



# SWUUWorld

*Women Helping Women  
Lighting the Way to Possibilities*

**Newsletter of Southwest UU Women**

5202 Crawford Unit 19, Houston, TX 77004 editor@swuuw.com <http://www.swuuw.com>

Volume 2005 Fall Issue

## FUN AT SWUUSI WITH SWUUW

All people can be peace workers.  
Whenever you bring harmony into any unpeaceful situation, you contribute to the total peace picture.  
Insofar as you have peace in your own life, you reflect it into your surroundings and into the world.

Peace  
Pilgrim



The SWUUW summer meeting is held every summer at SWUUSI. It has previously been put right after the Lunches+ program where it had to compete with afternoon lassitude and workshop commitments. This year we tried a different approach: a wine and cheese party in the SWUUW cabin.

We had a great turnout of very fun and interesting women: Cindy Hurt, Beth Hammer, Tracy Cook, Michelle French, Jeanne Parkhurst, Colleen Barnard, Lindia Franklin, Mary Francis, Sylvia Wheeler, Laura Edwards and new board members Rev. Danita Noland and Julia Harris.

We showed two movies, "Cowgirls" and "The First National Womens' Conference". After the socializing and the eating and the watching, we sat in a circle and introduced all around our names, home congregations and interest in SWUUW. A lively and productive discussion followed. The exchange of ideas brought out some new possibilities for networking and being more effective as a service organization.

The innovation more than achieved our goals of reinvigorating the SWUUSI meeting! We will do it again next year. Y'all come!

We did not do as well as hoped in the lunches department. Registration was down at SWUUSI perhaps because General Assembly was in Texas earlier in the summer. We did earn \$450, approximately half of what we made last year. Next year we will increase the price of lunches for adults to \$6 from \$5 and also ask for lunches to be purchased in advance through registration. Elizabeth Muller will be working with Rev. Jonalu Johnstone and Arlene Dormio to better coordinate SWUUW lunches with other camp activities.

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**FROM THE PRESIDENT**

Dear SWUJW

The situation on the Gulf Coast is sad and frustrating to us all. As the recovery moves along there will be continuing opportunities for all of us to help. It will be important to sustain the momentum that is finally building because this is not a project that will be completed any time soon.

Our district website, <http://www.swuuc.org/>, is an excellent source of possible action that we can participate in. I am sure many of you in the areas where refugees are living are already deeply involved.

I was particularly impressed with a program on the website called A New Way to Help - Adopt a Family:

"Many, many of you have offered your homes and we are working to place UUs in offered homes. In the meantime, we are beginning to hear from families who are affected but not necessarily displaced. Needs vary from needing a vehicle, to IV lines, to money for rent, and more are being shared every day.

Since we are obviously not going to be placing families in every home offered, we are now creating an opportunity for individuals, families, and/or congregations to "adopt a UU family in need". This way support can be offered from afar. If you or your congregation feel this might be something you are interested in, please contact [katrinahelp@swuuc.org](mailto:katrinahelp@swuuc.org)."

Those of you who danced with us in Oklahoma City two years ago may remember the words to the Dance of Universal Peace, "Tasche Dalek", "Rejoice in happy times together, and together share adversity." We have rejoiced together and will again; now is the time for the sharing.

With love,  
 Elizabeth

**NO NONSENSE IN NOVEMBER**

When the Texas legislature put off solving the problem of school financing to pass the marriage amendment during the regular legislative session, they said it was to protect marriage in this state. What it really will do is write discrimination into the Texas Constitution. The voters of Texas will be making a choice in November - yes or no to discrimination.

Proposition #2 reads: "The constitutional amendment providing that marriage in this state consists only of the union of one man and one woman and prohibiting this state or a political subdivision of this state from creating or recognizing any legal status identical or similar to marriage." The amendment is so broadly written that the ramifications are hard to predict. It may be interpreted as invalidating legal contracts and arrangements between unmarried heterosexual couples as well as same gender couples. It calls into question whether domestic partner benefits currently offered by cities, counties or companies will remain valid.

