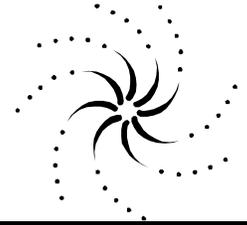


SWWIRL

Winter 2003

Newsletter of the Southwest UU Women



President's Column

As SWUW moves forward into the 21st Century, your officers have embarked upon organizational changes and development that we believe will strengthen the organization and enable it to grow and better serve you, our members, in the future. We looked carefully at the legal base of SWUW, our Bylaws. We wanted to be sure that they reflect our current functioning, especially in the area of the relationship between the Annual Women's Conference and SWUW, which is not spelled out in our current Bylaws. We also felt that the Bylaws should recognize our membership's desire for our organization to be socially active. We feel now is the time pursue achieving non-profit status so that contributions made to SWUW can be deducted for income tax purposes. It will also make possible our qualifying for our own bulk mailing permit and limit the amount of state sales tax we are required to pay. In order to do this, we named Laura Nagel, 1st UU Church, Houston, Chair and Denise and Bill Atkerson, Emerson U Church, Houston, members of a special committee to look into the attainment of non-profit status for SWUW. The changes that we are proposing be made in our organization we believe will increase our ability to raise money in the future and strengthen our organization so that we can accomplish our social justice initiatives, and other organizational purposes.

You will find an insert in this issue of SWWIRL that contains:

- 1) The Articles of the Articles of Incorporation that Bill wrote for us. This is the first required step in the process of achieving 501(c)3 status.
- 2) Board recommended rewritten Bylaws.
- 3) Letter identifying the key changes in the Bylaws.
- 4) Current Bylaws for comparisons sake.
- 5) Report of the nominations committee.

Items 1, 2, and 5 are to be voted on at our Annual Meeting to be held during the Annual Women's Conference in Austin, TX. All of the above can also be found on our web site www.swuuw.org.

We felt that another way to increase our effectiveness is to increase the number of people on the Board, so we are recommending that we elect four non-officer board members, who will be given specific portfolios to be responsible for.

These portfolios can include activities involving social justice, conference planning, the Newsletter, leadership development, membership, and/or SWUUSI program planning.

Due to our joyous adoption of the funding of three social action projects at our 2002 Annual Meeting, our treasury is low.

Continued on Page 2, PRESIDENT

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In this Issue

President's Column.....	1
SWUW Board	1
Board Nominations.....	2
Annual Women's Conference	2
Invoking the Sacred Within	2
Maiden Adornment.....	3
Meeting the Crone.....	3
Celebrating Maidens	3
Late Night Ritual.....	3
Maiden Ceremony and Workshop.....	3
Labyrinths: Sacred Space.....	4

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**PLEASE BRING ENTIRE INSERT TO
CONFERENCE for reference during
Annual Meeting!**

We hope that at the Annual Meeting, the members will approve a dues increase to \$10 a year. But it cannot go into effect until the start of our next fiscal year, which will be June 1, 2003. So we are hoping that those who pay their dues with their conference registration will make a contribution in order that we be able to publish and mail out four issues of SWWIRL; send our President to Spring and Fall Conferences and to SWUUSI; as well as maintain the usual office expenses and pay at least food and hotel costs for board members attending called board meetings.

Have you looked at the 2003 Conference web site? It is <http://www.liveoakuu.org/swuuw.htm>. I can hardly wait to experience all the wonderful things they are planning for us. You should have gotten your registration packet by the time this issue of SWWIRL reaches you. I do look forward to all the wonderful hugs I will be getting and giving in Austin. My batteries will enjoy the recharging that will occur from all the women power that will be evidenced there!

I have enjoyed being your president for the past two years. It will be with a real sense of regret that I turn the reins of this organization over to the very capable hands of Janet Martinique, our President-elect at the end of our Annual Meeting in Austin. But I will do so knowing that she and your new officers (and I hope 4 non-officer board members) will continue the momentum that we have built up!

Blessed be,

Gino Kennedy

Board Nominations

Report from Nomination Committee

Each year the Nomination Committee seeks out qualified candidates to serve on the SWUUV BOARD of DIRECTORS. This year,

because our bylaws are being changed and hopefully ratified by the membership at the annual business meeting during Saturday's luncheon scheduled at the Annual Women's conference, we will be adding four new

positions, which will serve as directors. These are at-large positions and have no specific duties, but have an expectation to work in the areas of newsletter, conference, social action and other important facets of our work with SWUUV. This year, we need to elect a new President Elect, Treasurer and the four new directors. Our recommended slate includes:

President Elect, Laura Nagel, 1st UU Church, Houston

Treasurer, Amy Youngblood, Westside UU, Fort Worth (corr'd 01-03)

Director, Denise Devereaux, 1st UU church, New Orleans.

