

## President's Column

*We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote*

*The inherent worth and dignity of every person;*

*Justice, equity and compassion in human relations;*

*Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;*

*A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;*

*The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;*

*The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;*

*Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.*

Some of you may wonder why I started out this column with the 7 Principles of Unitarian Universalism. It is because they are what guide my life and my actions. They underlie why I agreed to accept the nomination to be your president.

I believe that we can have a lot of fun working together to carry out these principles while dealing with women's issues. I agree with what Connie Dunn said in her first President's Column a year ago, "SWUUV has not outlived its usefulness in this district." However, I was frustrated when so many got up and left the room when the Annual Meeting was announced in Little Rock. I hope that next year there will be many more who will stay. It is only by our members developing a sense of ownership in SWUUV that this will happen.

I was delighted with the concerns that came out of the Planning Meeting which was held at the Little Rock Conference. It was proposed that SWUUV adopt one or more social justice projects. We will be holding another Planning Meeting at SWUUSI (SouthWest Unitarian Universalist Summer Institute) in July. At SWUUSI, we will listen to reports of various social action projects as we continue to gather recommendations of social justice projects. In fact, I hope that we will need to schedule additional time to discuss social action proposals because there will be too many new ideas and points of view to be expressed in just one session! Another way to recommend projects is found elsewhere in this newsletter (see "Calling All Women's Groups"). You may also contact me or Sarah Oglesby ([sco5320@dccc.edu](mailto:sco5320@dccc.edu)), the newly appointed chair of the SWUUV Social Justice Project Committee, with information on projects you support and feel would appeal to SWUUV membership.

We plan to include a vote on a social justice project in the Annual Meeting to be held in Fort Worth on February 23, 2002. I believe a social justice project can be an important

way to help our members see the relevance of participating in SWUUV business meetings.

I personally consider "Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part" to be an important principle. I am very concerned with how we are treating our environment all over the world. I am especially concerned that so few young people seem to realize the seriousness of the issues involved. I think the fact that four of our maidens attended the Planning Meeting in Little Rock says a lot for OUR young people. Do you have knowledge of a group or groups that we might support, or even just provide information about to others who are working with our young citizens on this topic?

Please let me hear from you. I hope that I have aroused your concerns in some way. I believe that, as Margaret Mead said, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed it's the only thing that ever has."

Let us proceed to do some changing!

Gino Kennedy



## Volunteers Needed

[Mary Francis has agreed to chair Lunches Plus at SWUUSI. She will come up with ideas for simple menus, but she needs volunteers to do the shopping, preparation and serving of the food.](#)

[SWUUV has sponsored this program for several years, and many people look forward to it as an alternative to the standard restaurant lunch. Although it is not a big money maker for SWUUV, it is an appreciated service to SWUUSI participants and a good way to publicize SWUUV.](#)

[If you will be at SWUUSI and are willing to help for one or more days, please contact Mary.](#)

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# Introducing

## SWUW's New Officers

### **Gino Kennedy –** *President*

For approximately fifty years I have been involved in 4 different Unitarian Universalist churches. First in Knoxville, Tennessee and then in Fort Worth, where I am presently a member of Westside UU Church. During that time, I have been involved in working with all ages in church school programs ranging from overseeing the nursery to being advisor to our youth group. Some of the roles I have filled in the various churches have been committee member, committee chair, newsletter editor, president of women's groups, and church president. I have enjoyed them all. I have always formed close friendships within each church home. I have found that wherever there is a group of UUs, I will be comfortable.

I believe that one of the reasons I feel I was meant to be a UU is that there have always been other UUs who, like me, are guided by this quote from Martin Luther King. He said "There are some things in our social system to which all of us ought to be maladjusted." Since I was a very young girl, I have been aware of social injustices and have worked to correct them.

Yes, I bring passion to my causes. I am committed to the environment. I am concerned that all persons have equal opportunity to reach their fullest potential. I believe SWUW is capable of helping to bring about social change in this chaotic world of ours and I relish the opportunity to be a part of that!

On the personal side of my life, I have four adult adopted children, 6 grandchildren and 2 great grandchildren with another expected this summer. They add greatly to my life. "Wanna see some pictures?"

I retired nearly 3 years ago after 23 years of teaching at Tarleton State University, a part of the A & M system. I was in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction as coordinator of the Special Education Program. I love gardening, reading, bird watching and almost anything related to nature. I am a benefits counselor for the North Texas Area Agency on Aging and was recently appointed to its Advisory Board.