*(Continued on page 6)*

## MEET NEW SWU UW BOARD MEMBER JULIA HARRIS, TULSA, OK

When asked to introduce myself these days, I try consciously to say what I am rather than describe myself by what I do. The easy answer is that I am a mother of two daughters away in college and a musician. The “doing” of that involves private teaching, work for the Tulsa Arts Council in schools, playing viola in two orchestras, and in traditional music playing Celtic fiddle and hammered dulcimer with one heck of a non-traditional work schedule. This summer I became a woman on a quest to “show up” for whatever rich experiences life may yet have for me at 58 years old. Showing up at SWUUSI brought me to an invitation to serve on the SWU UW Board. One just doesn’t turn down Laura Nagel.

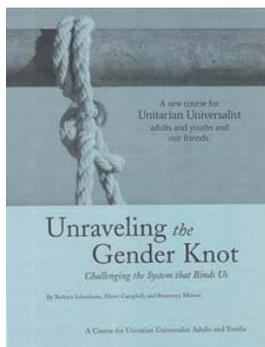
I became an active UU in the 1970s in the Fellowship in Bartlesville, Oklahoma and then in All Souls in Tulsa. Although my church has much to offer, I have to credit my association with women in the Southwest District for the experiences that defined and enriched my spiritual life, challenged my intellect, held me up when times were hard, and held me in friendship across the span of miles and years. The organizational vision of Kathy Calhoun (another woman one does not say no to), the humor and leadership of Fran Faris, the steadfast diligence of Sylvia Wheeler, the mentorship of Arlene Johnson with her ability to connect the right person with the right place at the right time, the vision of Shannon Cooper who saw that the formal linking of SW Women and Religion and SWU UW was the way to allow for our survival (which indeed has meant that our district is the only one left in the UUA with a viable women’s organization with an annual conference), the creative vision and work of the women who conceived and brought us the District Women’s Conferences, the spiritual exploration and sharing of Maggi Joseph and Anita Louise, and the poetry of Betty Becquart Sanders published in SWIRRL that has allowed us to keep Anita Louise close in our hearts, and oh, so many friends - this is what SWU UW has been for me. I sense now a revival of energy and immense possibility in this organization that I am excited to be part of.

I first heard the word “Goddess” spoken seriously at the Second Southwest District Women’s Conference held in Dallas in 1988. The idea that it

was not only possible to personify the sacred as feminine but that thousands of women were exploring seriously what that might mean in their lives changed the course of my life. But SWU UW is not about the Goddess, though the safe space to consider such a notion was made possible by SWU UW. It is not about service, although the bank we have set up in Central America is changing the lives of women, their children, and their communities. In my personal quest to “be” more and “do” less, my descriptions of organizations turn more toward how they exist and what they allow space for than to what they do. It just happens that in the space occupied by the collaboration of Southwest UU women we call SWU UW, women are being lifted, even wrested, out of the margins into the center of the page in bold type.

The annual District Women’s Conferences and *SWIRRL* [renamed *SWU UWWorld*] are the examples of SWU UW work most in public view. Too few women, however, personally receive the benefit of attending District events where the workshops designed by SWU UW to meet specifically the needs of women can enrich or even change a woman’s life. I hope that with your help we will be able to let all our UU women know what is there for them at district gatherings and also the resources they can bring to themselves in their own churches. Check the website for the Resources available from the district office that were put together by the Women and Religion Committee over the years. There is much there that is still timely and free.

*Julia Harris lives in Tulsa, Oklahoma and served on the SWU UW Board from 1994 to 1998 in her capacity as the Women and Religion Convenor for the Southwest District, an appointed position on the SW District Board until the “sunsetting” of that committee in our district.*



SWU UW Sponsored Workshop - Fall Conference  
 Unraveling the Gender Knot  
 November 11-13, 2005                      Live Oak UU Church, Austin

The workshop will focus on one session of this new curriculum developed by Rosemary Matson, Alison Campbell, and Barbara Schonborn through a grant from the UU Women's Federation.

The curriculum entitled *Unraveling the Gender Knot: Challenging the System that Binds Us* asks us to consider the patriarchal system that everyone participates in, willingly and knowingly, or not. Participants will begin the workshop by brainstorming definitions of patriarchy. Next we will view the film *The Gods of Our Fathers*. After the film there will be a group exercise exploring experiences of patriarchy in our lives and how we have responded and what we can do to bring down barriers to change. Each participant will be given a brochure on the course and materials to take back with them to their congregations.

