‘ALTARGRAM’ REVIVED

If you haven’t seen the ‘Altargram’ in over a year, here’s why:

In 2008 our faithful Editor, Ann Neller, decided to retire from publishing this document. Ann served as President-North for several years, and has been a long-time and loyal member of the Altar Guild at Church of the Ascension, Clearwater. THANKS and KUDOS to Ann for all that she has done for the Diocesan Altar Guild over many years. She has more time to enjoy retirement with her husband, visit family & friends, travel, and pursue her many other interests.

The DAG Board is revising ‘Altargram’ as a Board project and hopes to be able to publish four issues each year (January, April, July, and October). Deadline will be the last day of the preceding month (December, March, June, and September). We will need everyone’s help in order to accomplish this goal! Please keep us informed of upcoming meetings, special events, etc. Articles on any topic of interest to Altar Guild members will be gratefully accepted. See Page 4 for contact information for Board members.

ONE copy of the ‘Altargram’ is mailed to the Altar Guild of each parish in the Diocese with request that it be posted in the Altar Guild Sacristy. We will also e-mail a copy to at least one AG representative from each parish with the request that they then e-mail it to as many members of their Altar Guild as possible. If you would like to receive a copy by e-mail, send your request by e-mail to pcurlin@verizon.net.

SUBMIT ARTICLES by e-mail to any Board member, or mail hard copy to: Altargram Post Office Box 18938 Tampa, FL 33679-8938

“FREE MARKET” a Big Success

At Diocesan Convention, your DAG held a “free market” at its booth. Several altar guilds and some individual clergy had donated items in good condition that were no longer being used by their churches. We had vestments, crosses, cruets, banners, and even an altar complete with custom fair linen. All items were “free to a good home” and almost everything found a loving new home. Many items went to Hispanic ministries, both within the Diocese and in other countries. We plan to continue this recycling project, so be on the lookout for items to donate next year!

“HEADS UP” on ANNUAL MEETINGS

(See Page 4 for dates and locations)

The speaker for both meetings will be Dianne Walters from Enterprise, AL. Dianne’s life was greatly affected by Hurricane Katrina. “Can You Afford to Lose It All?” helps churches document what they have and prepare for possible damage from hurricanes or other natural disasters. She has presented her program to many churches in the Gulf of Mexico region as well as at the 2006 Triennial Convention of Episcopal Church Women in Columbus, Ohio. Dianne is active in Province IV Altar Guild and has held several positions on the National Altar Guild, as well as regionally. She is a popular program presenter – funny, creative, and with a talk that pertains to all of us here in the Diocese of SW Florida. (Yes, this program should be of interest and importance to clergy as well as altar guilds.)

* * * * * * * * * *

2009 Province IV Altar Guild Conference
Kanuga Conference Center
Hendersonville, NC
(May 31 – June 3, 2009)

The Diocese of Southwest Florida was well-represented at the Conference by five AG members: Carol Ann Brumbach from St. Luke’s, Fort Myers; Peggy Curlin from St. John’s, Tampa; Sarah Hill from St. Peter’s Cathedral, St. Petersburg; and Betty Modys and Mary Vernon from St. Michael & All Angels, Sanibel. At its meeting in March 2009, the DAG Board had voted to assist four persons with a small stipend towards Conference expenses, with members of the Board having priority as they are in the best position to report back to the greatest number of members. As only three Board members were able to attend, the remaining stipend was split between Mary Vernon and Betty Modys. Mary is the AG Deanery Director for the Fort Myers Deanery and Betty is her “understudy”.

Altargram 1
Saturday I left for Tampa to stay overnight in Tampa with Peggy Curlin, Treasurer of the DAG. Sarah Hill, President-North, drove over from St. Petersburg early (6:30 a.m.) Sunday morning to start our 11-hour drive (including rest & lunch stops) to Kanuga.

Sunday, May 31 - Upon arrival we met up with Mary Vernon and Betty Modys (who went by plane) at Kanuga’s Lakeside Inn. We arrived at 5:30 p.m. for registration, just in time for dinner – missed the opening reception. Went to opening Eucharist at 7:30 p.m. at the Chapel of the Transfiguration, a beautiful pine chapel nestled among towering trees. The Very Rev. Martha J. Horne presiding, The Rev. James Parks assisting, with Dr. Carl Gilmer as organist. After mass the Conference speakers were introduced. The evening concluded with refreshments and a video “Premier” of last year’s meeting highlights, and time to get to know others in attendance. Sarah, Peggy, and I had a great cabin with each of us having our own room. It was within walking distance of the Inn and meeting rooms. Mary and Betty stayed in the Lakeside Inn.

