



# THE GRAPEVINE



A Newsletter for Presbyterian Women in the Presbytery of Northern New England

## Upcoming Events

**MAY 7-8 PW PNNE\*\* Retreat:**

*MAKING A JOYFUL NOISE TO THE LORD!*  
Hulbert Outdoor Center, in Fairlee, VT

**AUGUST 17 Coordinating Team Meeting**  
Bedford, NH

**OCTOBER 23 The New England PPG\* event,**  
"Shall We Gather by the River"  
a Multi-Cultural Celebration  
(10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.)  
First Presbyterian Church,  
Worcester, MA

\*Presbyterian Partnership Groups (Northern New England, Southern New England and Boston Presbyteries)

## Open Positions on the Coordinating Team

Do you enjoy working with lively, creative women?

Are you are ready to serve the church by representing the women throughout the Presbytery of Northern New England (VT, NH, ME and the northern tip of MA)?

If your answer is *yes*, then Coordinating Team experience is for you!

The Coordinating Team is the *connecting link* between the churches and *you* can be a part of it!

The open positions are as follows:

- (1) Co-Moderator
- (1) Historian
- (1) Liaison, VT
- (1) Co-Liaison, NH/MA

*Call Elaine Brown at 207.725.7855 and ask her about it!*

## Terms of Office

*By Rev. Nancy Donnelly, Kearsarge Community Presbyterian Church*

The Presbyterian Women's Presbytery-wide Coordinating Team (CT) is recommending changing the terms of office for the CT from three years to two years in order to make holding an office more attractive.

Three years is a long time to commit to holding an office and no one can predict what may happen. Over three years, changes may occur and what was once a reasonable commitment, becomes a burden. Knowing this, women are often reluctant to take on such a long-term obligation. The CT feels that a shorter term of office would be more attractive to potential candidates.

There can be advantages for an organization to have officers serve a second term. The CT thinks that more officers would be willing to serve a second term if the term is for only two years, thereby serving four years instead of six. In May, we will consider and vote on this at our Retreat. We would appreciate your comments.

## Presbyterial Women, Presbytery of Northern New England\*\* Newsletter: The Grapevine

Our newsletter is designed and edited by *Liz Blackman* from St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Kennebunk, ME. She was appointed to the Coordinating Team at our January 26<sup>th</sup> meeting. Liz is responsible for compiling all articles and information for The Grapevine.

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Upcoming Events for 2010

Open Positions on the Coordinating Team

Terms of Office

PW PNNE 2010 Retreat: May 7-8

Mission Displays at the Retreat

Pre-Retreat Activities

Our New Website

Remittance Forms

The Heritage Project: Interview with Melva Geores

## PW PNNE 2010 Retreat

*By Rev. Diane Hoppe Hugo*

**MAKING A JOYFUL NOISE TO THE LORD!** Come, Presbyterian Women, to the 2010 Spring Gather/Retreat!

Sing a new song to the LORD! Everyone on this earth, sing praises to the LORD!

Beautiful words from Psalm 96 and only one of 63 different references to "sing" in the Psalms!

Not only are we encouraged to sing, but so are the birds and even the trees. So my sisters, bring your tambourines and let us gather once again in May to sing together and celebrate music as worship.

Your planning team has been inspired to put together a variety of musical experiences as we come together, once again, for fellowship and inspiration. We hope to hear from area musicians bringing us their own sacred music. And, you have a part in the planning as well. Tell us what your favorite hymn is and we will bring histories and stories about those favored songs of worship, as well as sing them together.

We also invite you to let us know how music helps you in prayer and worship. Do you have a particular kind of music with which to prepare for prayer time? Or, do you have a special kind of music that soothes your soul and lifts your spirits? Let us know so that we can incorporate them into the program we are developing. We look forward to learning from you as well as offering new musical experiences.

As always, our retreat will not only be a time of learning and worship, but we will also renew our friendships and hear how other PW groups work together. We hope to see examples of your special mission projects so we can go home to our congregations filled with new ideas and excitement for God's work among us.

So in the words of 1 Corinthians 14:26: sisters, let's summarize, -- when you meet together, one will sing, another will teach, another will tell some special revelation God has given... Don't miss this wonderful opportunity to re-create, rejoice, and renew yourselves with song and musical interludes with your sisters in the faith. Be joyful and sing as you come in to worship the LORD! [Psalm 100:2]

**Where:** At the Hulbert Outdoor Center on beautiful Lake Morey in Fairlee, VT

**When:** 5 pm Friday May 7 until 2:30 pm Saturday May 8

**Price:** \$10 for the Saturday Gather includes lunch; \$75 for Friday/Saturday Retreat includes overnight stay with Friday dinner through Saturday lunch

**Registration forms will soon be mailed to the churches—around the end of March**

## Mission Displays at the Retreat

*By Bobbie Knickerbocker, Mission & Pledge coordinator*

I'm currently knitting a baby blanket for a layette for Church World Service. Due to the disaster in Haiti, CWS needs many more layettes and hygiene kits. I don't know about other states, but a tractor trailer comes to Bow Methodist Church in New Hampshire in May to pick up the "Gift of the Heart" kits. This is one of the ways women's groups respond to those in need. Perhaps your women's group has found other ways to help people in your community or other parts of the world. I hope you will share your projects with us by bringing samples or displays to our upcoming retreat.