Last summer I attended the Dwight Brown Leadership Experience (DBLE). It was a life changing experience for me, as it has been for so many others. As I told Kathy Calhoun, director last year of DBLE, and Mary Kay Hamilton, this year's DBLE director, at the Little Rock Conference, "I must give back some of what was given to me!" This is, in part, why I accepted the nomination to serve as President of this wonderful organization.

### **Janet Gardner Martinique –** *Vice-President*

Although born and raised near San Francisco, I've lived most of my adult life in the Dallas area. I have two sons, now in their late 30's, and 6 grandchildren ranging in age from 6 months to 16 years. While raising my sons and working full-time, I earned an Associate degree in Real Estate from Northlake Community College and a Bachelor's degree from UT Dallas. My career included work in the areas of finance and international transportation, including being licensed as a Customs Broker by the U.S. Treasury Department.

In 1990, I became disabled. Now that my condition is in remission, I spend most of my time working to promote the Unitarian Universalist denomination. The social issues I have worked on the last 30 years is Civil Rights and racial justice. During six years as a UU, I have served on the Program Committee, published the Sunday bulletin and was a member of the nominating committee in the Galveston Fellowship. During the four years I've been at the UU Fellowship of Dallas in OakCliff (UUF Dallas), I have been the Social Action Chair and Program Chair. Currently I am President of UUF Dallas and a delegate to the North Texas Association of UU Societies (NTAUUS). I have presented several lay programs in Galveston and Dallas. I attended General Assembly (GA) when it was held in Nashville and am a graduate of the 1998 Dwight Brown Leadership School. I am a very enthusiastic UU, and it means the world to me. It has provided me with the best family and support I have ever known, people who actually live their beliefs, not just talk them.

### **Carol Phillips –** *Secretary*

As early as college years, people told me that I would like Unitarian Universalism. Despite one early foray into All Souls Church in Tulsa, I did not begin attending regularly until many years and several moves later. I have been a UU since 1987, and Bay Area Unitarian Universalist Church (BAUUC) is my third church.

I owe much to Unitarian Universalism, to the heritage, the organization, the district and affiliate groups, the individual churches and to the people within them. Not the least of which I owe my nuclear family, beginning with my husband.

In my time of association with BAUUC, I've been involved with, to one degree or another, the Women's Lunch Group, The Women's Spirituality Group, Wednesday Night at the Church teaching classes and leading Vespers, Religious Education, the summer vacation church school, facilitation of the Pagan Covenant Circle and various one shot affairs.

In the District, I have attended, taught classes and helped out in RE at SWUUSI. I have been involved in SWUW, for whom I now serve as Secretary, and I don't do THAT much. There are plenty of people who do far more than I do, put in far more hours volunteering for this church and this association on its many levels.

*(continued on next page)*

*(Carol Phillips, from previous page)*

My first SWUW conference was in 1990, when I moved to Houston, and while the energy is always wonderfully strong and wild, children and other circumstances have prevented my attending every single one since then. I look forward to my increasing involvement in SWUW. This is an important organization, for I feel that it is through getting to know and love other women that we learn to love ourselves. Women have a special loving energy that nurtures and heals. I'd love for more women to realize what an important and vital role SWUW could play in their lives and in the district. The more women who get involved, the more needs can be identified and met by this collection of strong women.

**Barb Rodman –  
Treasurer**

I've been interested in Women's Spirituality for more than twenty years, and in the late 70's attended a Re-virgination ceremony performed by members of a NOW group that stirred my interest in contemporary feminist theology. The ceremony focused on "virgin" as an independent woman (the original meaning was "a woman who owned herself"), and included a re-naming ritual in which we could give ourselves new identities if we wanted to. After that, I joined a once-a-month potluck and discussion group which met on the Friday closest to the full moon and discussed everything from ancient goddesses to healing herbs to Christian and Jewish theology as it affected women.

Until I moved to Denton, though, I'd never belonged to UU church or Fellowship or participated in a women's group affiliated with any church and, except for a youthful fling with Methodism, I'd never belonged to any church at all. The Denton UU Fellowship allowed me to join a church and find a women's group all under one roof. My adult daughter (Sarah Oglesby) joined the church on the same day I did, without us discussing that intent at all, and she's also been an active member of the same women's group.

