



# SWUUWorld

*Women Helping Women  
Lighting the Way to Possibilities*

**Newsletter of Southwest UU Women**

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Volume 2004 Winter Issue

## SWUUW OBTAINS STATUS AS AN AFFILIATE OF THE UUA

### Will Sponsor Two Workshops and Be an Exhibitor at General Assembly in Fort Worth

This summer at General Assembly in Long Beach, the UUA board voted to approve SWUUW's application to become an Independent Affiliate of the UUA. You may ask, what does that mean? The UUA like many organizations gets more and more organizationally sophisticated. While its primary function is as an association of congregations, there are myriad other associations that have formed to support special causes or groups of people. Other examples of independent affiliates are the UU Process Theology Network or the UU Women's Heritage Society. It's not quite as easy as it used to be to gain this status. Our application had to include letters of support from a fellowshipped UU minister. We would like to thank the Rev. Jonalu Johnstone for providing this for us. Also we needed letters of support from our District Executive and the SWUUC board president. We also extend our thanks to Bob Hill and to Joe Sullivan both of whom wrote letters for us with the full support of the SWUUC board.

You might ask, why we would want to be an independent affiliate of the UUA. This is a status we must seek every year although to request reauthorization is not so extensive a process as the first time. Still you must reapply. So, if we find that it offers us no benefits, we do not have to continue. We explored this because General Assembly will be in Fort Worth next year and, as an independent affiliate we can have two workshops at General Assembly and also can be an exhibitor, a move which the SWUUW board approved at its last meeting. Because we have been working hard to grow and develop SWUUW, this seems like a perfect opportunity to spread our message.

Descriptions of the workshops we will sponsor at General Assembly are due to the UUA by the end of this year. At its last meeting the board agreed to submit two workshops. The first is the history of the Rev. Mary Billings, the first woman Universalist minister in Texas. The workshop will be conducted by the Rev. Barbara Coeyman who has done original research on Rev. Billings and is broadening the workshop to include a broader discussion of how we do the history of women in our UU movement. The second workshop will be led by SWUUW Vice President Elizabeth Latifa Muller who will teach the Dances of Universal Peace. Although the workshop descriptions are not yet finalized, Elizabeth has

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To make a difference is not a matter of accident, a matter of casual occurrence of the tides. People choose to make a difference.



Maya

Angelou

Reminder:

Your SWUUW dues are due! If you are attending the conference, you can pay your dues when you pay



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**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

**STAFF FOR SWUUV**

I wanted to write to you about the idea of a staff person for SWUUV, a matter now under discussion by the board. As SWUUV has grown more complex organizationally, we have also had an increase in our reporting responsibilities and financial obligations. In the past we have relied completely upon volunteers to do this work, though it has never been easy, particularly with the huge size of our district. Perhaps we have survived because the past several board presidents, including me, have not worked traditional 9-5 jobs and we have devoted long hours to the board president's position. But SWUUV cannot count in the future on finding its presidents from the ranks of the unemployed. In 2007 we will celebrate our 20<sup>th</sup> annual conference! We have come a long way, but we have further to go and my purpose here is to write to you about the challenges I see for us, to lay out alternatives for meeting those challenges, and to ask for your feedback on the proposal.

When I was in Long Beach this summer at General Assembly, I had breakfast with Arlene Johnson, past president of the UU Women's Federation and a SWUUV member. I had set up the meeting with her because she had indicated that there is a possibility that the UUWF could help SWUUV with this transition to paid staffing through their grant program. (Arlene will be giving a workshop at this year's conference in Houston on the changes that the UUWF has undertaken in recent years.) Also at the breakfast was Rebecca Scott from the UUA Financial Development Office. She had been at our last SWUUV conference in Oklahoma City. It was her first SWUUV conference and she said she had been impressed with the size of our turnout. She said that since the conference, she had taken it upon herself to poll the 26 UUA District Executives to ask them if they had anything comparable to SWUUV in their districts. She said that the responses she got indicated there are only two or three other districts that have women's conferences and they are much smaller than ours in size and their conferences happen only occasionally. I thought this was fascinating information though I am not quite sure what to make of it. Initially, I was quite surprised because I expected that instead she would have found many organizations similar to ours, doing what we do. I was pleased to hear that we have a singular position. On the other hand, the adage says you may need to question

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**SWUUV Supporters**

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your leadership if in turning around you find no one is following.

