



## A LINKS Birthday Surprise

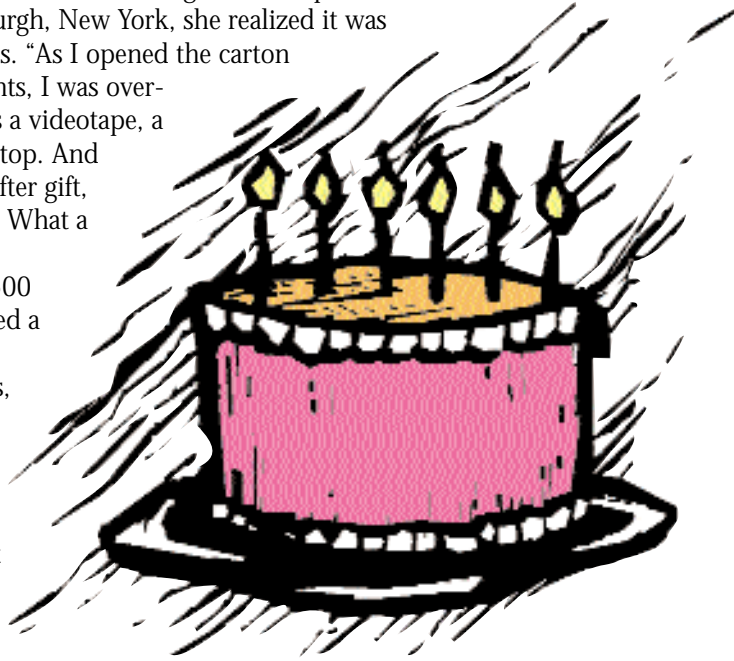
“For...for me?” Gladys Zahner stammered, as the mailcarrier handed her a large parcel. “What in the world could this be!” she wondered.

Closing the door, Gladys hurried to her dining table and put the box down. Noting the postmark of Plattsburgh, New York, she realized it was from one of her LINKS churches. “As I opened the carton and began to remove the contents, I was overwhelmed,” she says. “There was a videotape, a birthday banner, and a card on top. And then I pulled out gift after gift after gift, each one individually wrapped. What a wonderful birthday surprise!”

The Plattsburgh church—1,500 hundred miles away—had staged a birthday party for Mrs. Zahner, complete with a biography, gifts, and cake, and then videoed the event. “Imagine my amazement,” Gladys says, “after the congregation lit and blew out the candles and prepared to cut it, the NMI president lifted the top right off the cake. And inside was a cake mix. That’s right, the cake was fake, just a box covered with icing.”

That cake mix was part of the gifts the retired missionary unwrapped. To add to her birthday cheer, a lady in Gladys’s church in Raymore, Missouri, baked the cake for her and served it during another celebration with the local congregation.

“I’m so grateful for my LINKS family, which has grown over the years,” Gladys says. “I will always cherish the many cards, notes, gifts, prayers, and especially this birthday surprise.”



**Wes Eby • Mission Education Coordinator**