

USFW F.L.A.S.H.E.S.

(United Society of Friends Women) (Friends' Ladies Always Sharing, Helping, Encouraging & Serving)

"Margaret's
Musings"

EXPECT SURPRISES!

Margaret Stoltzfus

"Expect surprises," Henri Nouwen says, in his book, BREAD FOR THE JOURNEY. Unless you're expecting a surprise you won't see or recognize one when it comes. As I read that on the first day of January 2008, I thought, what a great idea! I began to look each day for some event or experience that made me smile or brought tears because surprises can be sad as well as happy.

An unexpected email from my granddaughter, those regal cardinals at my bird feeder, that bit of music that triggered an old memory, a line in a book that drew me in--each was a surprise to be relished.

Focusing on the present helps me to be aware of surprises. In some ways it's easier to continually look back to some former event that was special, or to look ahead to the future by filling the mind with expectations, but neither of those helps me recognize surprises sent my way today by a loving Father.

So, I challenge you to expect surprises each day . . . and say thank you as you recognize them. Be aware of the people around you, the tasks on your list for the day, the events happening in your family. God has placed you in your unique circle for a reason. Be grateful!

ANNOUNCING THE USFW SPRING FLING



Saturday, April 5, 2008

Marshalltown Friends Church

Program: "Children of Promise" Quakerdale ministries

More information forthcoming. You do not need to be a USFW member to attend.



INFORMATIVE & ENCOURAGING CHRISTIAN WEBSITES



Encouraging devotionals and scriptures: <http://www.annieshomepage.com/barnabas.html>

23 Ways to Jumpstart your Spiritual Batteries:

<http://www.navpress.com/EPubs/DisplayArticle/1/1.87.7.html>

Christian Simple Living: <http://slowerpace.com/>

Senior Saints go Web Surfing: <http://www.entourages.com/barbs/senior.htm>

Iowa USFW Site: <http://www.usfwiowa.com/>



READING COURSE BOOK REVIEWS

Ethel Watson, Iowa USFW Reading Chairman

These cold, wintry days have made me want to stay in front of the fireplace, grab a book and a cup of hot chocolate and hibernate! Unfortunately, other obligations seem to call and put a damper on that activity. I would encourage any of you that can find the time these next few months to pick up an USFW Reading Course book and enjoy the inspiration that comes from reading it.

I have shared several books with you in past issues. Now I would like to encourage you to read **The Runaway Quilt** by Jennifer Chiaverini. This is the fourth novel in the Elm Creek Quilts series. I haven't read any of the others, but it is easy to get involved with the characters and the story line without having read the others. This book should appeal to many of our Friends' ladies since it shares a story that goes back to the Underground Railroad times when Friends were known to give assistance when needed. Join Sylvia as she searches for the meaning behind the quilts she finds hidden in her attic. Each quilt tells a story that helps her find information about her ancestors. This Pennsylvania farming community is divided by the issue of slavery from 1853-1859. It is almost a mystery as family discord, betrayal, and secrets are unveiled. I highly recommend this book.

Two Old Women by Velma Wallis is a book many of you have told me you have enjoyed. I also enjoyed reading this Alaskan Legend of "Betrayal, Courage, and Survival" very much. At first I wondered why it was on our reading list since it doesn't have a Christian message with scriptures, etc. that usually accompany our books, but then I realized that within the story, we find similarities to Joseph being abandoned by his brothers and how God made a horrible situation into one that glorified Him in the end. Also the story of the Prodigal Son fits somewhat.

In both of these situations, the age of the "heroines" is reversed. The old are thrown aside and the young have to come and ask for forgiveness of their deeds. I enjoyed the mutual respect that the two women came to have for each other. Learning that we all need others in order to survive is an important lesson. We don't go through this life alone. So, even though scriptures aren't used, this is an interesting book with good morals to be learned.

On a personal note, I especially enjoyed reading about how the women handled the mosquitoes in Alaska since we also found how terrible the mosquitoes can be in Alaska when we visited a few years ago! Iowa's mosquitoes are mild by comparison – but I guess we don't have to concern ourselves with that right now! Continue to enjoy your reading. I anticipate looking at all the wonderful new books that will be coming our way for next year! God bless!

