



# SWUWWorld

*Women Helping Women  
Lighting the Way to Possibilities*

Newsletter of:

## Southwest UU Women

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### PRESIDENT'S COLUMN:

It really has been an exciting experience to be working to develop the new, improved SWUW. Now we are both a non-profit corporation in the State of Texas and officially approved as such by the IRS.

#### SWUW TAKES RESPONSIBILITY

SWUW has taken on all the major responsibility for the annual conferences. We now have all the financial responsibility, we have the insurance to cover our profits and expenses from disaster (as in closed airports due to weather or hotels burning etc.), we make the guarantee to the hotel and we act as registrar.

This past year, our heartfelt thanks go to ELIZABETH MULLER of Oklahoma City. She took on the challenge of being the first conference under the new system. Neither of us dreamed how many decisions would have to be made to cover all the details -- it least one decision a day it seems! She has been a real champion in this effort. PLUS, she has agreed to be the Board of Directors member for conferences next year in order to pass her knowledge on to the next convener. SO THANKS ELIZABETH.

Please consider your area for hosting the next conference, or for a year or more from now. See the article on hosting a conference in this newsletter. It will be easier than ever to accomplish putting it on. Being on the planning committee of one of these events is one of the ways SWUW gives you education in leadership. From being the co-convener to setting the signs out, everyone learns a lot working for a great SWUW conference.

#### WHY I LOVE TO GO TO CONFERENCE

I sure hope you are planning on coming to Oklahoma City this January 30, 31 and February 1, 2004. The word is out. The previews make us believe this will be one of the best!

Truly, I look forward to the conferences every year. They really recharge my batteries. There are so many opportunities to experience and to express our spirituality. Here are wonderful new women to meet, each one warm, open and giving. We develop many new friendships and take our old friendships to a higher level. Friendship is also part of spirituality.

The knowledge of knowing all these women support us and our efforts, and that they are all on our side is fulfilling and embracing.

*And the food is good, too!!*

Please consider coming to OKC and stop me to say hello. I'll see you there!

Your President,  
Janet Martinique

For remaining silent when a single voice would have made a difference...

For each time that our fears have made us rigid and inaccessible...

For each time that we have struck out in anger without just cause...

For each time that our greed has blinded us to the needs of others...

For the selfishness which sets us apart and alone...

For falling short of the admonitions of the spirit...

For losing sight of our unity...

For those and for so many acts both evident and subtle which have fueled the illusion of separateness...

We forgive ourselves and each other; we begin again in love.

Adapted from  
Robert Eiler-Isaacs

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## A Plea from your Membership Coordinator

Want to continue receiving the newsletter?

Gino Kennedy

Membership Coordinator

We hate it when you don't get the newsletter, now called the SWUWorld.

We hate it when you don't get announcements we may have sent out.

We hate it when don't get the Annual Women's Conference Brochure.

Yet all of these things happen to a few of you each time we send material out. For example, we had 25 of the last-sent newsletter returned with notes from the postal carriers saying "not deliverable as addressed" or "attempted, not known." We had almost 50 of the e-mailed copies returned as undeliverable.

Using our local contacts we were able to get many corrections of addresses. By using lists of these attending SWUUSI and SWUUC Conferences, we have corrected even more, but at present we still have a number of women whom we haven't been able to get up-dated snail or e-mail addresses.

If you move, please send your new address to me at [kennedy@tarleton.edu](mailto:kennedy@tarleton.edu).

If you change carriers please send your new e-mail address to me. [See above address]

Won't you volunteer to be the person in your congregation who will keep addresses (and in a few cases, names) corrected? We especially need someone in:

- UU Church, Corpus Christi,
- Dallas 1st U Church,
- Emerson - Houston,
- 1st UU Church - Houston,
- both congregations in Kerrville,
- Community UU Church, Plano,
- Hope UU Church, Tulsa,

I prefer someone who has e-mail capabilities. It makes it so much easier and faster to communicate this way.

