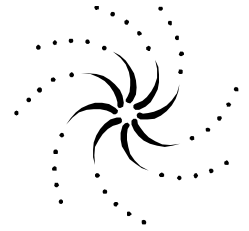


SWWIRL

Spring 2001



Con-vening is an Act of Faith

*by Linda VanBlaricom, Convener
2001 SWUW Conference Little Rock, AR*

It is over! "It" being the 15th annual Women's Conference/Retreat for the Unitarian Universalist women of the Southwest District and their friends. For me and the women of UUCLR (Unitarian Universalist Church of Little Rock), it has been a fabulous act of faith and a miracle of the best sort. An act of faith in part because when I volunteered us to sponsor a conference in Little Rock, we had no organized women's group, only a handful of our women had ever attended a SWUW Conference and we had never done anything like this before. A miracle of the best sort because we came together with one mind to make a fabulous conference happen for all of the UU women of this district, we worked very hard and we did it. I have to admit that initially I had hoped that someone else would want to be the convener and that I could be the catalyst and then step back and be a worker bee. Now I am glad that the women of my church entrusted me with the role of convener, and I am also glad to rest on my laurels and let you all do the leading and work for awhile. I was very gratified to see so many churches and women's groups volunteering for future conferences, and the women of my church were relieved for they feared I would volunteer them again before they had rested. By the last day of our conference, I had heard that women's groups had committed for the next four years. Bravo to all of you!

Our journey began with a few of us asking a few more women to meet with us on Friday evenings and just talk about possibilities. Of course we would share a bottle of wine, some good food and our lives in the process. We did some basic outreach to the larger community of women in our church by sponsoring a women's potluck meal with entertainment, a dessert potluck with games and then an open invitational organizational meeting to all the women in our church. This occurred over a two year period and we still had a year to go. By that point we were clear that we wanted to really encourage our young women and daughters to be part of our conference and we wanted to take advantage of the 4-H facility just outside of Little Rock and it's Ropes program. We also encouraged more of our women to attend the SWUW conferences in other cities during that time period.

We really kicked into high gear about one year before the conference. We were really blessed by having the 'Mother Book' from past conferences to use as a reference. We especially relied on technology (e-mail) and the great organizational structure that the 2000 Conference in Dallas had put together. By then we had a strong core group and we began to enlist the specific talents of other women in

our church. In early June 2000, we began to meet monthly and had assigned major committee chairs - Bazaar, Registrars, Decorations, Transportation, Programs, Food, Treasurer, etc. There were crunch periods when one or more women had to really put in considerable time, like when the final brochure went out, during the registration period and especially in the last week, but overall we were able to keep the work organized and under control because of the long range planning and the competency of our women.

The WOMEN I mean! I have never before in my life, in any situation, in any setting had such an incredibly positive, life affirming experience as I have had these last three years with the WOMEN of UUCLR. I believe that coming together and working on such a meaningful and creative project has been a significant gift to all of us, a gift that is immeasurable and yet to be fully understood. I could go on and on about the competency, the creativity, the hard work, the love and the spirituality of the WOMEN in our planning group.

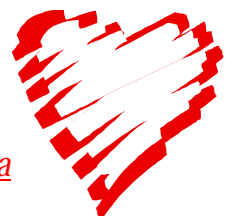
I was asked to write something for this issue of SWWIRL about the 'process' rather than the planning of a women's conference. At this point it is hard for me to separate the two so I have talked some about both in this article. What I want you to know is that despite this being the biggest volunteer effort of my life (or probably of any one of our lives), and despite the fact that we received high praises and low criticisms (both deserved, I am sure) for different aspects of our conference and despite the fact that our women were almost begging me to not volunteer us for another conference in the near future, I am in awe of the process and the outcome.. But I never lacked faith in the WOMEN.

And thanks to all of you WOMEN for showing up and having faith in us. I have experienced a miracle!

P.S. We are now in the process of organizing a women's group!

All I ask of you, is forever to
remember me as loving you.