Director, Rita Cusak, Northwest UU Church, Houston

Director, Susie McGee, Horizon UU Church, Carrollton

Director, Connie Dunn, UU Fellowship, Denton

The nominating committee, along with the Board, believe these elected officials will serve the membership in the best manner possible. Elections will take place during the Saturday luncheon at the Annual Women's conference (Annual Business Meeting)

ANNUAL WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

*Becoming Wonder Woman:
Weaving Wonder in Our Lives*

February 28-March 2
Renaissance Arboretum Hotel
Austin, Texas

The conference planners are thrilled to announce that they are accepting registration for the 2003 District Women's Conference, which faithful readers will know is February 28 - March 2, 2003. While a printed registration brochure was mailed to your church, since the color printing was expensive, few were mailed. The

planners would like to encourage you to go to the Web at <http://www.liveoakuu.org/swuuw.htm> and download the PDF version of the registration brochure. The link can be found prominently on the SWUUV site at

<http://www.swuuw.org>. Information on how to register is easily found in the brochure. Note that our SWUUV dues indicate \$5 but that the Board is asking the members include a voluntarily contribution also.

Check out the artwork,



which will be on the t-shirts. Make sure to reserve your room and ask for the SWUUV Conference rates.

The following articles are written to inspire you to find out more and attend the Annual Women's Conference in Austin, Texas. The planners urge you to come and find out how to be Wonder Woman...for an hour, a weekend or for the rest of your life!

INVOKING THE SACRED WITHIN

by Jenny Carloye

We live our lives day to day, with lists and schedules and all around hub-bub. As we enter in to the conference hotel, we will leave all this behind. As the evening begins, the ballroom will beckon us in with drumming and chanting. As you enter the room, you will be greeted by Maidens, Mothers, and Crones passing out bubbles! And as we gather, we will create a sacred space both within ourselves and with each other. Through our opening ritual of drumming, singing and reflection we will set the stage for a wonderful weekend of workshops and community making.

With the coming of Sunday, we will begin to wind down and bring closure to our time together. Again we will gather, again we will experience the rhythmic drumming

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and our sacred circle. This time, through our closing ritual, we will affirm the wonder in our lives and prepare to take this precious gift with us as we return to our daily lives, refreshed and inspired.



Maiden Adornment

by Martha Iacoletti

This will be an exciting workshop for those young ladies who enjoy decorating themselves. I am planning on having lots of temporary tattoos, glitter, make up, "jewels" and other fun stuff for the maidens to adorn themselves and each other with. If you have been paying attention, you know that is one thing almost all of them can agree on. "Doing" themselves up. I hope all maidens and even a few mom will join us.



Meeting the Crone

by Linda Webster

Who is the Crone? She is the old wise woman, the woman who no longer bleeds. She is the goddess of the crossroads, the one who has experienced all three phases of a woman's life (Maiden, Mother, and Crone). Her face is etched with the signs of a life well-lived. Her color is black. You can find her at the dark of the moon. You know her names: Hecate, Spider Grandmother, Cerridwen, Kali, Changing Woman, Baba Yaga..

Crone wisdom includes the mystery of life, death and rebirth; the secrets of the cycles of nature; the power of endings. In her cauldron, you can be transformed. With her broom, you can sweep away what is stagnant and decayed in your life to make way for new and healthy growth.

The Crone no longer feels compelled to please. She pleases herself, acting from her own wisdom, her own experience. Her power comes from being true to herself. She is not afraid to speak out. She can say no, as well as yes. She speaks for and nourishes all of life.

Would you like to spend some time with the Crone? All women—of whatever age—can call upon the energy of the Crone. The Crones and Cronies from the Women's Spirituality Group of the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Austin invite you to join us in a participatory ritual honoring the Crone within each of us, with special focus on women who have gone through menopause. The workshop is "Honoring the Wisdom of the Crone: A Ritual" on Saturday morning, 10:30 a.m.-12 noon.



Celebrating Maidens

by Linda Webster

We celebrate the Maidens and welcome them into the our women's community during this conference. During the Opening and Closing Rituals (Friday evening and Sunday morning), the Maidens will call in/release the energy of the East/Air (new beginnings and the dawn of a new day) and the energy of South/Fire (freedom, bright energy, warmth). The Mothers and Crones will call in/release the West/Water, North/Earth, and Center/Spirit.

On Saturday afternoon, from 3:15-4:45 p.m., the Maidens and Mothers of the Live Oak Unitarian Universalist Church (in Austin) have planned a workshop entitled "Celebrating MaidenSpirit: A Ritual." This participatory workshop will honor Maidens 11 years of age and up and their Mothers (or adult women significant to the individual Maidens). Activities will have a "MaidenSpirit"—playful, exuberant, wonder-full, and open to many possibilities—just as the Maiden is.