I have decided that this situation parallels other experiences I have had since becoming SWUJW president in that I had imagined there were lots of women in lots of organizations who were minding the store on women's issues and women's rights while I was busy having children, raising them, and going to work. But, I have concluded that this was merely wishful thinking on my part. If you believe as I do that the work of SWUJW is important and that we need to keep doing it, then we need to do a better job doing what we do and get more efficient at how we do it. (For a definition of SWUJW's purposes see the excerpt from our bylaws below.)

I know that hiring a staff person may seem like a giant leap forward coming right on the heels of all the other giant leaps we have taken recently: becoming a nonprofit, and gaining status as a UUA Independent Affiliate. But it is not something we necessarily have to do tomorrow nor necessarily all at once. We can do it a step at a time. We do not have to start with a full-time position, we can begin with a part-time position. We do not necessarily have to fund it all ourselves either. We can look for help with funding in the start-up years (perhaps from the UUWF) and build from there.

At this writing the Treasurer's report is not complete for the year and for this we will have to wait until the conference. However, I know we are in better shape financially than we have been for years, and I expect that to get better in the future. After all, part of the reason that we sought status as a nonprofit was to improve our financial position and I believe that is already beginning to happen. In another article in this issue of SWUJWorld you will hear from Gino Kennedy about the success of the SWUJSI lunch program. This is something that we have been doing for years, but we are getting better at it and it is becoming profitable for us. Another factor, and another article in this issue, concerns the financing of our SWUJW Conferences. We have increased the registration fee somewhat this year and our projections show that we will earn a profit for the first time in years. And, the board has been discussing other fundraising opportunities that exist at Fall and Spring Conferences of the Southwest District and at General Assembly next summer when it is in Fort Worth. All of these add up to having some money that we could devote to paying a part-time staff person.

You ask, what would this staff person do? I don't know the answer to that yet. It is one of the things the board is discussing and that I hope we can

report on to you at this year's annual business meeting at the conference luncheon. The answer at least in part is to run an expanded SWUJW in a business-like manner and provide increased support for conference and program planning throughout the year. For example, she could help with the requirement that we submit tax returns. She could help with planning for upcoming SWUJW conferences as we attempt to share conference planning responsibilities between the SWUJW board and the host convener.

I heard a story recently about the genesis of the Margaret Fuller Awards Program of the UUWF. I had not known previously of this substantial grant program which every year supports projects in religious feminism, including scholarly work; creative endeavors in the arts; material for use in congregations; conferences and innovative events. The history of this grant is an interesting tale of the strength of southwest UU women and testament to our ability to shape the direction and course of the women's movement in the UUA. The idea for the grant was begun at the 1985 biennial business meeting of the UUWF when they could not find a speaker on feminist spirituality. This fact and this need stunned the women at the conference and the women from this district in particular who were so aggrieved by this that they went home and raised \$41,300 for the purpose of stimulating such study in the future. Those funds were subsequently matched by the UUA and thus the Margaret Fuller Awards Program was born. I relay this to you here so that you know we can do what we set our minds to do when we feel that sense of urgency.

I would love to hear from you our members on this topic. If you care to write, please email me at [president@swuujw.com](mailto:president@swuujw.com)

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written about this workshop, "Communicating through music and movement, transcending barriers of verbal communication, adding another dimension, visceral understanding, to each person's experience of the divine.... These simple group Dances, set to sacred phrases, are a way of honoring the spirituality inherent in all cultures and promoting peace within individuals and in the world."

By the time you read this it will be 2005 and you will no doubt be making plans for the new year. I hope those include making your reservation to the SWUJW Conference in Houston this year which promises to be FAB! Make your reservations now!

See you in Houston!

Laura Nagel, SWUJW President

## SWUUW ANNUAL CONFERENCE

### February 4-6, 2005      Houston, Texas

"Sisterhood is still powerful" is the theme of this year's Conference in Houston, Texas. The Houston planning group has organized a full agenda to appeal to anyone seeking spiritual growth, personal awakening, or who wants to be reminded of the power of sisters helping sisters.