What I like about UU women's groups is our diversity of interests and ages. The "Cakes for the Queen of Heaven" and "Rise Up and Call Her Name" curricula have been stimulating and educational. Our group has also read books such as *Women Who Run with the Wolves*, performed regular solstice and equinox rituals, studied a variety of other subjects, and provided education, emotional support, intellectual stimulation and real friendship to each other. I feel that we've grown together, both as individuals and as a group.

If there's one area I think we're a little weak on, it's social action and justice. I worry that we're too self-centered and don't always carry our insights and commitment outside of our groups. Worship and ritual are important to me, but I think they are meant to widen our world and to encourage us to reach out to others in all sorts of ways.

I'm pleased to be asked to serve as Treasurer next year and am looking forward to meeting new people while helping to carry SWUW into the future.

### ***Minutes of SWUW Annual Meeting***

The Annual Meeting of SWUW was held on Saturday, February 10, 2001 at the SWUW Women's Conference in Little Rock. According to the sign-in sheet, 29 women were present.

*First Item of Business:*

The president, Connie Dunn, presented her Annual Report for 2001.

*Second Item of Business:*

Change to Bylaws Article IV. Officers, Section 1:

Proposed change: The elected officers shall be President, Vice President (President Elect), Past President, Secretary and Treasurer; they shall be known as the Executive Board. The President, Vice President and Past President TEAM would be the chief executive of SWUW with the Vice President assisting the president the first year to learn the duties, then servicing one year as president and consulting as Past President the following year. Thus the office of Vice President (President Elect) would be refilled every year and would be a three-year commitment. The Board shall fill its own vacancies until the next election. The Executive Board shall transact the business of SWUW between meetings.

This Bylaws change was accepted unanimously.

*Third Item of Business:*

Election of Officers:

Each candidate was introduced followed by a request for other candidates. No other candidates were identified.

Mary Kay Eisman moved acceptance of the slate and it was seconded by Mary Kay Hamilton. The candidates were accepted unanimously.

New officers are as follows:

President - Gino Kennedy, Ft. Worth, TX  
Vice-President - Janet Gardner, Dallas, TX  
Treasurer - Barb Rodman, Denton, TX  
Secretary - Carol Phillips, Houston, TX  
Past President - Connie Dunn, Denton, TX

*Fourth Item of Business:*

Mary Francis, Midwest City volunteered to be in charge of Lunches Plus at SWUUSI. There will be an opportunity to sign-up to help at SWUUSI at the SWUW Planning Meeting to be held today at 6:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

***Fran Faris, Secretary***

## **Ropes Course at Little Rock**

By: *Linda McConathy*

As age 60 looms on the horizon, I have found myself considering “what ifs” of life more often. What if my poor eye sight becomes uncorrectable? What if my memory lapses increase to the point I don’t remember that I don’t remember?

Then the brochure for SWUW’s 2001 Conference in Little Rock arrived in the mail. The description for the Ropes Course said, “It has all the trappings of a Tarzan movie - wilderness, the offer of a challenge . . . outdoor adventure using cables, ropes, platforms, trees . . . forty feet in the air.” The more I thought about it, the more I asked myself, “Why not? This opportunity probably won’t come my way again.” So my sporadic trips to the gym became routine. I gradually increased the repetitions and the amount of weight on the machines and my overall strength increased, especially in my upper body. I began to feel like an athlete in training! I was going to the Ropes Course – me, old enough to be someone’s grandmother! My enthusiasm increased to the point that I began to tell everyone I knew and met about my upcoming adventure.

By the time February 10th rolled around, I was really charged up. We spent the morning involved in “challenges” in groups and pairs, but we didn’t go near a tree. I was champing at the bit until after lunch when we finally got down to the business I had come for. With age, I am very nervous with heights, but our instructors had created such trust that I unconditionally believed that if I did just what they said, I would be safe. So into the harnesses and helmets we went. Our lines with two clips were attached, and we practiced the correct way to move and reattach our clips to cables over our heads. We were reminded to be sure to have one clip attached at all times, so the harness will catch you if you fall.