TREASURER'S NOTES

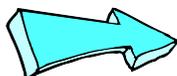
Dorothy Taylor, Iowa USFW Treasurer



I received good news from the USFW International treasurer, Adis Beeson, this week. She says that due to generous undesignated funds contributed in December they were able to fully fund all the under funded projects that are still current. Praise the Lord! That is great news.

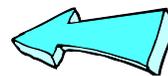
Iowa contributed some to that accomplishment. I received one generous undesignated check from a lady whose meeting no longer has a USFW, but she felt led to help out. It was a real blessing to send those funds on to USFWI, as well as regular contributions from our societies.

And the new year is starting out well. I have already received 3 checks for dues and projects for 2008. Consult your Advocate for the specifics of 2008 projects, and may God continue to bless our efforts.



USFW INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Mary Glenn Hadley, USFWI President



I am sure you are aware of the turmoil and devastation that has taken place in Kenya resulting from the apparent election fraud which followed the national elections that took place on December 27. Nearly $\frac{3}{4}$ of USFWI women are in Kenya and our hearts go out to them. The USFWI has set up an emergency fund which will be funneled through Friends United Meeting and will be administered through the FUM Office in Kisumu and Friends Theological College. We (USFWI) are advancing \$5000 on January 15 in our effort to get immediate assistance there.

It is hard for us to fathom what many are going through. Our Kenyan board member states there are more and more reports of our own Quakers being affected. She goes on to say knowing that USFWI is already doing something towards the needs in Kenya is the best thought she can think of right now. Eden Grace, in her correspondence to me on January 8, describes the situation very succinctly when she says we must act immediately to meet the needs of the vulnerable among us. There are thousands of Internally Displaced People in Western Province alone, and because of general insecurity and the total breakdown of the transportation and wholesale sectors; there is no one to feed these people. In addition, when food is available, it is at an inflated price. There was no food at Kaimosi Hospital, so she bought what they needed in Kisumu, but it was almost double what they usually budget for food. Fuel is double or triple, when available. This situation will persist for a while, and has the ability to devastate our program. Many people are now homeless. Businesses have burned. This means that not only have people lost their means of income but the community suffers as well.

Every program Friends are involved with will be impacted by this devastation. The hospital has an increased patient load due to many who have been injured, but the cost for caring for these people has gone up dramatically due to escalated costs for food and petrol. Short supply of medicines, due to the inability to travel (blockades, lack of fuel) will cause difficulties in care especially for those who are suffering from HIV/AIDS and cholera due to sanitation problems. For these same reasons FTC faces a crisis for caring for their students. Samburu and Turkana will suffer dramatically also. Orphanages, churches and schools will face the same dilemmas. Depending on the news reports there are somewhere between 250,000 to well over 500,000 people who are displaced and in need of help.

Money can be sent to treasurer Adis Beeson, 4305 Beeson Farm Road, Sophia, North Carolina 27350. We are posting an announcement on our website at www.usfwi.org and will do our best to update that as we gather information. You can also find information on <http://www.updatesonkenya.blogspot.com/> which is a blog spot Mary Kay Rehard has established. I am reminded of the verse in II Corinthians 8:14 which reads: "Right now you have plenty and can help them. Then at some other time they can share with you when you need it. In this way, everyone's needs will be met."

"Instead of criticizing yourself when you do something goofy, laugh about it!" Barbara Johnson

"The cheerful heart has a continual feast." Prov. 15:15



A NEW YEAR FOR CHRISTIAN SERVICE

By Linda Eliason, C.S. Secretary

Greetings, Ladies! I hope you received many blessings during the Christmas season and that 2008 is off to a good start for you! Unfortunately, I'm sure you are aware that 2008 is NOT off to a good start for our USFW sisters in Kenya. Although this may be emphasized elsewhere, I want to take this opportunity to encourage you to send a generous contribution to help our Kenyan sisters through this crisis. Please make your check payable to USFWI and mail it to: Adis Beeson, USFWI Treasurer, 4305 Beeson Farm Road, Sophia, NC 27350. Mark your check "Kenya relief fund". The funds will be distributed by Eden and James Grace and Ben and Jody Richmond, so we know they will go where they are most needed.

