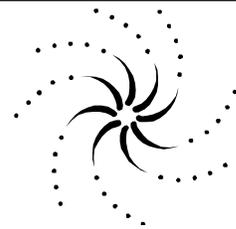


SWWIRL

Spring 2002



YES! to Social Action

SWUW Votes "Yes" to Funding 3 Areas of Social Action

During SWUW's Annual Meeting at the Fort Worth Conference, members voted to use a portion of SWUW's accumulated funds as follows.

- ✓ \$5000 to start a village Banking Group through Microcredit
- ✓ \$500 to the Heifer Project for a Knitting Basket to consist of 2 llamas and 2 sheep
- ✓ \$300 at \$100 per call for Chalice Lighters

Microcredit is empowering women throughout the world. It gives women who live in poverty access to the credit they need to start small businesses. These women become micro-entrepreneurs who are organized into borrowers' circles. Through loans from Microcredit programs, these women start small businesses such as selling firewood, clothing, fruits and vegetables or production of food products, clothing, or various crafts. Clients typically run their business out of their home. Some choose to be "ambulatory" – selling door-to-door, on street corners, or carrying their wares to sell at places such as construction sites. Women are targeted for the loans because they are the least able to access credit, and mothers with children are typically the poorest segment of the poor.

For more than 50 years, the **Heifer Project** has provided livestock and training to more than 4 million families living in poverty world-wide. The animals help hungry people feed themselves, earn income and care for their environment. Families in countries on all continents except Antarctica have received animals after being trained to care for the animals, preparing appropriate facilities for them and pledging to Pass on the Gift by giving the first female offspring to another family in need in their village.

The Southwestern UU Conference **Chalice Lighter** Grant Program makes up to three calls a year to individuals who have pledged to pay at least \$10 per call. Congregations within the SouthWest District propose projects that will enhance their growth. They may be as varied as supplementing funds to support an extension ministry, building a new church, or renovating an existing building. By pledging \$300 a year, SWUW became members of the elite Flaming Chalice group and will receive district recognition as such.



A Message from the Chair of the New Social Service Committee

Laura Nagel, First UU Church of Houston

I was putting on chapstick in the car this morning, when a story about Zimbabwe came over the radio. The narrator told of his experiences working as a teacher there. He said that many of his young students existed on one meal a day, and that one in four of them would die of AIDS. They are under the tyrannical dictatorship of Robert Mugabe. As I drove along in my car I wondered how in the world I, who can't abide chapped lips, would survive in such a world. What could I do to help?

Then I thought about recent conversations I have been having with other women in SWUW about our new social service projects. I am the incoming chair of that committee. We have money and, thanks to the foresight of our leaders and the support of the membership, at this year's annual meeting we approved support for three social service projects. One of them is local, Chalice Lighters (\$300), but two of them, the Heifer Project (\$500) and FINCA International Village Banking (\$5,000), are international in scope and will benefit women and children on an ongoing basis.

Sarah Oglesby, outgoing chair of the social service projects committee, developed these projects. Sarah traveled to El Salvador in the summer of 2000 where she met with members of FINCA International, a highly acclaimed nonprofit organization, which facilitates micro-lending banks. The micro-lending concept first started with the Grameen Bank of Bangladesh. Unlike the banks we know, village banking is done in the locality where the funds are offered and the local people make the decisions about who receives loan funds and the collection of loans. It has been very successful in helping to start small businesses in these areas and, because they are loans, the funds grow and revolve to more and more businesses over time.

(continued on page 2)

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Am I a Member of SWUUW?

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 the year is followed by "NM", you paid the non-member fee and will receive newsletters for 1 year). If no year is shown, we have no record of dues receipt. Any questions, please contact our President listed at left.

IF YOU HAVE NOT PAID DUES (or non-member fee) IN THE PAST YEAR, YOU WILL BE REMOVED FROM THE MAILING LIST AFTER THIS ISSUE OF SWWIRL.

(If your mailing label has a "2001" or "2002", your dues are considered "current".)

MOVING?

Please send your change of address to SWUUW or your SWWIRL may never find you!

Send changes to: SWUUW@hotmail.com or to: Brenda Baldwin 4400 Inwood Rd Fort Worth, TX 76109

SWWIRL (SouthWest Women In Religion Letter) is a quarterly publication of SWUUW (SouthWest Unitarian Universalist Women).

