of the night and a new day is born. I have watched hundreds of dawns, and never cease to wonder aesthetically where the darkness has gone—what moment has light appeared and night faded into oblivion.

The advent of dawn has undoubtedly fueled sermons for centuries. It conjures hope, promise, and a freshness of mind, spirit and soul. God's eternal phenomenon has a significant message for today's world. "Be of good cheer for I have overcome the world." I John 16:33

Dawn can teach us a lesson about fear—about living in a world of horror, uncertainty and terrorism. It can teach us to cope. In the advent of another dawn, we can shed the tentacles that bind us with fear. We can emerge from the darkness of night and step boldly, unafraid, into a new day. Hope springs eternal in the human breast. At dawn, we can see the face of our brother and sister.

I am concerned when I read that the presidential campaign has become a referendum on fear. This sends the wrong message to the American people. It is demeaning and defeatist. Contrary to the prevailing

rhetoric, it will never win in war or peace. However, it is just what our enemies want to see happen.

Fear is dangerous for a democracy, because the negativity is so constraining that we are tempted to abandon our freedoms and the principles inherent in our nation's origin—the truths upon which we rely.

If the strategy takes hold and we succumb to a posture of fear, we are, indeed, in trouble. To be bold and fearless does not mean that we should abandon our safety mechanisms. Without question, we need secure borders. We need to improve our intelligence capacity and use it wisely and

co-operatively, but we never should make fear an obsession.

To do that is self-defeating. There is much to be done in our country. We are strong only when we proceed to live and work in the fullness of each day.

Benjamin Franklin said that people who give up freedom for security will have neither.

The four freedoms President Franklin Delano Roosevelt promoted are still relevant: freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom from want and freedom from fear.

Jo Hendricks - contributing editor

Newsletter Excerpts

Sounding Board

Reflections

The following commentaries are edited excerpts from area church newsletters.

If we learn to live in recognition of and in harmony with the natural world around us—the land—then we will know far better how to live in health and harmony with each other. Those who think we can control and exploit the natural world tend to be those who think we should control and use other people for our advantage, as our current foreign policy reflects. The Creator of all invites us to humility and the search for our proper place in the world. If we can embrace that, perhaps we will discover how to live with one another.

Our reality is corporate, not individual. If we are to fulfill God's intentions for us and the creation, we will need to act as interdependent communities. Of course, individuals must be responsible, but in order to establish "righteousness"—things as God intended them—we also must develop a perspective and responsibility and action that are corporate.

It takes decades and sometimes centuries for natural processes to restore balance and health to a piece of land that it takes a bulldozer one hour to scar. There are no quick fixes in nature and most of the effort and resources we invest in quick fixes either do nothing to alleviate a bad situation or actually make things worse.

The Sabbath—as rest and liberation for the land and us—may be the gift God gives to enable us to approach and embrace those truths. The Sabbath is recognizing our life as connected to all life and embracing the life-gift we receive in our oneness with the land and with each other. The Sabbath is forever, the eternal present, the time of which there is always enough.

**The Rev. Tom Soeldner
Salem Lutheran**

Fall is a time to recommit to our spiritual lives. As we become busy again and the flurry of activity resumes for many of us, it is important to reflect on balance and proportion and space in our lives for silence, for prayer, for study, for feeding our souls. We cannot give to others what we

do not possess ourselves. So how is your life going? What can you let go of, what would you like to add, what would make your heart sing? At church, at home, in every area of life, we have the chance to begin again, maybe not from the start but from the middle, and to recognize that life is all about choices.

**The Rev. Debi Hasdorff
Cheney United Church of Christ**

Our communication with God and with each other is strongest at the foot of the cross. When we're at the foot of the cross, all our pretensions are gone. We can't pretend to be people whose lives are all together, who don't have problems, whose feelings are never hurt. We can't pretend that we can do it all on our own, that we don't need God or anybody else.

At the foot of the cross, we are who we are, human beings who make mistakes. We are vulnerable. Our lives are not all together, but often chaotic. We are not self-made, independent and autonomous people, but needy beggar children, and most of all we need God.

In light of the cross, all our pretenses are stripped away, our defenses are knocked down. That's when God comes through to us most clearly, and when we can be the people we truly are, without our masks, defenses, and pretenses. Then we can be more comfortable with each other as well and communicate better.

**The Rev. Betty Krafft
St. Peter Lutheran**

I predict that the winner on Nov. 2 will be the candidate who is the most negative about his opponent.

