

SWWIRL

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SWWIRL

Beginning with the Summer issue, SWWIRL will be coming to you from Oklahoma City. Elizabeth Muller, Ellen Scheer, Barbara Starr-Langhaus, Betty Sanders, and other women from First Unitarian Church of Oklahoma City have agreed to edit and publish this important quarterly publication. They are teeming with ideas and enthusiasm and are eager to communicate with women in the Southwest District to bring us news and articles of interest and importance. We are looking forward to a regular book review from Karen Pope in Tulsa and a regular feature on UU women's organizations to connect you with other UU women active in a variety of special interests. Our thanks go to Sue Stone, retiring President of SWUU Women, for her work in finding a new home for SWWIRL and to the women of Oklahoma City for responding to the need.

Deadline for contributions to their first issue is June 15. Send contributions to Elizabeth Muller, Editor, 6624 Whispering Oaks Rd., Edmond,, OK 73034. Phone: 405/341-4066. E-mail: ElizMuller@aol.com

Coming to your mailbox in April: The new Southwest Women and Religion Resource Library Catalog. Funds from the Southwest District budget for Women and Religion were invested in acquiring the resources and, now, in publication of the catalog. We appreciate also contributions from individuals as well as from SWUU Women. SWUW dues at work !

Be sure to stay on the SWWIRL mailing list. SWWIRL comes to you with membership in Southwest UU Women. If your mailing label indicates your dues are not currently paid, send \$5.00 to Gail Huggett, Treasurer
12314 South 14th Street
Jenks, OK 74037



"When She Was Young," the RE curriculum written by Anita Louise in Houston, has been so well received that she has received a grant from the Sunday School Board of the UUA to add six more modules. Anita Louise received a grant from SWUUW for development of the curriculum. SWUUW dues at work again..

The following article was first printed in 1994 in the SW District newsletter. The issues are still with us.

Speaking of Women

I was reminded recently of an event from my college days at the University of Arkansas. The Ozarks were ablaze with Fall color. A cool Thursday evening found us gathered in the open-air Greek Theater for the weekly pep rally to "call the Hogs" and inspire the team and crowd for the weekend game.

A traditional part of the pep rally was "roll call". The emcee for the evening would deliver an introduction for each living group on campus after which we would raise our standard, rise to our feet, and cheer for our group. In that Fall of 1968, the introductions had taken a derogatory tone. It seemed that each emcee tried to outdo the last in demeaning and embarrassing the women's living groups with sexually blatant one-liners. We were still expected to cheer!

The campus Panhellenic, which included representatives from each of the sororities, discussed our predicament. We had already expressed our displeasure about the tone of the roll call, but the lewd comments had continued. We decided to take a stand ... or rather to keep our seats. The pep rally organizers were informed that if a demeaning comment were made, the sorority would not respond. The decision to take this stand was not reached easily. What if some of the groups broke the agreement? How would the rest of us be viewed?

These questions did not escape my sorority's members. We were the first in the alphabet. If we were the only group to keep our seats, we could be terribly embarrassed. We carried a heavy burden of responsibility and apprehension. The emcee did as we expected. The raunchy tone was not tempered, and our choice was clear. On that crisp autumn evening, the obscene remarks met only silence. Group after group remained in their seats, their silence sending a message more powerful than any their voices could have sent. Our sorority was proud we had led the way and relieved the others had followed our example. The tone of the pep rallies changed completely after that, and we experienced a taste of what we now call "empowerment".

Looking back on that event 28 years ago, I am surprised at how difficult it was for us young women to take a stand against such blatant degradation. As difficult as it was for us, it was much easier to sort out what we should do then than to hear and respond to what we recognize now as more subtle and damaging language. As we have come to be aware of how language is used to define our roles and our value in a culture, we have the task of educating a largely unaware society to usages that are no longer acceptable.

While it is safe to say that the blatantly obscene comments were unacceptable to most of the women on that college campus, I suspect there are many women and men who are not aware of how commonly used phrases serve to degrade and demean. This is not just a "women's issue". If language serves to define one gender, it also serves to define the other. If a phrase suggests that women can be exploited by men, that has just as much to say about men as it does women. Most Unitarian Universalist men I know would not be happy to take on such a

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**Southwest Unitarian Universalist Women (SWUJW)
Annual Business Meeting
Noon, Saturday, April 13, 1996
at Southwest District Spring Conference
Houston, Texas**

Agenda

1. Open Meeting—Introduction of Officers
President's Annual Report Sue Stone, President
2. Minutes of SWUJW Business Meeting
August 2, 1995, SWUJWI Mary Francis, Secretary Pro-Tem
3. Treasurer's Report Gail Huggett, Treasurer
4. Nominating Committee Report
and Election of Officers Fran Faris, Chairperson
Allyson Cate, Mary Francis
For President: Carol Barron, Memphis TN
For Secretary: Mary Francis, Norman, OK
Nominations from the floor will be accepted.
5. 1996-1997 Budget Proposal Gail Huggett, Treasurer
SWUJW Planning Committee
6. Old Business:
Women and Religion Report Julia Harris, Convenor
Fall Conference workshop suggestions
7. New Business:
Revisions to Women's Conference Scholarship guidelines.
8. Adjourn

Women's Conference Scholarship Guidelines

1. SWUJW owns and pays out scholarships for the annual Southwest Women's Conference.
2. Scholarships will be given on a "first come-first served" basis, with applicants submitting a written statement of why they need a scholarship.
3. Scholarships will be partial or full payment of registration fee as requested by applicants.
4. Working at the conference is not required as a condition of receiving the scholarship.
5. Scholarship applications are made in writing directly to the *conference committee scholarship* representative. Each conference's registration brochure will list the name and address of the *scholarship* representative.
6. Scholarship applications have a date deadline as specified by the *conference* committee, determined by postmark or FAX date.
7. If applicant does not get a response within 10 days, please communicate with the *conference scholarship* person again.
8. *The conference scholarship representative* communicates directly with applicants and then notifies *the SWUJW treasurer* how much scholarship money has been awarded. *The treasurer will pay the amount to the conference committee.*
9. Maximum total scholarship amount is decided each year by *the SWUJW Planning Committee*, depending upon amount available.
10. Each conference brochure will have a space on the registration form to allow women to add a scholarship contribution to the conference registration fee.
11. After the conference is over, if the conference has made a profit, the local planning committee will be asked to donate toward next year's scholarships.

Suggested revisions are in *italics*. The Planning Committee also suggests that the deadline for scholarship applications be made fairly late, such as two weeks prior to the conference, and that it then be adhered to.

Speaking of Women, continued from page 2

definition by default. It continues to happen, though, because the habit of using certain phrases has numbed us to awareness, even when we care. So what are we do to?

I am first willing to believe that all Unitarian Universalists do care about how we speak of one another. I am willing to believe that transgressions of language result from lack of awareness or lack of vigilance. For those of us who notice, it becomes our obligation to educate, to speak up when it is needed. Also willing to believe that we all want to give respect as well as receive it, my question becomes then "How shall we go about respectfully bringing awareness in an effective way?"

I ask that we all give thought to how we would like to be addressed when we need our attention brought to something we have said. How would we like to be answered so that we know our concern has been heard? How can we go about creating dialog in our communities which will bring awareness and respect for this issue? If we can find answers to these questions, how can we effectively let each other know what we want?

I invite correspondence on this issue and others that are of concern to women in our denomination. If you have ideas to share, I will gladly include them in the next issue. My Internet address is INTERNET: 74631.3714@compuserve.com

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