A Message from the Chair of the New Social Service Committee (continued from Page 1)

The Heifer Project was begun in the 1930s during the Spanish Civil War when a young Church of the Brethren youth worker, Dan West, had an idea that if people donated heifer cows, instead of food, they could help a family to become self-reliant, instead of dependent upon charity. The concept has grown and now you can give other animals as well and the program operates in every continent of the globe. The Heifer Project is specifically geared to working with congregations.

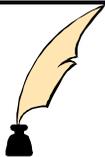
The new members of the SWUUW social service project committee will help in making the decision as to which specific Heifer and FINCA projects receive our funds and how we monitor the funds. We will also be working with the board to further define how social justice funds are administered and our goal(s) in investing in social justice projects in the future.

Personally, I felt very energized at the conference to hear Christina Biaggi in her keynote address talk about the international women's movement and I was proud of SWUUW and the work we have done together. I feel that SWUUW can become a part of that international

movement. After September 11 such international initiatives seem the best hope for our future, and the future of the world.

Members of the Social Service Committee

- Judy Albrecht, Comal County UU Society, TX
- Susan McGhee, Horizon UU Church, Carrollton, TX
- Linda Barnett, Live Oak UU Church, Austin, TX
- Erica Nagel, First UU Church, Houston, TX
- Nancy Brown, All Souls UU Church, Shreveport, LA
- Sharon Sahn, Denton UU Fellowship, Denton, TX
- Ruth Cowger, All Souls UU Church, Shreveport, LA
- Jane Spaeth, Comal County UU Society, TX
- Nell Evans, Red River UU Church, Sherman, TX
- Sherrie St. Cyr, Red River UU Church, Sherman, TX
- Susan Hunter, Community UU Church, Plano, TX
- Katherine Wilcox-Albright, Denton, TX
- Margaret Hurley, All Souls UU Church, Shreveport, LA
- Lee Ann Williams, First UU Church, Dallas, TX
- Lisa Krishnan, Westside UU Church, Fort Worth, TX
- Linda Woytasczyk, Red River UU Church, Sherman, TX
- Pamela Colleen Mallette, Fort Worth, TX
- Jodie Zoeller, Community UU Church, Plano, TX



President's Column

A most successful Women's Conference was enjoyed by nearly 300 of our members and friends in Fort Worth last month. The feedback on the speakers was mostly excellent. The Opening and Closing ceremonies were beautiful! The dancing was awe inspiring! The abilities of our members as displayed in the talent show were awesome! Liza Ely, Tyler UU Fellowship, our inspirational speaker, was to say the least, inspirational. She caused many of us to pause and think about the language we use daily. It was a tribute to the organizers of the program for Maidens to have 19 of them in attendance! The wares available at the vendors' booths were toothsome! Even if one couldn't afford all the things one wished to have, it was wonderful fun to look all of them!

But the most memorable aspect of the conference, for me, was the tremendous two-way flow of feminine energy! I felt it so strongly during the Annual Meeting that I felt I could reach out and touch it.

The approval of the three social service projects by the 200 plus members present at the Annual Meeting was the highlight of the event for me. I believe that this quote from Robert Kennedy sums up nicely what we accomplished:

Few will have the greatness to bend history itself, but each one of us can work to change a small portion of events, and in the total of all those acts will be written the history of this generation.

I am so proud that SWUUV is putting our UU Principles into action in this manner.

The response to the questionnaires available at each luncheon table, asking what everyone would enjoy doing in SWUUV, was proof of the renewal of the commitment to the importance of the Women's Conference and SWUUV in our lives! Over 100 women volunteered to participate in our activities for the coming year! If you weren't at the conference you still have the opportunity to volunteer for these and other jobs necessary for the maintenance of the wonderful forward momentum of SWUUV! On the last page of this SWWIRL you will find a copy of the questionnaire. Just fill it out, return to me and your name will be sent to the coordinator/chair of the area you are interested in working in.

SWUUC SPRING CONFERENCE -

In Memphis at the Spring conference April 5, 6 & 7, we will have a special space reserved so that we can all eat lunch together and chat about SWUUV concerns. The area where we are to meet will be announced at the

Morning session. You will be updated on our adopted Social Service Projects, money raising ideas, and have an opportunity to have input into other topics needing to be addressed. Do plan on eating with us. We want to get to know each other better!