Co-Facilitators, Laura Nagel, Administrator of Southwest UU Women and her husband Harry Nagel, SWUUC board member.

## NATIONAL PEACE PILGRIM CENTER MOVES TO OKC

The center for Friends of Peace Pilgrim will move to Oklahoma City at the end of October. The center will be housed at Epworth United Methodist Church which is a large old building (1903) which the church shares with non-profit organizations benefiting the community.

The Peace Pilgrim Center has been located in California, but had to close due to the illness of the previous director. Oklahoma is home to many Friends of Peace Pilgrim, because she passed through the state six times in the course of her coast to coast walks across America. Elizabeth Muller is a part of the committee that has sponsored the move.

In the words of Cheryl Canfield, President of the board of Friends of Peace Pilgrim, "When my dear friend and beloved mentor, Peace Pilgrim, died in 1981 a small group of people - Ann and John Rush, Andy Zupko, Richard Polese and myself got together and decided to put her words together in a book. The result was, *PEACE PILGRIM: Her Life and Work in Her Own Words*. No one could predict how the publication of that book and other Peace Pilgrim materials, completely supported by donations and distributed by volunteers, would not only continue but grow to inspire a world-wide audience. We have gone through many changes since then. Now,

embracing the inspiring and dynamic participation of volunteers in OKC, we are moving the distribution center to Oklahoma City the end of October. We applaud and appreciate our dear friends in Peace."

The book and Peace Pilgrim's pamphlet "Steps to Inner Peace" have been translated into 26 languages. One of the functions of the center is to distribute the materials free of charge to any who request them.

Peace Pilgrim walked across America for 28 years, from 1953 to 1981. She quit counting miles at 25,000, 11 years into her journey. Carrying in her tunic her only possessions, she vowed, "I shall remain a wanderer until mankind has learned the way of peace, walking until given shelter and fasting until given food."

How appropriate that her center move to OKC, the Heartland, the very center of the route she walked those 28 years. The people of Oklahoma City know too well the cost of lack of inner peace. The Memorial to the Murrah bombing attests to the result: destruction without and within.

Peace Pilgrim walked spreading her message- "This is the way of peace: Overcome

*(Continued on page 5)*

## ROSEMARY MATSON KEYNOTE SPEAKER FOR 2006 CONFERENCE



The story of how you come to find your keynote speaker is always an interesting, if sometimes, circuitous tale. Our story begins with the theme of this year's conference, which is to celebrate 20 years of SWU UW annual conferences. We have learned in the last two years that we are the only UU women's group which has such a track record.

This theme soon met up with another path or journey we have been on to discover our history, or what we don't know about our own history. It was sometime before SWUUSI this year, when we were touting our 20-year history, that board member Gino Kennedy made us aware that SWU UW had been around for closer to 60 years. Surely not in its present form, but SWU UW began serving lunches at SWUUSI soon after the Second World War ended.

Next, we began hearing about the Women and Religion committee from our new board member Julia Harris (see her introductory note elsewhere in this newsletter). Her box of files and history led us to reading more about the 1970s when the Women and Religion Committee was formed by the UUA president. We discovered that they convened a convocation of UU women in 1979 in Loveland, Ohio.

In reading about this period of history, Rosemary Matson's name can be found over and over. Rosemary was co-chair of the first UUA Women and Religion Committee formed in 1978, which organized the Loveland

convocation. They began the work to eliminate sexist language from the UU principles and purposes and from our hymns.

In 1998, Rosemary and Lucile Longview were given the "Ministry to Women" award by the UU Women's Federation and their names were placed on the Wall of Fame in Seneca Falls, NY, the site of the first Women's Rights Convention in 1848.

Lucile Longview, Rosemary's mentor, had attended the first United Nations World Conference on Women in Mexico City in 1975. Lucile, a lay woman, later authored the Women and Religion Resolution, passed at General Assembly in 1977.

These were exciting times. The ERA was being voted upon in a heated battle across the states. Lots of things changed then, battles were won and many lost, including that of the ERA.

Rosemary has agreed to be our keynote speaker at this year's annual conference. At this year's GA in Fort Worth, she presented a workshop entitled "Women Open a Window on the Bible." She is one of the authors of *Unraveling the Gender Knot*, a new curriculum from which SWU UW will present a workshop at the Fall Conference on November 11-13<sup>th</sup> (see article in this newsletter).