On Saturday evening, we will welcome all the Maidens and give them our blessings in their transition to womanhood. "Maidens are alive, and magic is afoot"! And we can all bask in this joyful Maiden energy.

LATE NIGHT RITUAL

led by Cottonwood Green

After the Sat night entertainment, there will be an additional ritual for the late-niters and other women who choose to join in. It will be a special, quiet space illuminated by magic and revelations and the visual splendor of a magnificent altar.

Cottonwood Green is well known in Austin for her imaginative and beautiful rituals. She is assisted by the Tuesday night circle of the Women's Spirituality Group of First UU Church of Austin.

The Maiden Ceremony and Workshop

An equal opportunity for fun

by Wendy Marks

I am supposed to write a brief article about the joys of participating in a maiden workshop and ceremony. The truth is that I have never written anything before. But this is such an incredibly wonderful ritual that I agreed to overcome my writer's block and fear and create this article. Any maiden from 11 to 21 and their mothers are invited to share a spiritual experience of rituals and chants honoring the mother/daughter relationship as well as the excitement of being a maiden. We will be making garlands and bracelet streamers that will be used in the evening ceremony.

All maidens younger than 11 need to be accompanied by their mothers in order to attend the workshop. The evening ceremony celebrating our maidens has been designed to include everyone. All maidens are invited to participate whether they went to the workshop or not. And since there is a maiden in all of us, every wonder woman will have a place in this ceremony as we honor all maidens past, present and future.

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Chartres Labyrinth



Cretan Labyrinth

Labyrinths: Sacred Space

by Joyce Phelps

Labyrinths have been built and used for the past 4000 years. They have been part of every major religious tradition in the world for encountering the Sacred. Known by different names but all used to help connect to a greater sense of Oneness. Some examples are The Hopi “Medicine Wheel” to the “Tree of Life” in Judaism. They have also been part of the Greek, Celtic and Mayan cultures.

So what exactly is a Labyrinth? It is a geometric form that defines sacred space and in current times, two designs have assumed prominence. The Cretan form, one of the oldest and universal labyrinths and the Chartres form. The Cretan labyrinth is named after the island of Crete, home of the mythical labyrinth in which dwelled the Minotaur and takes the walker through seven circuits before reaching the center. The Chartres labyrinth, is named after the permanent stone labyrinth set in the floor of the Chartres Cathedral in France about the 13th century and is an eleven concentric paths that wind through four quadrants of a circle. It is influenced by

Christianity with an equal armed cross visible in its design and a rosette pattern in the center, symbolizing the Virgin Mary. These designs can be 7, 11, or 12 circuit designs.

A labyrinth is easy to walk, one way in to the center and one way out. It takes the worry out of getting lost or confused. By following the path, you meander back and forth, turning 180 degrees each time you enter a different circuit. This physical turning helps to shift your awareness from right to left brain. By this action, the labyrinth can induce receptive states of consciousness. It can also help to balance the charkas.

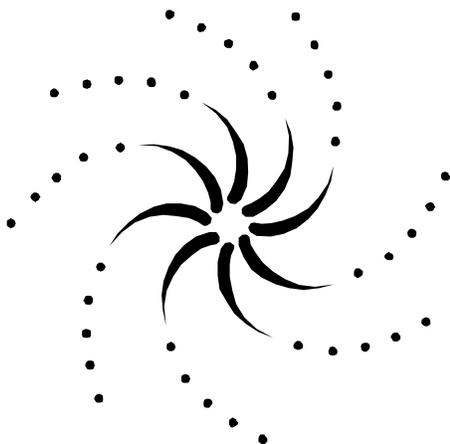
In our current times, labyrinths are used for reflection, meditation, prayer, creativity enhancement, fostering community and comfort. It helps us to eliminate stress by quieting the mind chatter and become aware of the guidance already working within our daily lives. Healing and self knowledge are possible as we begin to let go of seeking for answers outside of ourselves. It helps us to become more attuned to the land and its cycles. It helps us to celebrate the deeper meaning of holidays, such as New Year, Solstice or Equinox, and helps to ritualize an important event such as a birthday, death, an adolescent coming of age or the blessing of a new church.

People have discovered is that walking the labyrinth has something to offer to anyone who is willing to do so. Each experience is individual and there is no right or wrong way to walk the labyrinth. It reflects back to us not only the light of our selves but also whatever restrains us from shining forth. It is a tool for people of all beliefs to come together for a common spiritual experience. Join in and discover another tool to discover the wonder in you!

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