ACTIONS TAKEN BY YOUR EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE -

Your Executive Committee has become aware that our By-Laws need to be up-dated. We have nothing in them relating to adoption, funding or overseeing of social service projects; the fiscal relationship between the Women's Conference and SWUUV is not spelled out; there is no provision relating to the development of a budget; and there has been considerable discussion about changing our fiscal year so that it corresponds to when dues are actually paid. We will be looking at formation of a By-Laws Amendments Committee and other issues that need to be addressed at an Officers' Retreat to be held later this spring. If you have a concern that you would like addressed, contact one of the officers so it can be placed on the agenda for the retreat.

A Conference Guidelines Development Committee has been appointed. Brenda Baldwin, Westside UU, convener of our 2002 Conference, is chair. Past conveners Linda van Blaricom, Little Rock UU, 2001 Little Rock convener; Mary Kay Hamilton, Horizon UU, 2000 Dallas convener; and Elizabeth Muller, First UU, 1998 Oklahoma City co-convener, have agreed to serve on the committee.

Dolores Ruhs, Fort Worth Westside UU Church, was appointed chair of Lunches at SWUUV. She is busy planning heart-healthy and vegetarian entrees. She now has a core of volunteers to help prepare, set up, and serve the meals. If you are planning to attend SWUUV, consider giving a couple of hours on one or more days to help fund our social action projects by volunteering to help with Lunches. You can send me an e-mail, call me, send me a letter or just mark that line on the questionnaire and get that to me if you haven't already done so.

As Sarah Oglesby can't continue as Chair of the Social Action Projects Committee due to the demands of her beautiful, rosy cheeked family addition since last year's meeting, Laura Nagel, Houston First UU Church, agreed to Chair that committee for the coming year. Thanks to the responses to the questionnaire, she has a good committee to work with her.

Members of the Executive Committee are also looking into how best we should go about reestablishing our membership in UUWF (Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation.)

(Continued on page 6)

My First Time...

by Carolyn Dower, Live Oak UU Church, Austin, TX

This year's 2002 SWUW conference in Fort Worth was my first. I'd been wanting to attend for the last two years, but illness and family crisis prevented my getting away. This was the year, and my Goddess, I was excited!

I love being in the company of women, expanding my horizons, and being exposed to new and different ideas. Expectations were happily met. Oh, yes, seeing some of the wonderful items my friends have brought back from past conferences, I have to admit I was also looking forward to adding to my own jewelry and accessories collection. Yes, expectations were happily met in that category, too!

From the moment I stepped foot outside the elevators for the registration table, there was an energy in the air that was definitely that of women spirit; there's nothing like it - positive, welcoming, knowing.

The vendor area was a gorgeous display of color and enticements, beckoning me to every table! The vendors, themselves, were inviting in their friendliness and willingness to let me browse and chat when I exclaimed over or questioned certain items. They were artisans sharing their craft more than vendors selling their wares.

I enjoyed lively conversations with many women, some I knew and was delighted to get to know better, some were fellow participants, maidens, vendors, workshop leaders; there were no strangers.

I loved my workshops. Liza Ely and Jeanneane Cline were engaging, and actually taught me new "tools" that I couldn't wait to share with my husband and teenagers. The camaraderie of women participating made the workshops even more special.

I allowed myself time for solitude, as well. That was one of the nice things about the conference - not feeling like I had to participate in everything (even though there were times when I wished I could be in two places at once!). I was able to take care of just myself - what a luxury! A great reason to attend the conference for that reason alone!

I was also eager to get a glimpse of the actual workings of the conference, since I'm on the planning committee for next year's. (Yes, I was in the skit; no, I wasn't the truly wonderful woman who wore the Wonder Woman costume!) It was quite obvious that a lot of work and planning go into it; more than I realized (gulp!). But I'm really excited to be part of next year's conference, and to be able to commune once again amongst all of you wonder women! See you then!

Starting a Women's Group

by Connie Dunn, SWUW Past-President

Women's groups have historically been at the pinnacle of the church community. Whether it was a sewing group or a service group or a spiritual study group, these women were usually some of the most active women in their churches.

Since the women in a women's group are linked in a social environment, it is often these women who serve as the chief caretakers when there is a family crisis among their congregants. When the church kitchen needs cleaning, it is often these women who turn up with their own cleaning products. They cook the soup for their soup kitchens, bake the bread for communions and teach the children on Sunday mornings.

Today, UU women follow in this historical footsteps. While the typical woman of today spends her days at work, the women's groups no longer fills the void in her stay-at-home life. Instead, most groups meet at other times. They fill the void in our work-a-day lives by reconnecting us to each other, creating a loving, feminine community. They serve as consciousness raising, spiritual stimulating, and discussion-oriented support groups.