If you are volunteering, please send your name and congregation affiliation to me at

[kennedy@tarleton.edu](mailto:kennedy@tarleton.edu)

or to Gino Kennedy

1350 W. Melissa Dr.

Stephenville, TX 76401.

Note to Churches that send in group renewals: We need the e-mail address of everyone for whom you send in dues as well as their street address and phone number.

*Happy Holidays and be gentle to our earth.*

\*\*\*\*\*

If it is language that makes us human, one half of language is to listen.



## **Trip to Haiti June 1<sup>st</sup>**

Dear SWUW Members—

We are looking for members to go on a trip to Haiti on June 1<sup>st</sup> of 2004 to visit our village bank in the city of Les Cayes (pronounced lü KT-yü). The trip costs are estimated to be \$2,000. Twenty percent of this amount or \$400 will be required by March 15<sup>th</sup> as a down payment to hold your place. Covered in the cost will be air fare, ground transportation, lodging and food. FINCA will organize and lead the tour. Our lodging will be in a small resort hotel on an island off Haiti that FINCA has located. It is very clean with hot water and good food all of which is covered in the cost of the week long trip. We will fly into Port Au Prince, the capital, and then take a small shuttle flight to Les Cayes where our village bank is located. The shuttle flight provides a great view of the island.

We will go to a meeting of the village bank so that we get to meet the women whom we are assisting and get to know their environment. This will be a wonderful educational opportunity not only for those ten women who go on the trip, but for the entire organization as we hope the travelers will chronicle their journey and bring the story back to the rest of us. To that end, we are especially looking for travelers with the following skills: videographers, photographers, and writers and speakers of French as that is the language of Haiti. We are also looking for women with professional

backgrounds such as education, agriculture, social work and nursing who can offer the Haitians assistance as well as providing elucidating commentary and analysis of the Haitian situation and what the United States could and should be doing there.

For those of you who are new to this SWUW project, we began a village bank there several years ago with an initial investment of \$5,000. This provides enough for 50 start up loans to women. These loans are repaid—usually within six months—with interest and then can be reloaned to other women while, at the same time, through the interest the principle is growing which is also to the benefit of the village because the bank itself can become self-sufficient. Each loan further requires that the woman borrower retain a certain percentage in savings in the bank which grows the capital of the bank as well as the woman's savings.

Micro lending has proven to be a very effective means of helping the poor. First, it goes to women and they have shown over the years that they invest their money and savings in the education and health of their children, thus investing in the future generation. It is also a means of building and strengthening the bonds of community. The women are the bankers. They meet together in lending circles and decide

about who gets loans and also review repayments and decide what to do about anyone in arrears. Since they are frequently borrowers themselves this is a way to connect with one another about their common economic circumstances and to be mutually supportive of one another.

It has been shown over and over that these small loans can make a critical difference between business success and failure. Some examples of loan purposes include: a refrigerator to keep produce fresh before it is taken to market; a sewing machine to turn material into clothing or other items; a cell phone that can help to facilitate delivery of goods and materials.

A little more about FINCA: It stands for the Foundation for International Community Assistance. It is a nonprofit agency launched in 1984 which is now the largest micro-credit lender. They operate now in 23 countries on five continents. They serve over 250,000 borrowers in more than 15,000 lending circles. The overall repayment rate for their loans is 97% and the interest rate charged is generally 3-4% per month. While this rate may seem high to us, it comes with technical assistance and is the only alternative other than moneylenders who typically charge as much as 10% per day. Commercial banks, while their rates might be lower,

do not lend at these amounts to these people who do not meet the usual lending criteria.

Poverty in the world today is measured at 25% of the world's population. 1.3 billion people live on less than \$1 per day. It is increasingly a problem for children and female-headed households. Micro-credit has shown to be one of the most effective means of combating poverty by increasing income, savings, labor productivity, food purchases, family health, educational investments, home improvements and personal and group empowerment.