Linda



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 Bottom Row: Barb Rodman, Connie Dunn**

SWUW Supporters**SWWIRL Guest Editors -**

Summer 2001 Jackie Gibbons
 (treejwg@hotmail.com)
 Fall 2001 OPEN
 Winter 2001 Brenda Baldwin
 (swuuw2002@hotmail.com)
 Spring 2002 OPEN

LETTER FROM THE GUEST EDITOR –

What a joy it has been to assemble this newsletter! My goals were to report on the SWUW 2001 Women's Conference "Women In Their Natural State" and to bring writings, by women, on other subjects to the women of SWUW. Since November I have been announcing my wish for material to my women's group, the Women's Expressions Group of Fort Worth. This issue contains input from them. After the conference, I asked several people individually, most of whom are on the conference committee for 2002 or were on the conference committee for 2001, to submit material related to the Little Rock Conference, and that is also included here.

I was impressed over and over by the talents of the contributors. I hope you enjoy these writings as much as I have, and I hope that you are motivated to submit your own writings for future editions of SWWIRL. I will be editing again in the Winter (target mailing mid-December) and would love to receive work from you for that edition.

In this edition, you will find a brief introduction to each of the contributors and information on each of the recently installed officers. I hope you will take the time to get to know these wonderful women, and I look forward to getting to know each and every one of you in the future in whatever ways and places we may meet. I feel a wonderful bond with the women who contributed to this edition of SWWIRL and hope that you will, too. May you come away from reading this newsletter feeling good about yourself, the women of SWUW and our power to impact the world in which we live.

Wishing you peace,

Brenda Baldwin

e-mail: swuuw2002@hotmail.com
 address: 4400 Inwood Road
 Fort Worth, TX 76109

Am I a Member of SWUW?

If you have paid dues in the past year, yes, you are. If you have not, you can become a member by sending annual dues of \$5 to the Treasurer listed at left. Please include your full name, mailing and e-mail addresses, phone number, name of women's group and/or church or fellowship, if applicable.

To determine your current status, please look on your mailing label. If there is a year shown in the upper right hand corner of the mailing label, it is the most recent year in which we have record of your dues. If no year is shown, we have no record of dues receipt. Any questions, please contact our President listed at left.

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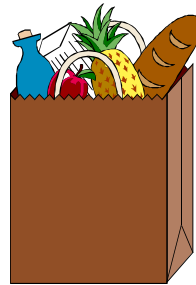
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Oklahoma City, OK 73112
(405)949-9011
write-us@home.com **WHAT DO**
WOMEN WANT?

By: Barbara Patton

Comedian Bill Hicks said he has learned a lot about women. He thinks he learned exactly how the fall of man occurred in the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve were in the Garden, and Adam said one day, "Wow, Eve, here we are, at one with nature, at one with God, we'll never age, we'll never die, and all our dreams come true the instant that we have them." And Eve said, "Yeah. . . it's just not enough, is it?"

Just what do women want? Men have lamented this question for ages. The theme of this article is "What Do Women Want, Why They Want It and How They Will Get It." To delve into the mystery of "it" requires a look into history with the life story of a woman named Sarah Grimke. The reason Sarah's life made an impression

This denial of a higher education became the motivation for Sarah's search for equality and freedom for women. In Charleston, Sarah found the social conventions stifling to her need for growth. When she was in her late 20's, Sarah moved to Philadelphia where she discovered the Quaker teachings. During the early nineteenth century, the social norms did not allow women to speak in public. However, Quakerism affirmed the equality of men and women and allowed women to express themselves in public. In addition, Quakers were pioneers in the antislavery movement. When Sarah's younger sister, Angelina, moved to Philadelphia, the two sisters felt they were called to a noble work by speaking out on the antislavery issue. In 1838 the Grimke sisters defied social custom by touring New England and speaking out for slaves. They were viciously attacked by the clergy as being unwomanly



Volunteers Needed

Mary Francis has agreed to chair Lunches Plus at SWUUSI. She will come up with ideas for simple menus, but she needs volunteers to do the shopping, preparation and serving of the food.

SWUW has sponsored this program for several years, and many people look forward to it as an alternative to the standard restaurant lunch. Although it is not a big money maker for SWUW, it is an appreciated service to SWUUSI participants and a good way to publicize SWUW.

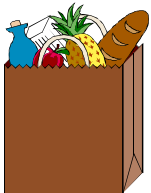
If you will be at SWUUSI and are willing to help for one or more days, please contact Mary.