The HOW in starting a group, is quite simple. You announce it and advertise it in every way your church has to offer. You invite the women to a meeting. You might even make phone calls to the women. In Denton, we find that at the beginning of each church year, which corresponds to the typical school year calendar, that we need to have a social gathering where new women can meet those of us who have been there awhile. We typically bring snacks, such as wine, cheese, and deserts. We socialize and get to know each other. We don't carry on business and we don't have a ritual, we simply interact and get to know each other. We also have built into our yearly schedule some social time at solstice and equinox gatherings. This social time is crucial to our bonding and commitment to the community of women.

The WHY you start a group can be a bit more difficult. However, if you understand that the consensus of women want to explore feminist theology, for example, then it's easier to start an educational or spiritual group.

Our group in Denton falls into this category (Educational/Spiritual). Here is our general structure: We discuss business that includes other meetings of interest (SWUW conference is an example) and future meetings. We are a leaderless group, in that we don't have one leader, instead we share leadership. Everyone takes a turn at leading sessions. Some of our sessions are a curriculum study. At other times, the women share knowledge in a plethora of spiritual practices, including

(continued on next page)



Starting A Women's Group

(continued from previous page)

Tarot to labyrinth walking. We have coordinators that volunteer for awhile (unspecific time) and they (we have two main coordinators for this year) handle the business portion of the meeting. Then, since we are a spiritual group, we normally call the directions (an earth-centered religious practice) and light a candle on our altar, which is decorated by the leaders of the session and they probably will hand out slips of paper with the words they want to use for the directions.

We also make it a practice to introduce ourselves with our matrial lineage (I am Connie, daughter of Odell, daughter of Olivia, daughter of Sarah, daughter of Mary). Sometimes we choose to introduce ourselves with a check in (more support group style) Next, comes the curriculum session or book discussion or meat of our meeting.

For a curriculum study, I suggest looking into *Cakes for the Queen of Heaven* or *Rise Up and Call Her Name*, which are published by the UUWF. Other books can work, as well. We usually supplement study with an activity, so it is more hands-on learning. We end with a song and extinguishing our candle.

Ritual is very important to our group. An entire newsletter, published by SWUJW, was devoted to discussing our women's group. It is published on our Web at <http://www.swuujw.org/newsletters>. Choose Summer/Fall 2000.

I've divided the types of Women's Groups into five categories:

1. Educational/Spiritual group - this group meets with a purpose of studying curriculums, books and otherwise educates themselves for spiritual purposes. .This model works like the Denton example above.

2. Support group - this group meets with a purpose of supporting each other. This model typically has a check-in of each member at the beginning of the session. An example is: My name is Connie, I feel....this evening. You can use variations on this. After you've gone around your circle and everyone has had an opportunity to check in, then you might have a topic of discussion for the evening or devote your evening to discussing a problem that one of your members might have. This might be a group of women who start a micro bank, which loans money to impoverished women (usually in third world countries). This group might also do something more local, such as set up a soup kitchen, volunteer as a group at a battered women's shelter.

3. Social Action group - this group typically meets with a specific purpose in mind. The agenda is set by the need of the social action adopted. You can opt to have a

check-in around the circle or an introduction of names with matrial lineage or some other choice before you

begin the business of your social action. An example might be a group of women who start a micro bank, which loans money to impoverished women (usually in third world countries). This group might also do something more local, such as set up a soup kitchen, volunteer as a group at a battered women's shelter.

4. Sewing/Book group - this group, similar to the Social Action group meets with a more focused purpose...to read or review books or to sew. Again, you can opt to have some sort of ritual along with this sort of meeting and include an introduction similar to either choice 1 or

5. Women's Federation - this group, is typically more organized. It elects officers and collects dues. Its purpose, however, may still fall into any of the above four categories. It may just as well follow into a ritualistic pattern as other groups. The main difference is that they pay dues to UUWF usually collect dues for its local and district organizations. It may be more usual for these groups to fall into my #3 group above for organization during each session. However, one UUWF group that I'm aware of simply meets for lunch.

Membership in SWUJW is only \$5 per person. Membership in the UUWF is \$33-\$75, depending on your level of support or a lifetime membership of \$750. Groups join as affiliates with five or more individuals at \$15 per person.