Of the \$2,000 that each of the ten travelers pays for our upcoming trip, \$500 will go toward creation of a second bank in Haiti. We hope you will join us for this trip. Think about ways that your church might support you in making such a trip. We have a presentation available that you could use to educate your congregation and to raise funds for the trip. We will hold a workshop on the trip at our annual Women's Conference in January. In the meanwhile, if you have questions, please contact Laura Nagel ([lauraonagel@houston.rr.com](mailto:lauraonagel@houston.rr.com) or phone 713.524.5608).

Laura Nagel  
President Elect  
SWUJW

#### WE NEED ONE ANOTHER

We need one another when we mourn and would be comforted.  
We need one another when we are in trouble and afraid.  
We need one another when we are in despair, in temptation.  
We need one another when we need to be recalled to our best selves again.  
We need one another when we would accomplish some great purpose and cannot do it alone.  
We need one another in the hour of success, when we look for someone to share our triumphs.  
We need one another in the hour of defeat when with encouragement we might endure, and stand again.  
We need one another when we come to die, and would have gentle hands prepare us for the journey.  
All our lives we are in need, and others are in need of us.

**HAVE YOU THOUGHT  
ABOUT.....**

..... your area being host to the SWUW's Women's Conference?

**YOUR OPPORTUNITY**

Are you creative? Are you a leader-in-training? Do you have a lot of UU women friends? Are there other UU churches in your area? Would you like a very creative job where most of the grunt work is done for you?

**IT'S EASY**

Host a SWUW annual conference in your area. It's never been easier. SWUW takes the gamble out of putting on a conference. We provide a step-by-step to do list with time guidelines. We insure for great loss in case of weather or other catastrophes that might cancel the event. Unforeseen circumstances cannot leave us with a great loss. The insurance is also the guarantee for the hotel eliminating any personal guarantees by you or your committee.

We handle all the registration money and database. We provide a Board Member to guide you throughout the process. SWUW starts you with seed money, provides a special bank account, and checks to write for expenses.

The great nervousness is gone, as SWUW takes the entire gamble out of putting on a conference.

**YOU JUST CREATE!**

teacher/speaker? Sign her up and pick a location and the rest just falls together.

Do you know a great meditation? Spiritual dance? Do you have favorite workshops or ones you have always wanted to see available? Do you know artists and artisans that can help? You make the Conference whatever way you want. Let it have your flavor and highlight your locality. **CREATE AWAY!**

**GREATEST LEADERSHIP TRAINING**

Would you like to be a District Leader? Have you thought of being on the UUA General Assembly Planning Committee? Being a conference coordinator would be one of the greatest items on your resume. It also will cause your abilities in leadership, organizing and coordinating skills to grow multifold.

**SAY YES TODAY!**

Take your time and commit to 2008 or step up to the bat and put on 2005 - or any year in between.

Due to unforeseen circumstances the hosts for 2005 had to cancel. It is imperative we find a host for that January/February ASAP. The more time you have, the easier the planning. SWUW will give you all the assistance possible every step of the way.

Explore the possibilities (no commitment required) by calling or emailing

Janet Martinique 972-572-5736  
[zucchi@earthlink.net](mailto:zucchi@earthlink.net)

Elizabeth Muller 405-341-4066  
[elizmuller@aol.com](mailto:elizmuller@aol.com)

"We must become people that others want to partner with." Mark Walz

## **ONE CONFERENCE CONVENOR'S TESTIMONY**

*By Elizabeth Muller*

ALL IT TAKES IS 4 COMMITTED WOMEN.  
A SWUW CONFERENCE IS NOT SO  
DAUNTING AS YOU MIGHT THINK.  
And, the longer lead time you give yourself, the  
less stressful the task.

We knew that we had the **facilities** in our  
community for such an event. We are two  
church communities so we also have enough  
**people resources**. We did have some  
experience from putting on the 1998  
conference, but attendance at conferences is  
experience, too.

When the call came for conferences down the  
line, we put our heads together. We volunteered  
for a conference 7 years away. Long enough to  
give us a good rest from the 1998 one we had  
just done, short enough to keep the interest and  
continuity of the group.