Up the ladder we went, one by one. Those of us waiting our turns watched the brave ones who were finally high up in the trees, walking across cables, making their way over swings, suspended tires and rope ladders. At last I nervously mounted the ladder but had to continually tell myself not to think about the height. When I finally reached the platform in the tree and attached my clips to the cables, the fear and butterflies disappeared. There remained only a keen edge to my awareness and a heightened sense of my body and the physical tasks at hand. As I slowly made my way around the course from tree to tree, my concentration seemed as pure and sharp and in the moment as it has ever been. Every movement was thought out and deliberately executed. When unsure of how to proceed, I would ask others how they approached a particular segment. I absolutely believed that I would find a way to go on. More than once I took a deep breath and murmured to myself, “You can do this.”

On the last leg, I was becoming more fatigued - I had just pulled myself across a 20 foot rope while on my belly! I was walking across a cable holding onto a waist high rope when I pushed down on the rope and lost my balance. I managed to break my fall and catch myself by hooking my

arm over the rope and sitting down on the cable. The pain in my armpit was intense. I sat for several minutes waiting for it to pass and to gather strength. Then holding onto my clip lines, I pulled myself to my feet and completed walking the cable with coaching and encouragement from an instructor.

At last I had reached the highest platform where my harness was clipped to the zip-line, a cable which ran 350 feet from the tree I was in to a tree down the hill. After the instructor told me what to expect, I leaned forward and descended on the ride of my life!

When I returned to the lodge, I discovered I had the mother of all bruises on my inner upper arm - it was about 4 by 3 inches and dark purple! Whenever I met other participants or my friends, I hiked up my sleeve to show them my badge of courage! I was actually proud of it!

I have to include this experience among the top ten of my life, and it’s difficult to explain why. I do feel less old, although I took naps for several days afterwards! I somehow recaptured the feelings of trust in my body and in myself that I had when I was a girl and climbed trees, rode a horse without a saddle, waded in creeks and tamed wild kittens on my grandparents’ farm.

Now I spend less time on the worrisome “what ifs” and am more apt to say “why not?” Why not go on a walking tour in Europe? Why not ride the bike trails along the river? To use an old cliché, I find I am less focused on the half of the glass that’s empty and more on the half that is full, and I find it satisfying.

One of my favorite quotes is by the British writer Dorothy Sayers who said, “Time and trouble will tame an advanced young woman, but an advanced old woman is uncontrollable by any earthly force.” I say, bring it on!



## **You Did What?**

By: *Lela Woods*

There was such a great response to the Body Print offering at the conference that we were lined up from noon until 7pm. Some gave up, but those of us who stuck it out or lucked into someone’s forfeited spot had a memorable experience. By the time I arrived most women were worn out, but Alberta, the artist, was still going with gusto. I guess I was a little surprised that this grandma looked so much like the women in my family and not some ethereal crone type. Many of the women of my family would hide their body rather than celebrate it, especially as it changes with age. I, at 46, was not the only middle-age and older lady in line to do this. When my turn came, I took off my clothes and lay down on black canvass. Alberta chose the angles for my print and marked them. After I got up, she and two assistants mixed the “paint” and applied it to the areas that would contact the canvass. Although my canvass rode home from Little Rock in a place of honor, I have not yet hung it as it is a present for Tom, my husband, for our 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The Body Print experience was a highlight of my conference experience.



## ***Mothers and Daughters***

*By: Laura Nagel*

I debated whether to come to the conference this year at all because my mother was gravely ill and in the hospital. I had just returned from spending over two weeks at her bedside. Had my daughter not expressed an interest for the first time in coming with me to the conference, I would not have gone. As it was, I had a plane ticket to return home on the Tuesday morning following the conference. I didn't wait that long. I was on the plane Monday morning and Mom died Tuesday at 10am with all three of her children by her side.

Mom was 87. I think she died a good death, if that's possible. Six weeks before, she was living independently in her home, as she wanted, driving her car to and from the store. Then she fell again. While she was in the hospital they tried to repair a hernia and instead discovered colon cancer. Mom never recovered, but she died on her terms, in control to the end. I thought one of the finest tributes to her came at the end from one of her nurses. She was being transferred again from hospital to convalescent care and there was a delay in the process. Someone asked the nurse where Mom was, and she said not to worry, that wherever Mom was, her three kids would be right by her side.