To find out more about the UUWF, please check out their website at:

<http://www.uua.org/uuwf>

To find out more about SWUJW, please check out our website at:

<http://www.swuujw.org>

PURPOSES TAKEN FROM THE UUWF BYLAWS

- ◆ We affirm the inherent value of each woman within our community;
- ◆ We affirm the importance of our women's voices in our religious quest;
- ◆ We link our hearts and minds in service of knowledge of women's truths and we pledge our action against the religious roots of sexism;
- ◆ We pledge to support the diversity of religious feminisms;
- ◆ We join together to heal our wounds;
- ◆ We work to raise consciousness of the linked nature of oppressions;
- ◆ We seek justice for all women in our struggles to transform institutions of oppression;
- ◆ We highlight and celebrate women's achievements—past, present and future.

President's Column (continued from page 3)

MISCELANOUS NOTES –

Brenda McKeon, Ft. Worth Westside UU Church, this year's Director of SWUUSI, is including in the SWUUSI brochure a special blurb about Lunches Plus. The menus for the week will be announced in a flyer to be inserted in all packets. All profits from the lunches are to be earmarked for our social service project.

Have you been inspired to write a poem, an article, a book review or an opinion piece that you think would be of interest to other women? Send it to our e-mail address, swuuw@hotmail.com and it will be forwarded to the next editor of SWWIRL. You can also mail items for future issues of SWWIRL to me. Submissions are accepted throughout the year. There's no need to wait until the next edition is being prepared.

INTERNET AND E-MAIL INFORMATION –

Have you visited our SWUUW web site? Its address is www.swuuw.org/ Do check it out, and let Connie Dunn, Denton TX UU Fellowship, our web master, know that you appreciate her efforts. She has added all sorts of new things, including info on the 2003 Conference in Austin. Connie has written up a summary of our social action projects and has added information about vendors of products that may be of interest to you (click on SWUUW Marketplace). If you order from Chalice Art, they will contribute 25% to SWUUW! You have to request this on your order. Click on SWUUW e-News to find an article from the N. Y. Times titled "Living In A World Without Women." It is extremely powerful! There is also a link to our newly established SWUUW e-mail address, swuuw@hotmail.com. This e-mail address gives you a central address to send inquiries to or to reply to our requests for information. The person monitoring the site will either forward your question to the proper person, or alert that person that they have a message they need to attend to.

We hope that all women's groups in the SouthWest District will send Connie information on how to contact them so that it can be posted on the website for all interested in locating you. Currently we have only a few groups who have furnished this information.

SWUUW also maintains a Yahoo e-mailing list. If you are not a member of it, and wish to be, send an e-mail to swuuw-subscribe@yahoogroups.com. To send a message to the group, address it to swuuw@yahoogroups.com. To unsubscribe, send an e-mail to swuuw-unsubscribe@yahoogroups.com. We request that no jokes, pleas for petition signatures, etc. be sent to this list. You can give the address for a petition that you think many women will be interested in, but don't e-mail the full petition.

FUTURE CONFERENCES –

Want to strengthen the ties in your group, in your area congregations? Consider making a bid to host a Woman's Conference. This year's conference was the product of women of 4 congregations working closely together. Many ties between us were formed and will only grow stronger through the years.

Austin will host the 2003 conference on Feb 28, March 1 & 2. Sue Ann Kendell, Live Oak UU Church Austin, is the convener. Their main speaker will be San Antonio play therapist, Nancy Franklin. The skit they put on at Fort Worth was most WONDERful! [Their theme is Wonder Women: Weaving Wonder Through Our Lives]

Oklahoma City will be hosting 2004 with Elizabeth Muller, Oklahoma City First UU Church, and Carol Scott, Oklahoma City First UU Church, as co-conveners. They already have Prema Dasara and Anahata Iradah as their theme speakers. It will be held the last weekend in January or the first weekend in February of 2004.

2005 will be hosted by Tahlequah/Tulsa UU Congregations. Co-Conveners are Tery DeShong of Tahlequah UU Church and Marilyn Blackmon of Community UU Church in Tulsa.

Blessed be,

Gino Kennedy

SWUUW Annual Meeting Minutes February 23, 2002

Meeting was held during lunch to increase attendance and door prizes were awarded following the conclusion of the meeting.

Kathy Calhoun presented a short oral history of SWUUW and the women's conferences.

The meeting called to order at 12:33 P.M.