One highlight of the Conference is sure to be Margot Adler, award winning NPR journalist who hosts the show Justice Talking. Margot will give the keynote talk and also lead a ritual and conduct one of the workshops.

Margot Adler has traveled a remarkable journey and is generous sharing her experience and observations. As a child of socialists, she says she often felt herself an "outsider". After getting her B.A. at Berkeley and a Master's in Journalism from Columbia she began "walking between worlds". She has been active as a Wiccan priestess for three decades and is an active and influential member of the UU Church. Well known for her first book, *Drawing Down the Moon*, she has also completed a second book, *Heretic's Heart*. You might enjoy reading the books before meeting Margot. She will be available to sign books at the Conference.

In addition, nearly three dozen workshops will be offered – attendees will select the three that appeal to them- and a large vendor contingent will be selling irresistible merchandise!

The Warwick hotel in Houston's Museum District will be a lovely setting for the weekend and nearby Hermann Park will be the site of one of the evening rituals.

Plan now to attend. Check out the full Conference brochure and register online at [www.swuuw.com](http://www.swuuw.com) (before Jan. 1 for the lower rate of \$130). A few scholarships are available as well. Be sure to call the Warwick Hotel to reserve a room. Tell the hotel you're with SWUUW to get the preferred rate – only available until Jan. 20<sup>th</sup>.

Any questions, contact Susan Borches at 713 665 8710 or [smborches@yahoo.com](mailto:smborches@yahoo.com)

## SWUUW ANNUAL MEETING

### Agenda

#### **Minutes of the last Annual Meeting**

#### **President's**

#### **Treasurer's Report**

#### **Proposal to Hire SWUUW Staff**

Authorize the SWUUW board to conduct a search for a staff person to hire an administrator for up to six hour per week who would perform the following functions for the organization:

- Coordinate conference planning with the host church
- Help plan activities at General Assembly
- Pursue grant money for additional SWUUW funding
- Keep financial records, paying bills,
- Prepare records for income tax filings
- Maintain membership records
- Handle bulk mailings and email lists
- Maintain the website
- Organize fundraisers

#### **Approval of the Budget**

#### **Election of Officers**

#### **Adjournment**

## 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 U SI) 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.

### RECIPE FOR A SWU UW FUNDRAISER

- *Take Sweet Potato Queen Concept*
- *Mix with YaYa sisterhood Concept*
- *Add to SWU UW, resulting in the "Sweet U-Yas"*
- *Publicize the event as a Pjs and Pearls party*
- *Find big empty Unitarian church room with fireplace*
- *Lock yourselves in for the night*
- *Bring sleeping bags and pillows*
- *Bring firewood and marshmallows*
- *Form a scared circle for check-in and get to know each other*
- *Throw in a few bottles of wine*
- *Add music and dancing*
- *Add one fortune teller and her Soul cards*
- *Add junk to sell to each other (mini-garage sale)*
- *Stir in one huge chicken ceasar salad and garlic bread*
- *Add assorted cream pies*
- *Don't forget nail polishes of many colors*
- *Charge money for all of the above*
- *Also accept donations from those who can not attend*
- *Result, in the case of one of the above*  
*held in October, 2004 at First Church Houston:*  
*\$471.00 raised for SWU UW conference scholarships!!!!!!*
- *And a good time was had by all!* - *Keddy Ann Outlaw*

# MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

*Southwest Unitarian Universalist Women*

To join mail in the form below with your check to: Amy Youngblood, SWUUV Treasurer  
3137 Lubbock, Fort Worth, TX 76109

To join SWUUV on line, go to [www.swuuv.com](http://www.swuuv.com)

**PLEASE PRINT**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Area Code \_\_\_\_\_ Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Fax \_\_\_\_\_

e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Women's Group \_\_\_\_\_

Name/City of Church or Fellowship \_\_\_\_\_

Please make check payable to :  
**SWUUV**  
SWUUV is a 501(c)3 organization.  
Your donations are tax-exempt. If you need more proof of contribution than your check, please ask us to send you a letter.



Dues	\$	10.00
Amount Contributing to Scholarship		_____
Amount Contributing to Social Justice		_____
Total	\$	_____

## SWUUV

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Non-Profit Organization  
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Fort Worth, TX  
Permit 1733

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