Although some members had to drop out, we  
have added other wonderful, energetic women  
who share our excitement and commitment to  
putting on a quality event while maintaining  
**equanimity**.

We have conducted our **decision making  
through consensus**. Sometimes that consensus  
has been to allow a member to make a final  
decision. We have a co-conveners model that  
works very well because one of is a big picture,  
creative type and the other is a detail, time-line  
type; a great combination if you have the  
necessary ingredient of mutual respect for the  
other's abilities.

Our first decision had to be WHERE? That  
determined WHEN? which in turn helped us to  
decide... WHO?

We knew that we needed breakout **spaces** to  
accommodate workshops; a large  
banquet/entertainment room; reasonably priced  
delicious food service, and Bazaar space.

Our committee started looking at convention  
hotels about four years ago. We signed with the  
Marriott in 2001 for the 2004 conference. This  
process is now greatly simplified by SWUW  
guaranteeing the contract with event insurance!

The **date** was determined by getting the very  
best price for rooms if we had it early in the  
year. At every juncture, we strove to keep costs  
down without compromising quality.

As to the "who," we brought different ideas for  
**themes and speakers** to the group and  
discussed them. We considered wideness of  
appeal, appropriateness for the organization  
and a factor that can be called **uniqueness**:  
bringing something to our women that they  
never have been exposed to before. We did  
research as to availability and cost of the  
candidates and decided in consensus. This can  
be a difficult point in preparations.

We met sporadically until we were a 1-1/2  
years out from conference date at which time  
we began having monthly meetings. We do  
communicate often by phone and email. We are  
composed of a chairperson for workshops,  
vendors, volunteers, registration,  
graphics/printed matter and opening/closing,  
plus a registrar and a treasurer. The  
responsibilities and specifics of each of those  
will make another whole article!

The increased participation of the  
SWUWboard in the development of  
conferences and assumption of financial  
responsibility should be an encouragement to  
groups. Take notes at the next few conferences.  
Connect with nearby churches and the women  
who attend SWUWcon04: Could you align  
with them to strengthen your base? Putting on  
a Southwest Unitarian Universalist Women's  
Conference is a lot of work but (and I speak  
from experience here), **it is a lot of fun too!**

## SOCIAL ACTION AND PRAYER:

### MAKING THE LEAP OF FAITH

SARAH OGLESBY

DALLAS

214-443-0199

About seven years ago, i got involved with a non-profit citizens lobby called **RESULTS**. **RESULTS** is a network of concerned citizens, working as volunteer "lobbyists" to encourage government funding of programs that reduce hunger and poverty. (i.e., Headstart, Foodstamps, WIC, child survival—basic education and health issues—as well as micro-credit enterprise.) I got involved because the issues that we work on are primarily issues relating to women and children and specifically the empowerment of women. I remember when i first learned that a developing nation's child birth rates are related to the education of women—that for every year of education a woman had, fertility rates went down (fewer children resulted). I also remember when i first learned about the Grameen bank and its poverty-lending program that seeks out the poorest of the poor women of Bangladesh for tiny loans to begin or nurture a tiny enterprise. These loans were, and still are, breaking the cycle of poverty for women and their families, allowing for health care, food, better housing, and more education. These ideas spoke to a place deep inside of me that cares deeply about the plight of women. I believe we can end hunger and poverty as social diseases in our lifetimes, and i believe the key to this is the empowerment of women.

Something i think all of us struggle with is feeling as if, in the face of deep social and political crisis, we don't and can't really make a difference. This is at the heart of our spiritual crises, as well. We struggle with prayer—does it really mean anything? Will it really make a difference? We struggle with social action—will i really see change? Will i leave any mark on the world for all of my efforts?