Email: mfrancis1@earthlink.net

Mail: 1617 Christine Dr.
Midwest City, OK 73130

Phone: (405)741-0694

and unchristian. This attack awakened a sleeping giant - the issues of women's rights. Sarah wrote a series of letters comparing the plight of all women to that of slaves and defended the rights of women as intelligent human beings. During that time, women's lives centered around home and family. Women had no rights. They could not vote, own property, or even make a will. They were considered legally "dead in the law." Sarah was interested in showing the parallel between the condition of slaves and women being deprived of human rights. Her reply to the church constituted one of



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Please contact her if you will be at SWUUSI and are willing to help with the lunches for one or more days.

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on me is because in the middle 19th century, she answered these three questions in her speaking and writing about women's rights.

Sarah was born in 1792 in an upper class slaveholding family of Charleston, SC. She was an intelligent child who craved education. She learned Latin, Greek, and mathematics. Her father was a chief judge of the SC Supreme Court. He told his daughter she would make a fine lawyer, if only she had not been born a girl. When she was older, her schooling turned to French, watercolors, and embroidery while her brothers had the opportunity for higher education.

the first serious discussions of women's rights by an American woman.

Sarah's strength of conviction gave her the courage to confront the religious power structure that was a major force in 19-century society. Sarah confronted the clergy's use of scriptures as its authority for keeping women in an inferior position. She pointed out that Jesus' teachings were meant to be equally empowering to both men and women followers. Sarah's defiance stemmed from her anger not only over the restricted rights of women, but from the church's assumed control over women's beliefs and lives. Sarah based her defense on the scriptures, thereby meeting her critics on their ground.

What do women want? In this case, Sarah knew exactly what "it" was—the opportunity of an education, freedom from religious subservience, and equal standing with men. In her 60's, Sarah's letters moved from anger and blaming to relying on good reasons that appealed to people's values and their concept of good. With this approach, she answered the question "Why do they want it?" from the standpoint of being for the public good. Since women form one half of every class of society, she argued that the national interest as a whole would benefit with women's participation in business and public affairs. She turned her disappointment of not having an education into creative energy to raise the consciousness of the nineteenth-century men and women.

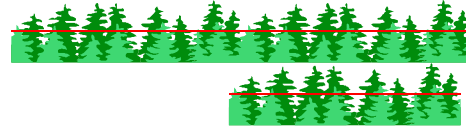
The last stage of Sarah's writings answer the question "How do they get it?" Her growth and development moved from resentment of men's educational and employment privileges, through good reasons for the whole, to a creative affirmation of who women are. Sarah discovered a woman cannot turn to a man to solve her dilemma. As one author said, "Those who are creating the problem are not those who can solve it. Insulated, they don't even know they're in a burning house." Sarah began to focus on women's capabilities and dignity rather than what they had been denied by society. Women had been isolated and lived narrow lives. This had taken its toll on their feeling that they were powerless and inferior. Sarah's quest was to raise their consciousness to make their private experiences legitimate, concrete and valuable. With all of Sarah's intellectual and spiritual searching, one can almost see this white-haired woman as she sits alone writing to the women of the world. She attempts to lift the veil of subservience and seeks to create a new self-defined image of strength and self-reliance.

Think a moment about your own life. When trouble begins, do you look first to blame, then begin to find reasons or understanding to shift your perception from victim to a more creative approach. Then lastly, do you look within to find your own strength. Sarah progressed through these stages as she blended her experiences and her knowledge into wisdom.

What do women want? They want a sense of personal power or control over their life! Why do they want it? They realize with effective self-management they can fulfill their own dreams. How do they get it? By

affirming their own accomplishments, their own nature, and by respecting themselves and their work whether it is in the home or in the public sphere. This is the bottom line! The rest is the icing on the cake!

Add "save the earth" message here



Along My Spiritual Path

By: Beverly Archibald

I would like to share with you my joy in being ordained as a minister in The Order of Teleos on January 12, 2001, in Scottsdale, Arizona. This event marked a very important milestone for me on my spiritual journey.

The Order of Teleos is an energy network of like-minded individuals who are devoted to the embodiment of Love on the pathway to greater knowing. It is a sanctuary without walls, an energy network and a soul center of celebration.

Teleos is a Greek word which means the perfect pattern within, that guides and directs our unfolding and our individualizing process. As ministers of The Order of Teleos, we seek to embody in individual and communal form the Ancient Wisdom and the inner knowing of each individual.