I say this based on 200 years of American politics. Mudslinging in the 21st century is no worse than in the 19th. It may be milder.

Each candidate, each campaign and most Americans say they hate negative campaigning, but it happens because it works.

Mudslinging works because it fires up rabid partisans and makes the opponent's weaker supporters stay home. It can be clear, specific and colorful, while positive campaigning is vague, general and boring. It is easier to say how alarming and danger-

ous the opponent is than to paint a beautiful picture of one's plans.

Mudslinging makes the campaign seem like a war, and in a war, troops need to hate the enemy.

Moving from politics to the history of Christianity, this is still true. There is a reason why two different church historians wrote books describing their denominations and used the title, *Organizing to Beat the Devil*. It is easier to fire people up about hell than about heaven.

It is more fun to burn heretics than to help the poor have adequate heating. It is more fun to bust up saloons with axes than to operate a church health clinic. It seems that conservative churches with angry pastors preaching against gay marriage and liberal churches with angry pastors preaching against multinational corporations do well.

I believe Jesus was born to bring heaven into this world and that the devil was decisively beaten at Calvary, so we no longer need fear the devil. I believe the gospel is a message of love, not hate; peace, not war, and joy, not fear.

There is danger that we can become like the enemy we oppose. It happened in Hitler's Germany. Thankfully, we have the Bill of Rights to keep churches out of politics. Our allegiance to the gospel will keep politics out of the churches.

Let the Democrats and Republicans sling the mud. For the gospel of Jesus Christ, we need to run a positive campaign.

**The Rev. Don Hoffman
Creston Christian**

Politics takes on the focus and intensity of a holy crusade. How can tearing down individuals build up our institutions? American politics is serious business.

The division and divisiveness in American politics between too many Democrats and Republicans has become a life-and-death contest—the struggle for the soul of America.

For someone who has managed campaigns, run for political office and worked in governmental positions for members of both parties, it's unbelievable to witness the viciousness of today's campaigns.

As a person of faith, I know and share the deep faith of both Republicans and Demo-

crats, with full realization that whatever they did or believed politically, it was never about saving the soul of America. Often they shared more in common with those across the aisle than differences, and most differences were limited to *how* and *when* they would achieve something.

Controversy sells, and conflict hardens troops for battles. Since the 1980s, we've witnessed a marked increase in the intensity and violence of this conflict.

Lee Atwater, chief political architect of Presidents Reagan and (G.H.W.) Bush, was ruthless, even lawless. He taught the next generation of young political operatives how to search and destroy any American willing to become a political adversary.

Lee's most insightful advice comes from his battle with cancer. He said, "I feel something stirring in American society. It is a sense among the people—Republicans and Democrats alike—that something is missing from their lives—something crucial. I wasn't sure what it was. My illness helped me to see that what was missing in society is what is missing in me: a little heart and a lot of brotherhood. The 1980s were about acquiring wealth, power, prestige. I acquired more than most, but you can acquire all you want and still feel empty. What power wouldn't I trade for a little more time with my family? What price wouldn't I pay for an evening with friends? It took a deadly illness to put me eye to eye with that truth, but it is a truth that the country, caught up in its ruthless ambitions and moral decay, can learn on my dime."

Ruthless ambition over brotherhood, moral decay over having a heart define American politics. Both Republicans and Democrats should take a lesson from the dead. American politics is not the genuine struggle for America's soul. That is a much deeper and more important spiritual struggle. Politics and policies are certainly important, only not eternally important the way family, friends, good health and the timelessness of brotherhood are. So let's stop the political violence, have a little heart and honor the memory of those who have died trying.

**Pat Copeland-Malone
Jubilee Community**

Regional rallies express solidarity with activists, indigenous people

The Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane is organizing "Witness to Truth: Confronting the School of the Americas (SOA)" on Friday and Saturday, Oct. 8 and 9, at Gonzaga University and Riverfront Park.

Magdaleno Rose-Avila, director of the Northwest Immigrant Rights Project in Seattle, will give the keynote address at the gathering that begins at 2 p.m., Saturday, at Gonzaga's Foley Lawn.

After speakers and music, participants will join a memorial procession at 3 p.m. to honor victims of the SOA, carrying crosses with their names and walking to Canada Island in Riverfront Park.

Magdelano, a voice in the Chicano movement, will speak on human rights and politics.