1. Motion to approve 2001 annual meeting minutes as published in the SWWIRL, seconded, and passed.
2. Motion to approve 2001 SWUUSI meeting minutes as published in SWWIRL, seconded and passed.
3. Barbara Rodman's Treasurer Report. Written report made available to all present.
 - A. Operating and Conference accounts are now both at Southwest Women's Credit Union Bank in Dallas.
 - B. Operating account ended the year with \$10, 338.72, and 69.08 cash on hand. Expenses last year were reported at \$740.66. Actual expenses were higher, but as the treasurer didn't have access to the records of the old bank account in Tulsa, she doesn't have a record of what they were.
 - C. Conference account, which provides seed money for each conference is \$2174.91. It is usually around

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Annual Meeting Minutes *(continued from page 6)*

D. Proposed budget for 2002 includes revenue from dues, profit from “Lunches Plus” at SWUUSI, dividends, and an amount from savings, to add up to \$2200. Expenses of \$2200 include printing and postage costs of 4 issues of SWWIRL, 30 hours of paid office work, and office supplies. Proposed operating budget may change based on officers meeting expense, approvals of scholarships and president's expenses.

E. No questions were asked, and Barbara announced that the Treasurer's report would be filed for audit.

4. Connie Dunn, Denton UU Fellowship, Immediate Past President and Chair of the Nominating Committee, ran the election of officers. The slate from the Nominating Committee offered Carol Phillips as the secretary (running for her first full term, as last year she was filling the end of the previous secretary's term) and the current officers, Janet Martinique as the President Elect (a three year commitment that will make her the President in 2003 and the Immediate Past President in 2004) and Gino Kennedy (one year as President and one year as Immediate Past President.) To complete the Executive Committee, Barbara Rodman is filling the second year of her term as Treasurer.

There being no nominations from the floor, a motion to suspend the By-Laws requirement of using written ballots for the election, was made, seconded and passed. A voice vote elected the slate from the nominating committee.

5. Gino announced that lots of actions have been taken by the Board and will be presented in detail at the planning meeting.

At last year's planning meeting, there was concern that the money in the SWUJW accounts was not moving. A committee was formed to investigate the possible adoption of one or more social service projects, with Sarah Oglesby, Denton & Oak Cliff UU Fellowships, as the Chair. After a call for suggestions in the SWWIRL, and much research into the issue, she presented three social service projects for funding by SWUJW, including FINCA Microcredit system, the Heifer Project, and SWUUC Chalice Lighters. A handout detailing these projects was made available to all in attendance at the meeting. Floor opened for questions. Question: How would this work for our group? Gino answered that we have asked for volunteers for a committee to establish guidelines for these social service projects, and a committee to complete the work around establishing these projects. Question: How much money are we talking about? What is considered excess money? Barb answered, not counting \$4000 seed money for the conferences, we have excess of \$10,000, and that she feels it is inappropriate and unethical to sit on money year after year and not do anything with people's dues. Barb's proposal/recommendation is to spend a significant amount, of around \$6000, and set up a committee to help raise funds for future projects.

Sarah moved that we support all three projects, \$5000 to Village banking, \$500 to Heifer project, and \$300 to Chalice Lighters. Janet Martinique, Oak Cliff UU Fellowship, seconded the motion. Barbara pointed out that the profit from Lunches Plus at SWUUSI was earmarked for the social service project. She made a friendly amendment that the Lunches Plus money be used as the \$500 donation to Heifer project, since that is approximately what that revenue is. Accepted by Sarah and Janet. Question: How long term are talking about? Ans. One time commitment. Suggested amendment that local women's groups participate. Gino pointed out that local groups can donate smaller amounts and we should leave it up to those groups to make donations independently. Sarah offered copies of the donation forms for people to take home to their churches and groups. Sarah pointed out that there are items in the Mini-Bazaar that were created in conjunction with the Microcredit program sponsored by the women of Tulsa All Souls UU Church. Barb offered to accept donations earmarked for social action, and to keep them separate from other SWUJW monies. Gino repeated motion. Resounding affirmation.

It was announced that the Executive Committee has approved the granting of two scholarships in the amount of \$100 each to SWUJW members to attend the Dwight Brown Leadership Experience.

Gino announced that the Planning meeting would be in Texas A & B from 5:30 to 6:30. Agenda for Planning Meeting to include setting up committees for social service, a by laws committee that would clarify the relationship between SWUJW and the annual conference and to include other items like a social service committee, Lunches Plus profits to be earmarked for social service.

Gino offered an inspirational quote from Emily Dickinson to the effect of “I dwell in possibilities.”