Central to our beliefs are The Love Principles, which open the way to unconditional Love. These principles have served me well for many years, both as affirmations and, more recently, phrased as daily intentions. Living these principles is one of the main purposes of my life at this time.

The Love Principles

- Receive all persons as beautiful exactly as they are.
- Be the change you want to see, instead of trying to change anyone else.
- Create your own reality consciously.
- Provide others with opportunities to give.
- Have no expectations, but rather abundant expectancy.
- Problems are opportunities.

Choice is the life process.

*In every new moment of awareness,
you are free to make a new choice.*

These simply stated, straight-forward principles have enabled me to stretch and grow spiritually as I seek to live in harmony with our environment and my fellow human beings.

For further information on The Order of Teleos, you may access the website at www.consciousnesswork.com.

About our contributors...

~~Beverly Archibald~~ (a.k.a. Rev Bev) is a member of the Fort Worth Women's Expressions Group. Retired, Beverly previously split her time between Arizona and Texas. She recently decided to give up her home in Arizona and become a full-time Texan.

~~Barbara Patton~~ has presented her original program "Body Mind Harmony" at the Fort Worth Women's Expressions Group. She lives in Fort Worth, leads a women's study group at First Methodist Church and participates in Toastmasters.

SWUW Women's Conference 2002

~~Gather The Spirit: Weaving Our Lives~~

~~Radisson Plaza Hotel in Downtown~~

~~February 22-24, 2002~~

~~—Keynote Speaker—Cristina Biagga
—Motivational Speaker—Liza Ely
—Workshops: Patter From Nerves to Nirvana—Toning—
Nia—Grandmother, Granddaughter—In The Footsteps of The
Goddess—Sexuality and Religion—Spirituality—Living
Intentionally—Politics—Health—and more...~~

~~—Maiden Program
—Ritual
—Vendors
—Off-site Activities—Water Gardens—Japanese Garden—
Kimball Art Museum—Modern Art Museum—Zoo—and
more...—(All accessible via the Fort Worth Trolley)~~

~~Please visit our website regularly to receive updates on plans for 2002.~~

~~<http://sites.netscape.net/swuww/2002.htm>~~

~~A note about our theme—The theme is meant to capture our goal of gathering the spirit of all those women in attendance, drawing on the spirit of those who have gone before and sending our spirit to those who will come after, and weaving that spirit into our lives. We are still working on a graphic representation of the theme for T-shirts and brochures. Should you wish to submit a proposal, please send it to: Brenda Baldwin—4400 Inwood Rd—Fort Worth, TX—76109.~~

~~OTHER ARTICLES DUE (WITH DELIVERY COMMITMENTS):~~

~~—Book review of *The Red Tent* by Beverly Fogelman
President's column by Gino Kennedy
—Travelogue of Observations and Philosophical Musings by Elizabeth Muller
—Reflections on 2001 Conference by Linda VanBlaricom
Tidbits of "Save the Earth" hints by Gino Kennedy
—2002 Convener column by Brenda Baldwin~~

~~OTHER ARTICLES DESIRED (WITH NO FIRM COMMITMENTS):~~

~~—Comments on 2001 Conference by any attendees~~

~~—Recap of Ropes by Linda McConathy (think she'll share pictures of her bruises?)~~

~~Original call~~



Dance For Joffrey Benefitting Erin Dunn

April 21, 2001
7:00 pm

Denton UU Fellowship
1111 Cordell Denton, Texas

Since Erin Dunn was seven years old, her biggest dream has been to study at the Joffrey and dance at Lincoln Center. This summer, with your help, her dream can come true. You are invited to an entertaining evening of dance put on by Erin and friends. Donations for sponsorship of Erin's Joffrey summer program will be accepted there.

In many ways, SWUW will be going to the Joffrey with Erin. She will be sharing her experience in many ways with SWUW, but she will also be taking what she has learned among us with her in all her dance experiences. Since Erin was 10, she has been attending the Women's Group at Denton and attending the annual SWUW conferences. She has grown as a person, a woman and a spiritual woman in the UU faith. She has learned from this group that anything can be accomplished, which she is using to carry out her dream. Both can happen this summer. You have been part of this and continue to do so as you send your love and sponsorship to Erin.

Contributions may also be sent to: Erin J. Dunn
PMB238, 1807 N. Elm St., Denton, TX 76201