He was a Peace Corps director in

Nicaragua, Guatemala, Paraguay and Micronesia; ran congressional campaigns; worked for Legal Services and the Migrant Council in Colorado; was western director for Amnesty International's Campaign to Abolish the Death Penalty, and was director of the Cesar Chavez Foundation.

Other speakers include Paddy Inman, Eric Robison, Alice Ann Byrne, OP, and Mike Cook, SJ. There will be music by Melanie Luedders and Ester and Luisa Orellana.

At Ft. Benning, Ga., the SOA trains Latin American military personnel who have been linked to human rights abuses, atrocities

and terrorism in that region, said Rusty Nelson of PJALS.

This regional demonstration is an outgrowth of the annual November gatherings since 1989 at Ft. Benning, when thousands of activists call for the closure of this institution.

Witness for Peace, SOA Watch Northwest, Pax Christi and Shalom Church are co-sponsors for the event, expected to draw participants from throughout the Northwest.

There will also be a Sweatshop-Free Fashion Show from 6 to 9 p.m., Friday, at Gonzaga Prep, 1224 E. Euclid Ave., to raise funds for students going to Fort Benning

in November, and a Salvadoran Lunch from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., At O'Malley Hall in St. Aloysius Church, 330 E. Boone. Proceeds will benefit a Salvadoran Clinic and SOA Watch NW.

In the 7 p.m. closing ceremony at Canada Island, Raymond Reyes, Gonzaga University's vice president for diversity, will lead a call for solidarity with oppressed

indigenous peoples.

For information, call 838-7870.

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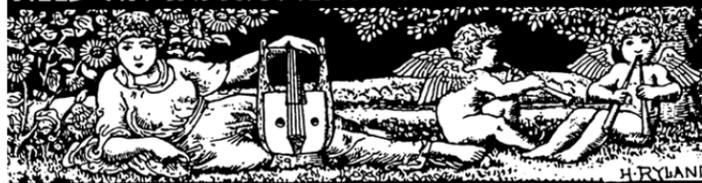


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Calendar of Events

- Oct 6 • Ministry Leaders Network, program on Community Impact Spokane with Penny Lancaster, Downtown Spokane Library, 906 W. Main, noon
- Creating the Balance: Solutions for Caregivers, "Double Tree, 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m. - 455-7450
- Cows with Guns benefit concert for Lands Council and KYRS, Center Stage, 1017 W. First, 7:30 p.m.
- Oct 7 • Candidate Forum at Salem Lutheran Church, p. 3
- Oct 8 • Sweatshop-Free Fashion Show, p. 11
- Oct 9 • Witness to Truth: Confronting the School of the Americas, Gonzaga University to Riverfront Park, p. 11
- Teriyaki Dinner, Highland Park United Methodist, 611 S. Garfield, 11 a.m. – 2 p.m. – call 535-2687
- Oct 11 • Spokane Alliance Core Team Development Training
- Oct 13, 27 • PAX Christi, St. Joseph Parish Center, 1503 W. Dean, noon
- Oct 14 • Spokane CROP Walk meeting, Manito United Methodist, 3220 S. Grand, 7 p.m.
- Advocacy Action Forum on 2004 ballot initiatives, St. Rose of Lima, 460 N. 5th, Cheney, 7 p.m., p. 3
- "Educating for Shalom: What Are Our Goals," Nicholas Wolterstorff, professor of theology at Yale, Weyerhaeuser Hall at Whitworth College, 7:30 p.m. - 777-3702
- Oct 15 • Jewish American Society for Historical Preservation, dedication of site of Temple Emanu El, the first synagogue in Washington State, Third and Madison, 10:30 a.m.
- Oct 17-19 • Guatemala Dialogues – call 329-1410
- Oct 18 • Spokane Citizens for a Living Wage, 35 W. Main, 5 p.m.
- Oct 19 • Advocacy Action Forum, First Congregational United Church of Christ, 205 N. Maple, Colville, 7 p.m., p. 3
- "Diversity and Democracy: Transcending America's Racial Divide," historian Manning Marable, Spokane Community College President's Speakers Series, Lair auditorium, 7 p.m.
- Oct. 20 • Spokane Alliance Breakfast, Ridpath Hotel, 7 a.m.
- Oct 21 • Advocacy Action Forum, Sacred Heart Catholic, 440 NE Ash, Pullman, 7 p.m., p. 3
- VOICES, Salem Lutheran, 1428 W. Broadway, 5:30 p.m.
- Oct 22 • Volunteers of America Hope House Celebrity Fashion Show, Double Tree Hotel, 322 N. Spokane Falls Ct., 11:30 – 2 p.m. – call 624-2378
- Oct 22-24 • Amnesty International National Weekend of Faith in Action - call 838-7870
- Oct 24 • United Nations Day, "The Importance of Women's Political Leadership at Home and Abroad," State Senator Lisa Brown, Mukogawa Commons, 5:30 p.m., p. 2
- Nov 1 • Christ Kitchen Nativity Event, Luncheon and Auction, First Presbyterian Church, 318 S. Cedar, 11 a.m., p. 8
- Nov 3 • Fig Tree distribution, St. Mark Lutheran, 24th & Grand, 9 a.m.
- Nov 4 • Fig Tree Board, 1323 S. Perry St., 1 p.m.
- =Mondays • PEACH Safe Food Orientation - call 455-2552
- Tues-Sats • Habitat for Humanity work days - call 534-2552
- Fridays • Peace Vigil at Army Recruiting Office, Colville - call 675-4554
- 1st Sats • Interdenominational Ministerial Fellowship Union - call 624-0522
- 2nd Suns • Sacred Harp Shape-Note Singers, 2929 Waterford Dr., 7 p.m.
- Stevens County Fellowship of Reconciliation, First Congregational, Colville, 6:30 p.m. – call 738-4962