Somehow, we're not sure we're "good enough" or that we've found "the right/righteous cause" and we're deeply afraid of venturing into actions that may seem nebulous and ineffective. These are certainly pieces of my spiritual struggle with my work for justice and transformation of our social realities. Getting involved with results allowed me to be in action and in partnership with others. This summer i went to Washington D.C. with a delegation of Texas results partners for the results international conference and was moved very deeply by the power of a small group of

people—350 or so at the conference—who would come together to speak to congress, to the world bank, and to other leaders about hunger and poverty. This group was so extraordinary for its ordinariness—we were diverse in our backgrounds and even in the political contexts we came from, but unified in purpose and in supporting certain programs. We sang together! We sang together in harmony, songs like "Shower the people" and "I believe I can fly." We sang in the halls of congress, too, at a morning breakfast before we went to our meetings with senators and representatives and their aids. I felt very powerful, and i knew my voice counted, both in song and in the spirit i brought to each office we visited.

Howard Zinn, the "people's historian" was once a speaker on one of our monthly conference calls for results. He reminded us, as we need to be continually reminded, that social change comes from movements, and movements are the result of many hundreds and thousands of people acting on their beliefs and out of a leap of faith that they will make a difference. We look in history books and we don't see each of the names and each of the actions taken that created that movement. We see the names and the actions of a few, and we decide that somehow those folks had something we don't, and their actions were destined to be powerful. We don't see the hundred times an action failed to bring about change—we see the one time it did and think that each action we take will result in some amazing shift.

For the same reason I lobby congress, write the editor and to the president, i also pray. Similarly, my work with results has brought me into a loving family of other citizens who want to transform our world and my prayer has brought me into a network of women who pray inside of ritual and who share their spiritual lives deeply. These are not separate pieces of my life. Each represents my underlying belief and faith that i do make a difference and that my life here has a purpose.

**RESULTS:** [www.resultsusa.org](http://www.resultsusa.org)

440 First Street NW Suite 450  
Washington D.C. 20001

Reclaiming Democracy, by Sam Daly Harris, founder of **RESULTS** and Executive Director of **RESULTS** Educational Fund

Soul of a Citizen: Living with Conviction in a Cynical Time, by Paul Rogat Loeb

### SPIRIT OF COMMUNITY

Spirit of Community, in which we share and find strength and common purpose, we turn our minds and hearts toward one another seeking to bring into our circle of concern, all who need our love and support: those who are ill, those who are in pain, their in body or in spirit, those who are lonely, those who have been wronged.

We are part of a web of life that makes us one with all humanity, one with all the universe. We are grateful for the miracle of consciousness that we share, the consciousness that gives us the power to remember, to love, to care.

Frederick E. Gillis



**Save the date!!! Jan. 30 - Feb. 1, 2004**

**Oklahoma City Marriott**

**SWUW 2004 Conference**

**Praising Tara: Empowering Ourselves**

**SPEAKERS: Prema Dasara and Anahata Iradah**

**THEME: *The 21 Praises of Tara***

- |                                  |                                      |                                      |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| • 1. <i>swift protection</i>     | • 6. <i>distributor of wealth</i>    | • 15. <i>sublime intelligence</i>    |
| • 2. <i>creative wisdom</i>      | • 9. <i>auspicious beauty</i>        | • 16. <i>destroyer of attachment</i> |
| • 3. <i>impeccable virtue</i>    | • 10. <i>worthy of honor</i>         | • 17. <i>bliss and joy</i>           |
| • 4. <i>irresistible truth</i>   | • 11. <i>invincible courage</i>      | • 18. <i>transformer of poison</i>   |
| • 5. <i>ferocious compassion</i> | • 12. <i>destroyer of negativity</i> | • 19. <i>remover of sorrow</i>       |
| • 6. <i>serene peace</i>         | • 13. <i>true refuge</i>             | • 20. <i>radiant health</i>          |
| • 7. <i>joy and laughter</i>     | • 14. <i>all victorious</i>          | • 21. <i>complete enlightenment</i>  |

**For more information, go to [www.swuuw.net](http://www.swuuw.net) and click on 2004.**

**SWUW**

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