Move to adjourn meeting, seconded and passed at 1:04 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Carol Phillips, SWUJW Secretary

A BIG THANK YOU

from Women's Haven in Fort Worth

SWUU Women were heroines of the day when the items collected at the FW conference were delivered to the local shelter for abused women and their children. This shelter serves as the first stop on the path of recovery for women in abusive relationships. Women and children often arrive there with nothing but the clothes they are wearing. The soap, shampoo, lotions, feminine hygiene items, medications and other assorted items will provide necessities and a degree of comfort to the women and children served by Women's Haven. The staff was overwhelmed by the generosity of SWUW.

Lost and Found

at the Fort Worth Conference

LOST

- CD's** - Riley Roden – *Decapolis – The River*
 - Ray Lynch – *Nothing Above My Shoulders But The Evening*
 - Unknown – Yellow CD, no case

Bottle Cap Earring (one) with drawing of Kuan Yin on it
Tie-dyed Wrap - purple and turquoise, with painting of Isis on it

Large Crystal – approx. 2.5 inches in length, white/clear, won in raffle and promptly lost by a Maiden

FOUND

Anklet, still in package – describe to claim

Fabric Sports Bag – Purple and teal, contained items for Women's Haven when found

*If you have any information on these items, please
 e-mail: SWUW@hotmail.com*

OR

*Call Brenda Baldwin
 @ 817-927-1762*

NAMETAGS

We successfully recycled all but approximately 50 of the nametags used at the Fort Worth conference. In case you left the conference without returning your name tag, please send it to Brenda Baldwin (4400 Inwood Rd Fort Worth, TX 76109) or give it to Gino Kennedy at the Spring or Fall Conference or at SWUUSI. SWUW plans to use these nametags for many conferences to come. The paper labels can be removed by a magical process (don't try this at home!) and new labels applied by the next conference committee. This is much more earth friendly than the "throw-away" badges and more economical for each conference. Please do your part by returning your name tag. Thank you!

Weaving

*by Brenda Baldwin
 2002 Conference Convener*

In the registration area of the Fort Worth Conference, the Welcoming Committee set up a simple loom and an assortment of fabric, ribbon and notions. From Friday afternoon until Saturday evening, many women took a turn weaving a row or two or three into the loom. For some, it was a solitary time in the midst of the noise and energy of the conference activities. Others had help with their contributions – an old or new friend offering suggestions and maybe another set of hands to weave while enjoying a few minutes of conversation. It was interesting to watch the piece grow in size and variety as time passed, just as it was to watch women making connections as time passed.

Late Friday night, or perhaps it was in the wee hours of Saturday morning, a small group of women placed centerpieces on each of the tables that would be used during meals throughout the day on Saturday. The centerpieces included a written card describing the Tibetan custom of prayer ribbons. Ribbons on which to write wishes, prayers, words of wisdom, etc. were placed on the tables along with colorful pens. Many of you took a moment to write on those ribbons, just as many of you took time to share your thoughts, wishes and words of wisdom with other women throughout the conference.

After quiet descended on the ballroom Saturday night, another small group of women collected the centerpieces and the loom, finished the weaving by incorporating the prayer ribbons and framed the finished piece. At the closing ceremony Sunday morning, the finished piece stood on the stage as a testimony to the sharing of our lives and selves that had occurred throughout the weekend.

What had started as a wooden frame with a few vertical strings and a pile of assorted textiles had become a beautiful piece with different colors, textures and symbols woven together. I liken the weaving to the components that make up our annual conferences. We start with a frame and some strings - the place and the program, and we end with a wonderful community of women celebrating themselves and the connections they have made and renewed.

I was honored and humbled to be presented with the finished framed weaving as a thank you for my acting as convener of the conference. It hangs in a place of honor in my home, a place I pass many times each day and remember the community we gathered and wove in our time together. The weaving is a lasting reminder of how truly blessed I have been in my associations with the women who organized and attended the conference.

SWUUV Springs Into Action

by Janet Martinique, SWUUV Vice President

All through winter, life retreats into rest. The roots cling to life dearly to what remains. In the spring, they push up all the life they held and bloom into riotous renewal. SWUUV has held onto the last shreds of life throughout the past year, our roots put out shoots, now we have sprung fully alive again.

A report of the results of the questionnaire filled out at lunch by women attending February's Women's Conference in Fort Worth is summarized below. It is really heartening!

- ♥ 3 women signed up to serve on a committee to set up the guide lines for our new service projects.
- ♥ 20 signed up to work on the service projects committee, and the Board appointed a new chairperson.
- ♥ 3 more signed up to work on a fund raising committee for the service projects.
- ♥ 1 woman volunteered to work with the nominating committee.
- ♥ 1 agreed to be a future officer of SWUUV.