Poor Man's Meal set

The 19th annual Bishop's Poor Man's Meal will be held from noon to 2 p.m., Sunday, Oct. 31, at the House of Charity, 32 W. Pacific Ave., in Spokane.

There will be shelter tours, music, and a prayer service led by Bishop William Skylstad.

Proceeds benefit the emergency winter sleeping program for homeless men, which served more than 700 last year.

This year with a grant from the Spokane County Housing and Development Department, it opens a month early and will continue into April.

The House of Charity, which is sponsored by Catholic Charities, also offers a hot noon meal, a medical clinic, case management, counseling services and a clothing bank to people in need.

For information, call 358-4250.

Comedian speaks

Mike Williams, a comedy writer for The Tonight Show with Jay Leno and the author of *Chicken Soup for the Sarcastic Soul* will speak at the Life Services' Fall Fund-raiser Dessert, at 7 p.m., Thursday, Oct. 21, at the Double-tree Hotel in Spokane.

Born in Chicago to a mother who did not want him or his four siblings, Mike lost his brothers to violence, his sisters to drug addiction and his father to suicide.

In grade school, she gave him up for adoption to give him a chance. His new family gave him unconditional love, discipline, inspiration, hope and faith.

Life Services of Spokane helps people facing an unplanned pregnancy at its two crisis pregnancy centers, a medical clinic and a maternity home.

For information, call 327-0701.

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Pullman teens touch lives of Mexican families and find their lives

For six of eight youth from Sacred Heart Church in Pullman who participated in a two-week summer mission trip to Agua Prieta, Mexico, it was their first experience in a developing country.

Rachel Brown and Elizabeth Dutton had participated in the 2002 mission trip. It was youth director June Brown's fourth trip.

Elizabeth has learned that "no matter what people look like, no matter where they are from, no matter where they live, no matter what language they speak, they are all brothers and sisters."

Having been there before, she was less shocked by what she saw this time.

"No matter how many times you see poverty, however, you are changed," Elizabeth said. "I've been transformed on many different levels, ranging from simple things such as taking shorter showers in an attempt to conserve water to having my faith and love strengthened to having even more compassion to get out there and help what little I can."

"Not only was I affected by the people of Mexico, but also I was blessed to be part of the community of teenagers and adults in the youth group. We formed a tight bond."

Other youth going were Claire Dutton, Andy Hughes, Cecil Jones, Alex Marcelo, Liz Paul and Kathleen Sutherland.

Mark Baetzhold, an Eastern Washington master's degree student who has been working with The Fig Tree and who has seen poverty in work at House of Charity in Spokane, accompanied a Pullman group on a summer mission trip.

Marcia Gonora and Tara Young-Brown were the two other chaperones.

Agua Prieta is a city of about 200,000 in the Sonoran Desert on the U.S.-Mexican border. On any day, a "floating population" of 50,000 people waits for the opportunity to cross.

Because that border between Agua Prieta and Douglas, Ariz., is a popular port of entry for undocumented immigrants, the



Alex Marcelo, Liz Paul, a child from the ranch and Rachael Brown

Photo provided by June Brown

United States in 1998 built a five-mile metal fence with stadium-sized lights that shine on it from the American side and give the border the appearance of a military state, Mark said.