This year's SWU UW conference will be February 24-26<sup>th</sup> at the Doral Tesoro Hotel and Golf Club in Fort Worth (<http://www.doraltesoro.com>). Registration will be available beginning November 1<sup>st</sup> online at <http://www.swuuw.com> and via mail.



*(Continued from page 4)*

evil with good, falsehood with truth, and hatred with love. My pilgrimage covers the entire peace picture: peace among nations, groups, the environment, individuals, and the very, very, important inner peace - because that is where peace begins."

Friends of Peace Pilgrim Center is a 501 (c) 3 non profit, so donations are tax deductible. For more information about Peace Pilgrim go to the website: [www.peacepilgrim.org](http://www.peacepilgrim.org).



## SWUW CONTRIBUTES TO TSUNAMI RELIEF

SWUW has contributed \$600 to Tsunami Relief through The International Alliance for Women (<http://www.womenalliance.com>). The money will become part of a fund for micro-lending to women in need of assistance. This money was raised through the Lunches + program at SWUUSI in 2004 and from raffle ticket sales of the Bra Quilt at General Assembly.

*(Continued from page 2)*

No Nonsense in November is a statewide coalition formed to educate and inform the public about this issue while building support to defeat the amendment. Former State Representative Glen Maxey is leading the coalition, bringing his many years of political experience in Texas politics to the table. Social justice organizations, such as the Lesbian Gay Rights Lobby of Texas, Human Rights Campaign, Lambda Legal and PFLAG, have been joined by a long list of faith communities, youth groups and political organizations in this coalition. A full list of coalition supporters can be found at [www.nononsenseinnovember.com](http://www.nononsenseinnovember.com). Seven UU congregations have already joined.

What can you do to help? You can join the coalition as an individual; talk to members of your congregation about this issue and encourage fellow members to support the coalition as individuals or as a group; have a house party (see the website for how-to details), volunteer for the phone bank; talk to co-workers and friends about why defeating this amendment is important to you.

As a PFLAG mom I have long been involved in advocacy for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender rights. I feel very strongly that my gay child should have equal rights with my straight child. Same gender couples should have the same choice as heterosexual couples, to be legally married or not. I have chosen not to exercise my right to be married in part out of support for my son, who does not have that right. All couples should be able to access the rights and protections for their families that are found only in marriage.

## SWU UW PURPOSES From the Bylaws modified February 2003

- To deepen the religious life of the women of the Southwest District;
- To bring the women of the Southwest District of the UUA into closer acquaintance, cooperation, and fellowship through the SWU UW annual conference, the Southwest Unitarian Universalist Summer Institute (SWU USI) and other district events;
- To promote the formation of new women’s groups in the Southwest District of the UUA (the “District”) churches and fellowships;
- To develop women leaders to be a strong and effective voice within the Southwest District of the UUA.
- To sponsor a district-wide Women’s Conference to be held annually within the Southwest District;
- To educate SWU UW members on social issues; and
- To work across the globe to promote greater social justice through long term systemic change at the local, national and international level.



### NEWSLETTER DISTRIBUTION - HOW YOU CAN HELP

Please communicate to us any news you think we should know about our members, or articles you would like to see printed in SWU UWWorld. Our newsletter editor is Sharon Salih, and she can be emailed at [editor@swu uw.com](mailto:editor@swu uw.com).

We are struggling to figure out the best way to distribute our newsletter, SWU UWWorld. E-mailing it is of course the cheapest way, but that means we need to have all the available e-mail addresses of those who wish to receive it. If you have access to e-mail addresses of women in your congregation, please send their name and e-mail addresses to [administrator@swu uw.com](mailto:administrator@swu uw.com). If you are reading a hard copy of this and have an e-mail address, please send it to the above address.

We will continue to mail a few copies to each congregation for distribution. We will be e-mailing a contact in each congregation a small newsletter article for submission to their church newsletter informing the women where the newsletters are so that those who are interested in the doings of SWU UW but have not received an e-mail copy may pick one up.

Thanks so much for your help!  
Laura Nagel  
SWU UW Administrator



**MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**  
*Southwest Unitarian Universalist Women*

To join mail in the form below with your check to: Patti Clark, SWUUW Treasurer  
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