- ♥ 8 want to help with SWUUSI Lunches Plus.
- ♥ 2 are willing to chair Lunches Plus, and the Board appointed a chairperson for 2002.
- ♥ 1 volunteered to do a new workshop at a future conference.
- ♥ 20, count them, 20 have agreed to be the local contact to SWUUV for their church.
- ♥ 15 others have agreed to maintain a data base of their women's group for us.
- ♥ 17 have also agreed to work on committees for hosts of future Conferences.
- ♥ 4 new people agreed to be editor for an issue of SWWIRL.
- ♥ 4 said they would provide a women's session at either SWUUSI, Spring or Fall Conferences.
- ♥ And last, but no means least, 32 agreed to help provide ideas for future events. Our officers have discussed using this group as a sampling or sounding board for ideas as well.

This is a tremendous response to a renewed SouthWest Unitarian Universalist Women! We look forward to the future with hopeful hearts. We will rise with the sap and achieve beautiful results!

Please cut and mail this section to Gino Kennedy - 1350 Melissa Dr. - Stephenville, TX 76401

SWUUV Questionnaire (for those who did not fill one out at the FW conference)

Name [please print] _____ Phone Number _____

Address _____

e-mail address _____ Congregation, if applicable _____

If you are not associated with a UU Congregation, would you like to receive information on ones in your area? Yes _____ No _____

Things I would enjoy doing as a member of SWUUV: (check all that apply)

- _____ Serve on committee to set up **guidelines** for social service projects
- _____ Work on Social Service Projects Committee
- _____ Work on Committee to raise monies to support service projects
- _____ Serve as an officer of SWUUV
- _____ Serve on committee to revise SWUUV By-Laws
- _____ Help with Lunches Plus at SWUUSI summer of 2002
- _____ Serve as Chair for Lunches Plus at SWUUSI 2003 and/or 2004
- _____ Serve as Editor for one or more issues of SWWIRL
- _____ Serve as local contact in my congregation for SWUUV
- _____ Serve on committee hosting a Women's Conference
- _____ Maintain updated street and e-mail addresses of women in my congregation
- _____ Serve on committee to provide Women's sessions at SWUUSI, Spring, Fall Conferences
- _____ Contribute ideas **but** not necessarily work on specific committee to carry them out

The Women

What do I remember most from my time as convener of the 2002 Conference? *The Women*. What did almost every respondent to the “Feedback on Fort Worth Conference” site as one of their favorite things about the FW conference and/or previous conferences? *The Women*. What did almost every respondent state as one of the top 3 three reasons they come to conferences? *The Women*. Why has SWUW held an annual conference every year since 19?? ? *The Women*.

The Women of SWUW and *The Women* who join us at our annual women’s conferences are some of my favorite women in the world! *The Women* who collectively worked to bring this year’s conference in Fort Worth to fruition are women I am most appreciative of and for whom I have the utmost respect. I could never explain how difficult, trying and ultimately rewarding the experience of convening a conference is. You’ll just have to try it for yourself! I now feel I have earned my place among those exalted women who have acted as conveners for previous conferences, and I now understand why they kept saying “but I had help”. For, you see, a conference could never be the product of one woman. The convener may organize meetings, assign tasks and try to follow-up, but she must let go and trust in *The Women* who have given of themselves to handle their chosen portion of conference preparations.

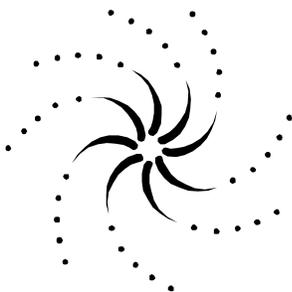
“Letting go” was something that I learned a lot about this past year. I appreciate *The Women* who didn’t back down and told me that I must “let go” and let them handle things. They were right, and their outcome was fantastic. I learned to “let go” and trust *The Women* who offered their myriad of talents. Some of those women also brought more talented women into the process. I feel the result was a quality experience for the vast majority of conference attendees. I thank all the conference attendees for sharing themselves with The Women at the conference and look forward to spending time with you again. Blessed Be!

Brenda Baldwin
Convener, Fort Worth 2002

p.s. After writing this, I went back to read what Linda VanBlaricom, the convener of the 2001 conference, had written following that conference. Amazing, but true – she, too, wrote about *The Women*!

SWWIRL
SouthWest Women in Religion Letter
SWUU Conference
6720 Brentwood Stair Rd.
Fort Worth, TX 76112

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