FROM THE SOUTH

Our year had its ups and downs but altogether was a good one.

We had our meeting in February with Hobey Hinchman as the Speaker, which is always the best beginning anyone could have. She spoke on “Expressing Our Faith Through Altar Guild Ministry”. Everyone fortunate enough to be there thoroughly enjoyed her inspiring talk, which was held at the Church of the Nativity in Sarasota. Eight of us from the Diocese attended the annual Meeting of Province IV at Kanuga in June and here again we had a wonderful and educational time. I just wish every member could go there as besides the gorgeous surroundings in the mountains of North Carolina there is such a feeling of peace and Holiness. Do try to do this at least once in your life!

We were delighted to have Marcia Simington and Barbara Smith installed as the Deanery Presidents of Manasota and Naples respectively. They are both doing a wonderful job.

Then we had some sad news. Maxine Kallio has been President of the Fort Myers Deanery for many years and is also the Treasurer of the entire Diocesan Altar Guild. You must all be aware of what a really conscientious job she has done and will be saddened to hear that she has to resign from these two responsibilities and lighten up on her commitments owing to her health. Fortunately, Mary Vernon from St. Michaels and All Angels is taking over her job as Deanery President and will be installed at our meeting at St. Marks in Venice in February. As Mary is also a Province IV officer we are extremely lucky to have someone like her follow in Maxine’s footsteps.

Now the one person we need for Venice we pray

FROM THE NORTH

This January is the half way mark for my time as your representative at the diocesan level. Without much of as job description, it took me a whole year (after fretting with personal challenges of moving and post hurricane damage to our former beach residence)to really apply myself to you, my sisters in this Altar Guild ministry. But, what an exciting experience it has become-visiting the different churches, attending the worship committee meetings for the annual Diocesan Convention, traveling to Kanuga for Province IV Altar Guild meetings and workshops and being an ex-officio member of the ECW. I have learned we are in the same ministry but certainly function extremely well as independent and resourceful guilds, regardless of the number of volunteers or the accommodations of the sacristy. I am humbled by all of you. I have also learned the advantage to having a deanery representative to help bring together AG groups for a sharing time once a year on a smaller scale than the annual meeting. These are best held in the fall. Each guild has so much to offer and is an important link in our shared ministry.

This past June Thelma and I attended the Province IV Altar Guild meeting at Kanuga, an oasis for the spirit, camaraderie, ideas and new friends. Once again the program was filled with interesting, well prepared and knowledgeable speakers, new ideas and positive reinforcement of Altar Guild ministry. The topic of our keynote speaker, The Rev. S. Albert Kennington, rector of Trinity Episcopal Church, Mobile, Alabama, was “Why We Use What We Use In Our Worship”, which he presented in a delightful and humorous manner. His talk given during on two different mornings had four main topics-Place, Space, Furniture and Vessels-plus cloth and ornaments from 1st century through the
will come forward in the near future. Ann and I are also going into what should be the final year of our service and though I think Ann is still hale and hearty, I don’t feel that I am, so, Please prayerfully consider taking over this wonderful job either in the North or the South. We can both attest to the many pleasures one gets from knowing so many people in so many walks of life who come together as Altar Guild members. Some of our Churches have only one, two or three members serving on the Altar Guild and others have about sixty, so our Diocese stretching from Brooksville to Marco Island is a very diverse area. We think of you in our prayers and Bless you as you maintain your steady Altar Guild service.

Thelma

NEED A RIDE TO NAGA?

Money IS available for 4 Altar Guild members, two from the south and two from the north, for transportation costs to the National Altar Guild meeting which runs concurrent to the triennial meeting in Columbus, Ohio, this June. Reimbursement from the treasurer is given after submitting a copy of your proof of ticket purchase. Our new treasurer is Peg Curlin of St. John’s in Tampa. Contact Thelma Wallis (twallis1206@aol.com or phone 941-776-9169) or Ann Neller (phone 727 443-2580 or uconnnelle@msn.com) for verification of funds available and Peg’s address.

UP COMING MEETINGS

February 11 Believe in a Miracle This is filled, but look for the 2007 date Scheduled for Manatee Convention Ctr.

February 25 Diocesan AG meeting, South @ St. Marks, Venice Watch for your invitations!