I came to see the decision to go to the conference with Erica, in part, as a tribute to my mother. And, Erica had a wonderful time. She got to meet and was warmly greeted by so many of you, my good friends throughout the district. She seemed to enjoy all the activities and meeting girls her own age, "the maidens." She signed up to do the ropes course in the morning and so enjoyed it that she ended up going back for the afternoon session. This was a tough choice because she also wanted to do body printing, which was in the afternoon. We were among the last to sign up for body printing, the only mother-daughter team to do so and Erica was the youngest person to sign up. The artist, Alberta Pearson, seemed anxious to do us because of this novelty. Alberta thought to do our prints as a set. The poses were animated, active and laid out in such a way that, when hung together we appear to be holding hands, dancing. The prints will always remind me that my greatest heritage from my mother is my love for my own daughters.



## ***The Red Tent***

*By: Beverly Fogleman*

I became aware of this book when I was shopping at the book store and on the Internet. Since it is biblical fiction I did not think this was a book I would want to read. I was mistaken. This is an engrossing novel very loosely based on the Bible. The language is poetic and luminous.

Women gathered in the red tent during times of menses, childbirth, and illness. Because of their closeness they experienced their menstrual cycles together at the time of the new moon. The tent was a refuge for female communication and companionship

When a young woman reached puberty, her mother and other wives of her father initiated her into the religious and sexual practices of the tribe. The ritual was beautiful. She was massaged, sung to, held and given special food. Some of the menstrual blood was given to the goddess. Menstruation was thought to be a time of the death of a potential life and the time to celebrate the possibility of a new life. The red tent also was a place to share the joy of pregnancy and the pain of childbirth. The woman experiencing birth was comforted, massaged, held and cared for. They nurtured each other through caring, sharing, and acceptance. Of course there were difficulties, but there was also forgiveness.

The book begins "You who come to me with hands and feet as soft as a queen's, with more cooking pots than you need, so safe in child bed and so free with your tongues. You come hungry for the story that was lost. You crave words to fill the great silence that swallowed me, and my mothers, and my grandmothers before them."

This is the story of Dinah, told through her voice, a silent voice in the biblical text. She is the only daughter born to Jacob and Leah, the granddaughter of Rebecca and Isaac, the great granddaughter of Abraham and Sarah. I recommend that you dust off your Bible and read Genesis before reading the novel. Dinah tells the stories of her four "mothers", Rachel, Leah, Zilpah and Bilhah, all of whom are wives of Jacob. Rachel is beautiful, Leah is competent, Zilpah does not have much use for men and Bilhah is silent. From Rachel, Dinah learns midwifery, and from the others homemaking. She tells of her birth and childhood in Mesopotamia, her years in Canaan and her death in Egypt. She tells of a doomed love relationship with the son of the ruler of Schechem and his murder at the hands of her brothers. She tells of a stay in Canaan where she became pregnant and her travels to Egypt as a midwife.

The Red Tent is a beautiful story of the lives of women, probably around 1400 BC. You know the women: their fears, hopes, and sorrows. It is said that "The Red Tent is what the Bible would be if it was told by women."

I highly recommend this book. I think as women today we still have strong and affectionate bonds. We care for each other. Someone said that women can become friends while riding in an elevator.

After reading the book I became aware of the lack of celebration for our daughters as they become women. How nice it would be to have a ritual of celebration. How comforting to have a space to be together at times of illness or trouble, to be able to hear the words of wisdom from the crones.

At the Women's conference in Little Rock, I loved the Red Tent room. When I walked in I was taken by a feeling of peace. The red glow, the music, the books, the quiet conversation, the games, the pillows. As I was leaving I saw a friend lying back on a pillow. We had a conversation in a manner that we had never experienced. I shall never forget it.



## ***The Red Tent Room: From Mirage to Oasis***

By: *Cynthia Crawford*

I smelled the Red Tent Room before I saw it - steaming herbal tea, pungent chocolate, straw and vegetation, natural and cosmetic women scents sweetly mixed with perfume and incense. I heard the Red Tent Room before I saw it - cries, chanting, sighs and laughter, the soothing flow of a fountain, the clink of pottery, murmured oracular prophecies and the calming notes of musical instruments.

The mirage in my mind began shimmering with possibilities. Where could a harried twenty-first century woman go to be a Lady of Perpetual Repose? Not until the UUCLR women were well into the planning stages of the SWUW "Women in Their Natural State" retreat did the idea present itself to me, after my having read the book, *The Red Tent*, by Anita Diamant. For UU women, attending this retreat was the first step in removing themselves from the frenetic pace of daily life, but since this particular retreat was designed to include the option of unstructured free time, I wondered where women could go to connect with each other. Since bonding was a primary goal of this conference, I knew that staying in one's room would not promote quality interaction. Hanging out in the lobby area was a poor second choice due to distractions, lack of privacy and a sameness of environment whose scenery did not promote a shift in perceptions - the quality of "be-ing" that I thought was crucial to truly relaxing free time.