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## Pre-Retreat Activities

*By Bobbie Knickerbocker*

Last year many of you arrived at the retreat site early, and although it was pleasant spending that time chatting it seemed an ideal time for informal activities. For those who come early this year, we have three projects in mind:

1. Paper Weaving to be framed with a poem.
2. Remembering our Heritage – Interviews of PW members.
3. Letter writing for Bread for the World.

And of course, you are free to just chat. These activities will be available throughout the retreat.

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## Our New Website

*By Anne W. Allen, Mid-Coast Presbyterian Church*

When you type [www.pwnne.wordpress.com](http://www.pwnne.wordpress.com) or [WWW.PWNNE.WORDPRESS.COM](http://WWW.PWNNE.WORDPRESS.COM) into your web browser, you will enter our new website. It's currently in the development stage so you can see how it's coming along. Add it to your "favorites"!

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## Remittance Forms

*By Bobbie Knickerbocker, Mission & Pledge coordinator*

Are you confused by the Presbyterian Women Remittance Form? We are too. Fran, our CT Treasurer, has designed a newer and better form. I will be mailing them soon to groups that have sent pledges.

## The Heritage Project

### Presbyterian Women's Stories

The Heritage Project arose from a discussion of amazing Presbyterian women that we know or have known. The goal of the PW PNNE Heritage Project is to capture the memories, wisdom, and experiences of many of the women in our Presbytery and gather these together in some format available to women throughout the Church.

We will be discussing it in more depth at our Women's Retreat, so we are introducing this exciting new venture to you with our first interview.

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### An Interview with MELVA GEORES

*By Linda Pappin and Joanna Damon*

On February 12, 2010 Linda Pappin and I, Joanna Damon, had the great pleasure of speaking with Melva Geores as a first step in the Heritage Project.

Melva's involvement with Presbyterian women (with a small "w") began when her husband Carl and she were called by the citizens of Leeds, Maine which had not enjoyed regular worship services for two generations. Carl was then appointed to Leeds by the National Board of Missions. The dilapidated church which greeted them when they arrived in 1952 was later bought for one dollar. They came to think that it had been overpriced but it was renovated in 1960. They had come from a rural community that had lost its church so they were in sympathy with the plight of the people of Leeds. Churches were organized at Leeds and Wales and later at Hartford. He was a bundle of energy and reveled in the work. He later became the second director of the Mission at the Eastward (MATE) which also included the churches at North Turner, Starks, West Mills and New Portland, North New Portland and Farmington.

Melva joined the local Ladies Circle which made aprons, quilts, and other handcrafted goods. This group became the Mother's Group. There were several young mothers and lots of children; Melva and Carl had six and other women in the group had as many or more. They held bake sales and did other things to raise money much as we all do today.

The Mother's Group merged with the United Presbyterian Women in the 1950s. Melva gives credit for this move to Ellen Blackwell. She said that Ellen encouraged the group all along the way. They were intrepid women. With a chuckle Melva told how in the 1920s the women asked the General Assembly to be allowed to form a group of their own and they were laughed at. A comment was made, "the next thing you know they'll want to be ministers."

Encouraged by Ellen, Melva attended the national "Gathering" at Purdue in the 1970s, and she says that her life was never the same after that. She was so inspired by the fellowship of so many women gathered together that although she was an introvert she took on leadership roles, including Moderator of the Presbyterian of Northern New England and later Moderator for the Presbyterian Women of the Synod of the Northeast. She served in these capacities with warmth and humor as she does everything but the effort always left her exhausted.

Melva says she also felt compelled to serve because of the great support given to the MATE churches by the women of the national church who sent clothes and helped in other ways. She felt she owed them so much.

Melva spoke to us of all the things women of the church were able to accomplish when they pooled their resources. They boycotted Nestles for selling formula in the third world; they took on racial issues and supported peace initiatives. She worries that with mission efforts being concentrated in local churches we will look inward and become more parochial and will lose an international awareness.

She praised Horizons Magazine and suggested that churches form discussion groups around the articles which would help us keep an outward focus. She called for Presbyterian women at each level to model for those following, and she stressed the importance of supporting the next generation. She also said that we should be realistic and know that the younger women we are looking for will most likely be in their 50s.

Finally, Melva described the time she has had since her husband died as a period of grace. She misses him terribly, but now that she has put everything in order she has time to think about her own life and to design her own future.