March 4 Diocesan AG meeting, North @ St. Mary’s, Dade City Watch for your invitations

June 5-7 Province IV AG meeting @ Kanuga-forms available @ AG meeting

June 14-20 National Altar Guild meeting –see form on back page
BASIC HURRICANE ASSISTANCE NEEDED
Jan Smith, Province IV Representative

We have received tremendous response in our efforts to assist the churches destroyed by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita on the Gulf Coast. In Katrina alone, six churches were destroyed with six others sustaining heavy damage. Thank you for everything you have donated to our altar guild family in need.

However, the following note came in Barbara Gent’s mail and she asked me to pass it on...

“1. I am hoping that the folks behind the linen project for Mississippi and Louisiana churches will realize before they begin distributing them that in most places there is no way to care for the linens once they are out there. The people who make up the involved congregations are struggling to meet their most basic needs. They don’t need to add laundering to the list.”

Let’s remember that for the Eucharistic gathering of Christians around a table covered with a table covered with a clean white cloth, bread and a cup of wine are all that is important, not the “traditional appointments” we know so well. Linens are not needed to celebrate the Eucharist in unusual situations. Hurricanes Katrina and Rita have certainly confronted us with unusual situations—just the sort the Presiding Bishop John Allin had in mind when he approved the substitution of paper for Eucharistic linens. Paper towels and purifiers are easily made and can be burned after use.

Let’s not get caught up by “the way we have always done it.” As Hymn number 304 says, “We come with joy to meet our Lord, to find our community of love in Christ’s communion bread.” We prepare for that meeting as well as we can wherever we are.

Copied from EPISTLE, Autumn, 2005

IN THE WAKE OF HURRICANE KATRINA

It is in the spirit of recognizing the importance of protecting our church heritage that we reprint, “Preserving Your Parish Heritage,” by Mike Thomas, Diocese of Virginia, which first appeared in the EPISTLE, Spring, 2004, Issue 134.

“As a friend of the National Altar Association, I have been asked to comment on personal property damage or loss. In recent months there have been catastrophic losses at churches, schools and private homes. What did they have in common? They did not have accurate and timely inventory of property. A first line of defense in the stewardship of church property is the altar guild’s inventory. It can play a major role in assuring parishioners that this kind of tragedy will not happen to them.

Let’s look at several steps to help organize the inventory process.

1. Why should the inventory be kept? The contents of your parish and social hall have great accumulated value as “personal property.” Just as you protect your church buildings, it is extremely important to recognize and protect the value of personal property in them. In the event of loss or destruction, an inventory helps to substantiate the existence of items, and, importantly, the cost to replace them.

2. Where should the inventory be kept? Two copies of this inventory should always be maintained. One should be a working copy, kept at the church with additions and deletions made as necessary. A master copy must be kept at another location, preferably a safe deposit box. The master copy should be updated from the working copy.

3. How often should an inventory be reviewed and modified? At least once a year.

4. What changes in insurance coverage should be considered after the inventory is done? After completing the inventory, consideration should be given to revising the content(s) used in determining the limit of your property insurance. (Remember that an accurate assessment of value is the best way to assure that your parish will be adequately compensated in the event of loss.)

5. How can replacement value of this property be accurately estimated? Below is a list of organizations which may be helpful:
* American Society of Appraisers An organization of appraisal professionals; its website provides ability to locate hundreds of appraisers by specialty (books, manuscripts, textiles, and other fine arts) by state www.appraisers.org
* Industrial Appraisal Company A company which can appraise just about anything: one of its sites features House of Worship and associated Fine Arts (sculpture, tapestries, art glass and stained windows and antiques; collections and precious unique pieces) www.indappr.com
Gold, silver and bronze (liturgical and secular); Gems and Jewelry; Stone carvings; Ornamental woodwork; Ornamental marble work (fonts, plaques, some columns); Music library; Documents, books and archives; Decorative Painting (murals and stenciling)

7. What additional steps can altar guilds take to ensure a good record of current items? In addition to your inventory master copy, a photographic or video graphic record should be kept of rare, unique or antique items, those items of value already described.

The altar guild ministry to the Church is invaluable. Your kind care as faithful stewards of our past is our connection to the future. +

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NAGA IN COLUMBUS, OHIO, JUNE 14-20, 2006
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