Monday, June 1 – Morning Prayer at 7:30 a.m. at the outdoor Lakeside Chapel, with Rev. Belinda Wright-Snyder presiding. The Chapel faces a large white cross on the other side of the lake. After MP, there was a Disposition of Sacred Linens. Breakfast was then served, followed by a general session. The theme of the Conference was “Hospitality and Service.” Keynote speaker The Very Rev. Martha J. Horne cited various Biblical texts in reference to hospitality. “The ministry of tending the altars of our church always calls to mind the practices of hospitality and service!” She stressed the importance of hospitality in the early church, particularly as practiced by the “Desert Fathers: who welcome strangers as honored guests. The Rule of St. Benedict states: “Let all guests who arrive be received as Christ, for He will say, ‘I was a stranger and you took me in.’” (Matthew 25:35)”. Later in the morning we went to historic St. James' Church, Hendersonville, where we were treated to as tour of the bell tower, a demonstration of change ringing. Noonday service, a wonderful lunch, tour of their beautiful church and talk on the stained glass windows, plus a visit to their sacristies (one for Clergy, one for Altar Guild, one for other persons assisting in the services). Then free time to visit shops and galleries in historic downtown Hendersonville. After dinner, a workshop called “Rector Discretionary Fun” (yes, FUN, not FUND).

Tuesday, June 2 – Morning Prayer in the Chapel of the Transfiguration, breakfast, then a workshop on “Stitching on Paper” – an old craft that comes from the Netherlands. We made beautiful note cards using the various patterns they provided. The annual Business Meeting was held in the afternoon. The ECW and Altar Guild enjoyed a joint Hospitality Hour, also attended by the Province IV Bishops (also meeting at Kanuga at that time). The closing Eucharist was presided over by The Very Rev. Martha Horne, assisted by The Rev. Charles Lovett Keyser, The Rev. Belinda Wright-Snyder, and The Rev. James Parks. The Right Rev. Samuel Johnson Howard, Bishop of Florida, installed the new Province IV Altar Guild officers for the 2009-2012 term. After hours, we learned by having fun – AG Bingo, puzzles, sharing of projects, etc.

Wednesday, June 3 – Breakfast and farewells, with wishes for safe travel and hopes that everyone will return next year.

JOURNEY TO KANUGA – FIRST TIME

By Carol Ann Brumbach

For those who have never been to Kanuga, it is an absolutely beautiful location! Temperatures ranged from 60 at night to 79 in the daytime (although others tell me it can be much colder or much warmer). If you have an opportunity to go next year, you won’t be disappointed. It is a wonderful experience to meet and share experiences with Altar Guild members from Province IV (AL, GA, FL, KY, NC, MS, SC, TN, and part of LA).

General Convention of the Episcopal Church and National Altar Guild Convention

Anaheim, California
(July 8 – 17, 2009)

At its meeting in March 2009, the DAG Board voted to assist Marietta Sophie Loundon with a small “scholarship” to help her attend General Convention as an exhibitor. Marietta is the talented creator of our Bishop’s beautiful silver and cloisonné crosier, and we wanted persons outside of Florida to become aware of the extraordinary talent God has given her. The Board also voted to bestow another small scholarship to help one Altar Guild member with expenses involved in attending the triennial National Altar Guild (NAGA) Conference. This was awarded to Millicent Muir Grey from St. James’ Episcopal Church, Port Charlotte. She then requested that she be allowed to share it with Amy Ricketts, also from St. James. Marietta and Millicent both submitted interesting reports.
**A LIFE-CHANGING EXPERIENCE**

I was told that going to general convention would be a life changing experience. I am here to report a resounding YES!!!

Also, to thank the Altar Guild for their help and encouragement in getting me there.

I had no idea what I was in for; in fact I had first thought this was going to be a four or five day junket ... maybe several thousand people attending. Reading about the General Convention online was an eye opening experience -- not only was this going to be quite a bit longer than four or five days but also attended by approximately 10,000 people. But all around me, Altar Guild members, staff at the Diocesan office, family and friends all urged me on with utter faith that I could do this.

With all your encouragement I just kept putting one foot in front of the other and attending to each task as it presented itself. Every once in awhile I would stop and think of what I was actually preparing to do. This was not a good thing. Thinking of the larger picture caused waves of fear and doubt that almost paralyzed me! What had I gotten myself into? God would then nudge me a bit, reminding me to just keep my eyes fixed on what needed to be done in the day. Finally, ten days before I was to fly out to California, I had all boxes packed and ready to ship. Things became real the moment I shipped those boxes out to Anaheim. No turning back now!

On July 5th I flew out. My flight had one stop in Denver and it was there that I began to feel a part of something really big. I was going to the General Convention of the Episcopal Church! While waiting at the Denver airport I looked around the waiting area trying to spy a fellow Episcopalian. I did not have to look far. I approached one couple and asked them if they were going to Anaheim for convention, and about a dozen people answered, “Yes!”

That was the beginning of a feeling that continued throughout my time I was in California. I began to see my church as not just a building in Florida, but rather a very large family scattered throughout the world. It seemed unimaginably large in scope and yet intimately within reach.

My first visit to the exhibition hall was a bit overwhelming, so I kicked into the “one task at a time mode” and two days later had my booth all set up and ready to go. I had no idea of how my stuff would be received and was very nervous I would not have the energy to be in that booth for ten days straight. The only time I took off from tending my booth was to go over to the Altar Guild convention to give a talk! My only regret is I had so little time to meet the ladies attending the Altar Guild convention. I do want to express my gratitude at being given an opportunity to spread the word about what I am doing. I need as much exposure as possible to secure commissions for further work. Speaking to the Altar Guild at Convention allowed me to get the word out on a national level! Thank you!