The mirage began to solidify. I now "saw" the Red Tent Room, as images of decoration became concrete. Prosaic lists were made of needed objects, procurement and transport of materials. An implementation team was enlisted, and the work began in earnest. I may have had the vision, but I cannot express how much expertise and perspiration by the original team and other volunteers transformed the vision into reality.

There it was, finished a little after the opening of Friday night registration. Quiet. Elegant. Hushed. Luxuriously draped, though rather formal, as if standing at attention. Well, I had other matters to attend to, and would check back later. I really didn't expect it to be used until Saturday, since people would be busy getting situated.

Later, as I sauntered toward the Red Tent Room, I smelled it before I saw it, and I heard it before I saw it. Herbal odors, incense, perfume, chatting, play sounds and music. Informal. At ease. Alive. Breathing. Full of energy. The Ouij Board was divining, chocolate wrappers were strewn on the floor, an embroidery circle was formed, and giggling girls were applying tattoos and playing dress-up. Later, later, into the evening, massages were shared, someone was writing a letter, cookie tins had been opened, music was pulsating, and exhausted goddesses were reclining on pillows just "be-ing."

Our Ladies were Reposing, and would do it Perpetually all weekend. I had captured my mind's mirage and made it manifest with devoted UUCLR help, but it was the creative SWUW women who had transfigured the Red Tent Room into a true Oasis, a haven for relationships to blossom.

May this tradition continue, as future SWUW conference dream spinners plan their own original embellishments to the Red Tent Room.

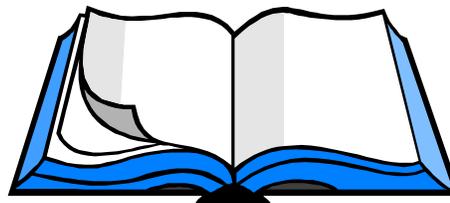


## ***Like Night and Day***

By: *Donna Wills*

I have two distinctly different impressions of The Red Tent Room at the Little Rock Conference – both wonderful. I had my first experience on Saturday morning. Most other conference attendees were at mid-morning workshops or secreted away elsewhere while I enjoyed the quiet solitude of wandering around. When I wandered into the Red Tent Room, , totally driven by curiosity, the sunshine whiteness of the morning seemed to fill it, allowing me to clearly see its various components. A maiden toured me around the room and introduced me to the tea section where there were pillows strewn about inviting one to relax while sitting or reclining. There were tables set with a delightful array of things to enjoy – books, games, make-up. An altar was available for offering petitions, prayers and thanksgiving. As I sat at the make-up table, I had the opportunity to chat with a couple of maidens who played hostess and offered to serve me tea. This simple act of hospitality by the maidens was heartwarming and lovely. If you are one of the mothers who brought their daughter to the conference, you've done well!

My second experience with the Red Tent Room took place much later that evening. When I entered this time, the lighting was beautifully subdued, creating a relaxing atmosphere and inviting women to share themselves. My friends and I sat on the floor around a small table sipping champagne, reading Tarot cards and sharing life stories and thoughts with one another. The best part of the evening was receiving and giving foot massage to my friends. At one point, I think we had four women simultaneously giving and receiving foot massage! Being in that room looking around at all the women who were there spending time together and filling the room with incredible energy of comfort, love and acceptance made the room a place that you didn't want to leave. But – we did. However, I feel that we left behind some of our spirit to warm the hearts of those who were yet to enter the Red Tent Room – that night, another night, another year.



**Editor's note:** *The Red Tent* by Anita Diamant is available at most bookstores or on-line. A good sample of the book's text can be found at Barnes&Nobel.com. A large paperback edition published in 1998 has been found at Costco for less than \$10. This book, narrated by Carol Bilger, is also available on tape.



### ***From the Past President***

As I write the title to this column, I ponder over the many past presidents of this country and other organizations, including this one. Leaving office is often as hard as taking the position. You ask, "Could I have done anything different?" and other questions about your time in an official capacity. Leading a group is often difficult because of expectations you and others have of what can be accomplished during your term.