"We crossed the border into Agua Prieta at night, and the environment changed dramatically and instantly," Mark said. "We noted the absence of adequate infrastructure. Children and dogs wandered on unpaved streets. One-room cinderblock homes struck me immediately."

"I have worked with the rural poor in Appalachia and the homeless in Spokane, but the poverty in this community was like nothing I have experienced. I had expected it would be a more developed, wealthier region because of its proximity to the U.S. border."

Tara, who is campus minister at Newman Center at Eastern Washington University in Cheney, said that "the border towns have some of the worst poverty in Mexico."

She explained that migrants from Mexico and other Latin American countries travel to border towns seeking work in American- and European-owned plants, or they try to cross the border, seeking greater economic opportunity.

However, plants are closing down to relocate overseas, and

crossing the border is increasingly difficult with U.S. surveillance.

As a result, a significant percentage of the population is unemployed and confined to makeshift informal housing in industrial neighborhoods on the outer edges of the city, Tara said.

The group resided for eight days in Agua Prieta at the Divine Providence Ranch, a program of the Rancho Feliz Charitable Foundation, established in 1987 by Troy and Gil Gillenwater.

Gil, a real estate broker in Scottsdale, Ariz., felt compelled to act on behalf of the most vulnerable after witnessing the extreme poverty of Agua Prieta. Initially formed to assist abandoned children in the border towns, Rancho Feliz strives to provide American volunteer groups with the opportunity to grow through serving the less fortunate.

"Service provides us unbounded possibility. Our lives start going better, there's somehow more quality, more meaning, more purpose and more joy," Gil said. "There is a greater sense of community, and we realize that we live in a world of abundance and that there is enough for all of us."

In addition to accommodations for volunteers, the ranch hosts seniors and orphans in separate facilities.

The proximity to the orphanage and nursing home allowed the volunteers to interact freely with children and seniors.

The youth group from Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Pullman spent time visiting, playing guitar and singing songs, dancing and serving meals at the nursing

home. At the orphanage they played with the children, read stories and worked on crafts.

One afternoon, the group prepared hamburgers and salad for seniors, children and some ranch staff, ending the evening with a piñata ceremony.

The youth also engaged in projects outside the ranch.

During the week, they awoke around 4:30 a.m. to be at work sites by 6 a.m. Because temperatures rose to 100 degrees or more, most workdays ended by 1 p.m.

They spent two days scraping, washing and painting walls of an elementary school.

For three days, they helped a family construct a one-story cement-brick house. The first day, they mixed cement and laid the concrete floor. The second day, they added several layers of bricks. The third day, they put on a tin roof.

During breaks, the Pullman

group also played tic-tac-toe and other games in the dirt with the family's four children and had a "water war" the last day.

Despite difficulties of communicating in different languages, the volunteers and the family formed bonds of playfulness, respect and friendship, Mark observed.

On the last day, the group toured a U.S.-owned factory that produces microphone and communication parts. It was clean and well run, like U.S. factory conditions, but the factory workers earn the equivalent of \$12 a day.

"We learned that the factory would close next year to relocate to China, where the company will utilize cheaper labor and less-regulated environmental standards," Mark said.

Another educational experience occurred when the group split into two "families" to shop for dinner at a local grocery store.

Each group was given 40 pesos (about \$4)—what a typical Mexican family might spend on dinner.

The groups could afford only basic foods such as beans, rice, eggs and inexpensive fruits and vegetables. Back at the ranch, the youth decided to combine what they had and share their meals.

"The experience deepened our awareness of the realities poor people throughout the world experience daily," Mark said.

The youth left Agua Prieta strengthened in their commitment to serve people in need and with a new awareness of issues of social justice, he said.

"In addition, we will remember the God-given bonds of friendship formed with the people of Mexico and with one another," Mark said.

For information, call 332-4402.

Fall Folk Fest scheduled for Nov. 6

The ninth Fall Folk Festival of the Spokane Folklore Society will be held from 10 a.m. to 11 p.m., Saturday, Nov. 6, at the Spokane Community College Lair.

The festival promotes preservation and appreciation of folk music and culture from ethnic traditions in the Inland Northwest.

The 2003 festival drew more than 3,000 people to see 325 volunteer performers in 65 groups.

The festival features seven stages of dance and music, plus workshops, crafts for children, jamming and meals. For information, call 624-5693.

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