Those of you who have been knitting and crocheting may be wondering what to do with your finished projects. Deb Moyer's sister, Judy Davis, is still planning to go back to Kaimosi Hospital. Because of the violence in Kenya she had to postpone the departure date, but it is now set for Jan. 28. She will be able to take some layette materials with her. She will come back to the U.S. in April for the birth of twins in the family. She may be able to take more layettes when she returns to Kenya after that. I do not have Judy's e-mail, but you can reach her through Deb at moyerd@mahaska.org to get details.

The new Christian Service projects for 2008 are in your January-February Advocate. These include \$1,500 for the Belize School Lunch Program, \$4,000 for Kaimosi Hospital Adopt-a-Nurse and Medicine, and \$4,000 for Turkana/Samburu Mission Support. As the year progresses, I know you will give your full support to these important projects.

If you have been saving commemorative stamps from your Christmas cards and other mail, this would be a good time to send them to Quaker Stamp Project, P.O. Box 795, Mattapoisett, MA 02739. They take all U.S. and foreign stamps EXCEPT the .34 Statue of Liberty; the .37 heron and flag stamps, and the .39 flag and liberty stamps. They also accept used and unused picture postcards. More than \$50,000 has been raised so far. A portion of the profits goes toward USFW projects listed in the Advocate. May God bless you as you continue in service to Him in 2008!

"Life is like riding a bicycle. You don't fall off unless you stop pedaling." Barbara Johnson

FOR YOUR PRAYERFUL CONSIDERATION :

Margaret Stoltzfus



Is God nudging you to serve in Iowa USFW? Since Linda Garrison resigned in October, our organization needs a vice president. This position involves a 3-4 year commitment--2 years as vice president, and then 2 years as president. Leadership is such an important part of USFW's growth and development. Email me if you are feeling God's touch to serve. mgs1214@mahaska.org

Let's join in praying for these F/friends and Iowa Board members:

--Stewardship Secretary, Mary Ann Coppinger is beginning her radiation and chemotherapy treatments today, January 21.

--Our Treasurer, Dorothy Taylor's husband, Waylon, has been in the hospital in Boone with a deteriorating heart condition.

--Linda Burnett, Friendly Flashes Editor, and her husband need our prayers, too, as they deal with health issues.

--We praise God for Literature Secretary, Ethel Watson's continuing recovery from back surgery.

--Karen Bauer, Peace & Christian Concerns Secretary with her husband Stan and Judy Davis are returning to Kenya on January 28. Pray for safety and good health.



PRAY FOR PEACE

Karen Bauer, PCSC secretary

You may have guessed that my days have been filled with finding current information about Kenya. I have spoken to friends in Kenya and receive regular e-mails from people there. We had scheduled a work team in January of 2008. However, since I could not guarantee safety I cancelled the work team for Friends Bringing Hope. I am very concerned that widows and orphans who were the most vulnerable will now be suffering more. I hope to be traveling soon to evaluate the needs of these dear people.

Friends have a long standing testimony for Peace. George Fox wrote to Charles II and said of the Quakers; "We utterly deny all outward wars and strife and fightings with outward weapons, for any end or under any pretence whatsoever. And this is our testimony to the whole world. The spirit of Christ, by which we are guided, is not changeable, so as once to command us from a thing as evil and again to move unto it; and we do certainly know, and so testify to the world, that the spirit of Christ, which leads us into all Truth, will never move us to fight and war against any man with outward weapons, neither for the kingdom of Christ, nor for the kingdoms of this world."

We are heart broken for our F/friends in Kenya who are enduring this political conflict. We pray for peace and solutions that keep people whole. Please pray that the spirit of Christ, love and peace prevails.

Peace and Social Concerns USFWI has the following new projects budgeted for the 2008 year. \$3000 for Lyndale/Swift-Purscell Scholarships in Jamaica; \$3000 for Eli and Sybil Jones Scholarships in Ramallah. In these difficult economic situations, scholarships are needed in order for children to receive an education.