

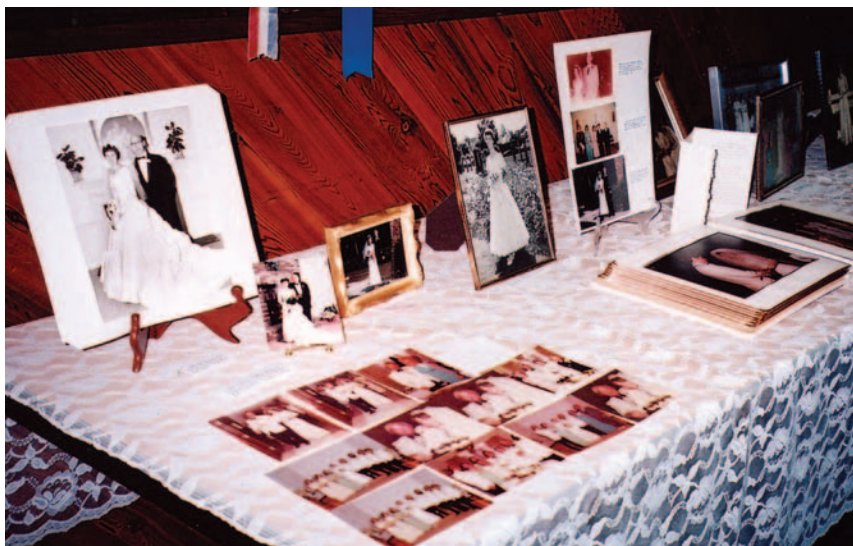
Celebrating the Past to Benefit the Future



BY SHARON DUNNE GILLIES

When Port Orange Presbyterian Church (POPC) in Port Orange, Florida, decided to collect money for the 2006 Birthday Offering, PW member Madelyn Beers looked to the past—not using ideas from the past, but celebrating the group members’ pasts. Asking women from her church to loan their wedding dresses to her for a day, she planned a luncheon for May 13, 2006, themed “Elegance of Yesteryear.”

Madelyn invited teenaged girls from the congregation to model some of the dresses and young men from Embry Riddle Navy Reserve Officers’ Training Corps (ROTC) to serve as the models’ escorts. Inviting not only women from POPC, but also their sister churches of Westminster-by-the-Sea, United Presbyterian Church and Daytona Beach Episcopal Church, she brought together more than 100 women. The women enjoyed lunch while viewing 22 vintage or heirloom bridal, mother-of-the-bride and bridesmaid dresses. In addition to hearing details about the fabrics, construction and design trends that went into each dress, they heard details about each others’ wedding celebrations, such as locations, dates and honeymoons. Additional dresses, which were particularly small or delicate, served as decorations along with hope chests, crocheted and embroidered dowry items, a quilt with a double wedding ring pattern and wedding photo albums.



Photos courtesy of Madelyn Beers

Attendees shared their wedding memories and displayed vintage wedding photos.

Following the reminiscing, Port Orange’s PW Moderator Carolyn Horner gave brief descriptions of the mission projects that would receive money from their donation to the Birthday Offering. Attendees placed donations into baskets on their tables, giving more than \$800 to the 2006 Birthday Offering. More than just a successful fundraiser, the event offered the opportunity for fellowship among Port Orange’s PW group, between sister churches and with young adult women from Port Orange.

Sharon Dunne Gillies is associate editor for Presbyterian Women.



Leanne Pohill, director of the bell choir, with an escort from the Embry Riddle Navy Reserve Officers’ Training Corps (ROTC)

Share your event ideas with Presbyterian Women! If your PW group had a memorable event, send details to Cheri Harper, 100 Witherspoon Street, Louisville, KY 40202-1396; charper@ctr.pcusa.org. Be sure to include specifics, such as date, location and reason for the event, along with your contact information.