In the exhibition hall I got to meet so many wonderful people. I was amazed at the diversity of our church. It was also incredible to find myself joking with the Past Presiding Bishop and many other people in purple!

The debut of my work exceeded my expectations. I was told I was the only person in the United States practicing traditional silversmithing and cloisonné techniques! I also had many people very interested in future projects, though I did not secure any solid commissions. I felt this trip was more about planting the seeds than reaping the harvest.

Since returning to Florida, I have been very busy putting together a website and also following up on the many connections I made in California. Please take a look at the website, [www.ecclesiasticsilver.com](http://www.ecclesiasticsilver.com), and let me know what you think!

Now the challenging time, having faith in what I do and the One who brought me to it. I have stepped up to bat and now wait on God to throw out the first pitch. Please keep your eyes open for anyone who might be in need of a new chalice or any other form of altar ware. At Convention I got to see the products from some of our largest sources of liturgical supplies. I was amazed to see manufactured goods cost the almost the same as my hand-crafted pieces. I would be very grateful for any leads for future commissions!

Thank you again for your financial support and continued encouragement. This whole adventure began with a seemingly small request from an Altar Guild member, Thelma Wallis, asking, “Would you be interested ....”

In Gratitude,

Marietta Sophie Loudon

---

**CALIFORNIA MEMORIES**

*By Millicent Muir Grey*

Amy and I had such a wonderful experience, and I was pleased to discover I already knew several people from conferences I had attended at Kanuga. NAGA takes care of altar guild functions at the General Convention of the Episcopal Church. The logistics involved in preparing for daily Eucharist for 3,000 to 7,000 communicants are amazing. Hobey Hinchman (Past-President of NAGA) was in charge of the Altar Guild. She was constantly on the move making sure that everything was in order. We all had stations that we were responsible for -- we had to check and double-check everything. I often found myself literally running to keep up, as her assistant walks really fast and the stations were far apart. At the completion of Eucharist, we cleaned everything up and got ready for the next day.

We were fortunate to be able to attend all the workshops and also to meet many Bishops. The installation of the new officers of the National Altar Guild was a moving service. Before the ceremony I went around looking at all the linens, which were very impressive. It was a very lovely sight as Bishops, Priests and Deacons from many parts of the world marched into the Church to attend services. After the blessing of the elements, the Deacons officiated at the various stations. Members of the Altar Guild wore white and navy blue aprons and were the epitome of efficiency.

The next Convention will be held in 2012 at Indianapolis. I do pray that my life will be spared to attend this soul-filling event with other members of the Altar Guild. Thanks again for the wonderful experience which I will never forget.
DATES TO REMEMBER:

Saturday, November 7, 2009 (9 AM – 1 PM)
*Fort Myers Deanery Altar Guild Meeting*
St. Hilary’s Episcopal Church  
5011 McGregor Boulevard  
Fort Myers, FL 33901-8840

Saturday, February 27, 2010
*Southern Annual Meeting - Diocesan Altar Guild*
St. Luke’s Episcopal Church  
2653 Cleveland Avenue  
Fort Myers, FL 33901-5898

Saturday, March 6, 2010
*Northern Annual Meeting - Diocesan Altar Guild*
St. John the Divine Episcopal Church  
705 - 9th Street SE  
Ruskin, FL 33570

Sunday, June 6, 2010 to Wednesday, June 9, 2010
*Province IV Altar Guild Conference & Workshop*
Kanuga Conference Center  
Hendersonville, NC

PLEASE POST ‘ALTARGRAM’ IN YOUR ALTAR GUILD SACRISTY

---

PROPOSED Bilingual Altar Guild Training in Jan. or Feb. 2010 in the Tampa area.

Please contact Sarah Hill by December 31, 2009 if you are interested in attending (or assisting with training, particularly if fluent in Spanish).

---

**DAG Officers & Board**

Sarah Hill  
President-North  
sarah_hill@hotmail.com  
727-525-8340

Thelma Wallis, Secretary  
twallis1205@aol.com  
941-776-9169

Marcia Simington  
Manasota Deanery Dir.  
marciae.simington@gmail.com  
941-753-2457

Nancy Shields  
Naples Deanery Dir.  
fairford8300@embarqmail.com  
239-417-8121

Florence Holden  
Clearwater Deanery Dir.  
fholden01@gmail.com  
727-992-4521

Carol Ann Brumbach  
President-South  
cabrumbach@gmail.com  
239-481-5410

Peggy Curlin, Treasurer  
pcurlin@verizon.net  
813-287-0176

Mary Vernon  
Fort Myers Deanery Dir.  
(no e-mail)  
239-446-9252

Donna Hoffman  
St. Pete. Deanery Dir.  
donnahoff42@aol.com  
727-367-9227

VACANT  
Tampa Deanery Dir.

---

Altargram

Post Office Box 18938  
Tampa, FL 33679-8938

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED