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*Monthly newspaper and website covering faith in action throughout the Inland Northwest
online in color at www.thefigtree.org*

Chance encounter changes lives

By Josiah Brown

Meeting Sirirat Pusurinkham from Thailand changed Nancy Cabe’s life. What started as a chance encounter in Louisville, Ky., has evolved into a 14-year friendship and a ministry with women and orphans in Thailand.

While sightseeing before a Presbyterian Women’s Churchwide Gathering in 1997, Nancy asked a stranger to take her picture next to a horse. Little did she know she would encounter this stranger several more times at the conference and at her hotel.

This stranger was Sirirat, a recent graduate of San Francisco Theological Seminary, who was returning home to Thailand to be a pastor.

Over the course of their conversations, Nancy began to learn about child prostitution, which was the focus of Sirirat’s doctoral dissertation. Learning that there were more than 800,000 child prostitutes in Thailand tugged at Nancy’s heart.

After running into Sirirat four times during the conference, Nancy realized “God was bopping her on the head to do something.” Sirirat started sending cross-stitching from Thailand, which Nancy sells at the



Nancy McCabe and Sirirat Pusurinkham share concern about orphans in Thailand.

Jubilee International Marketplace at First Presbyterian Church in Spokane each year.

That first couple of years Nancy received small boxes of cross stitching and was delighted to make a few hundred dollars, but now she receives crates full of it and can raise more than \$2,000 at the sale.

For Nancy, this is her way to address the problem of prostitution in Thailand. Because the women in Sirirat’s community can now make a little money through sewing, they don’t have to resort to selling their bodies.

Being the chair of the mission committee at First Presbyterian Church at the time, Nancy was also able to put Sirirat’s project into the church’s mission’s budget. The next year Sirirat made her first trip to Spokane to report to the committee on her ministry.

During Sirirat’s second trip to Spokane, she mentioned she was dreaming of opening an orphanage to take care of six children, who had been orphaned by AIDS. Hearing Sirirat’s estimate that it would cost only \$5,000, Nancy said, “Let’s go find some money.”

The orphanage, which ended up costing \$34,000 dollars, was
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‘All Hands on Deck’

Alliance celebrates media literacy

The Northwest Alliance for Responsible Media (NW-ARM) will hold its annual membership drive and celebration of media literacy efforts in the region, “All Hands on Deck,” 7 p.m., Thursday, Nov. 3, at KSPS Public Television, 3911 Regal St.

At the event, NW-ARM will present the 2011 Bill Niggemeyer Award for Media Excellence to Don Higgins of the West Central Community Center, Ted McGregor of The Inlander and Karen Michaelson of Tincan.

The event will also feature speakers addressing ways to improve the quality of mass media

in the community and the region.

They discuss media literacy issues related to race, drugs and alcohol, money and politics, cyber-bullying, body image, net neutrality, peace journalism, stories omitted, masculinity and independent media, looking at problems and good practices.

The award is named for Bill Niggemeyer, an educator and founding member of the NW-ARM, a thoughtful, relentless peacemaker, and a man with a drive to improve the community. The award is presented annually to community members committed to promoting awareness of and

change for media literacy and media responsibility, said John Caputo, director of NW-ARM.

Don, who recently retired as executive director of the West Central Community Center, has worked in his career to address effects of poverty on children, working on programs to assist the social and economic revitalization of low-income families. He helped develop NW-ARM and served on its board.

Ted earned a master’s in journalism from the University of Missouri-Columbia, creating a business plan for an alternative weekly hometown newspaper, *The Pacific Northwest Inlander*. He launched *The Inlander* in 1993, publishing a news, arts, commentary and events.

Karen is founder and executive director of Tincan, a nonprofit that uses information technology and interactive media for education and community development, including work with at-risk teens and adults in entrepreneurship and e-commerce.

For information, call 313-3567 or visit www.nwresponsiblemedia.org.

Associate editor retires, will assist as volunteer

Among announcements of changes this month at The Fig Tree is the retirement of associate editor Yvonne Lopez-Morton as of Dec. 23.

Yvonne said she will be focusing on some family priorities and on her ongoing volunteer commitments.

“I am not walking away from The Fig Tree. I started my affiliation years ago as a volunteer and will continue helping and supporting this community resource as you move into the future,” she explained.

“I will continue to write and to assist with the March benefit events as a volunteer,” she said.

“My two-and-a-half years as associate editor working part time with The Fig Tree have been rewarding and have nurtured and reinforced my passion and lifelong commitment to both journalism and social justice,” she commented. “It has been an incredible way to end my long career.”

Yvonne said that her time working with The Fig Tree has taught her to see the community’s possibilities from a perspective of “the good work” of individuals, congregations, faiths and organizations that value and respect everyone.

Fig Tree editor Mary Stamp said that Yvonne has been “an asset in building the base of support, in interacting with staff and volunteers, and in providing quality editorial content. We appreciate we that she remains committed to sharing her unique skills with us and to continuing to assist us as a volunteer,” she said.

For information, call 535-4112 or email yvonne@thefigtree.org.

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