It is with great joy that I leave SWUW's presidential job to continue on as an advisor for the next year. We have a great Board full of capable, devoted people. If this were all that transpired during the last year, I would be happy, but many of you know that I have also felt we needed to invest our money to help other women. SWUW will be looking into some service project ideas during the next year.

The last two conferences have been very-well attended and very-well executed. Little Rock was so organized that it is already returning its seed money to SWUW. Last year, the Dallas conference donated money to double the seed money. Next year's conference committee has begun many plans for the conference to be held in Fort Worth. We are certainly looking at more fun next year! Their skit at the LR Conference was only a taste of what will come.

When I took office last year, my main goal was to hold SWUW together. Our organization is much too important to have allowed it to dissolve. Without it, the conferences would not be able to continue. No seed money, no one making sure that the next year's conference would happen, no organization to promote the conference and probably a host of other things that the SWUW organization does that supports the conferences but aren't as directly connected. However, what transpired during the last year was that we accomplished more than just holding the organization together...SWUW has grown. More people are getting involved.

While we started out last year with a full slate of officers, our vice president moved to Seattle shortly after last year's conference (but has since returned), our treasurer could not fulfill her job because her disabled son got sick and she was busy with him in and out of hospitals and finding new living arrangements, our newsletter editor also became quite ill last year and could not continue her job. However, SWUW survived. Sylvia Wheeler, our previous treasurer stepped in at the end of last year and bailed us out. I took over the newsletter, and we made it through a tough year.

As a way of saying thank you for my stepping in during our crisis last year, Betty Sanders, SWUW's database manager, organized a collection of funds at the Little Rock Conference for my 13-year old dancing daughter, Erin. Erin has been accepted to the Joffrey Ballet School's summer program in New York City. This special collection was designated to help us make Erin's dreams of Joffrey a

reality. I want to thank SWUW and all its members not only for the approximately \$500 you gave us for Erin's Joffrey fund, but also for all of your confidence in me. In many ways, you've supported the idea that dreams can come true. Dreams, such as a maiden going to NYC and attending the prestigious Joffrey, may only be achievable once in a lifetime. It would be easy for me as a mom to say, "No way!", but hopes and dreams should never be squashed! Women can achieve anything, including going to NYC against all odds. Erin's dream and her determination to raise this money symbolize my determination to keep SWUW alive against all odds.

I want to say THANK YOU in the biggest of ways to all who contributed money to Erin's Joffrey fund and who helped me believe that SWUW is a valuable women's resource in this district. I know that merely saying thanks is not enough, but sometimes we have to rely on the limitations of our language.

May the spirit of the universe be with you.

*Connie Dunn*



## **Dance For Joffrey Benefitting Erin Dunn**

**April 21, 2001**  
**7:00 pm**

**Denton UU Fellowship**  
**1111 Cordell Denton, Texas**

Since Erin Dunn was seven years old, her biggest dream has been to study at the Joffrey and dance at Lincoln Center. This summer, with your help, her dream can come true. You are invited to an entertaining evening of dance put on by Erin and friends. Donations for sponsorship of Erin's Joffrey summer program will be accepted there.

In many ways, SWUW will be going to the Joffrey with Erin. She will be sharing her experience in many ways with SWUW, but she will also be taking what she has learned among us with her in all her dance experiences. Since Erin was 10, she has been attending the Women's Group in Denton and attending the annual SWUW conferences. She has grown as a person, a woman and a spiritual woman in the UU faith. She has learned from this group that anything can be accomplished, which she is using to carry out her dream. Both can happen this summer. You have been part of this and continue to do so as you send your loving sponsorship to Erin.

Contributions may also be sent to: Erin J. Dunn  
PMB238, 1807 N. Elm St., Denton, TX 76201

## ***Oh, Those Little Rock Women!***

By: Jackie Gibbons  
Editor, Summer 2001 SWWIRL

I always gain courage from being in the same room with people who have changed the course of history, listening to their stories, marveling at their determination. Of course, that's true of all of us: we all change the course of events, some more, some less. But when the events are the ones that have reached the history books that our children are reading, then I'm virtually speechless with gratitude, awe, and admiration.

That was the effect of hearing the story of how the women in Little Rock worked behind the scenes, in the face of enormous opposition, to open the public schools forty years ago. To learn that about a quarter of those women were Unitarians was especially inspiring.

Then, in the same conference weekend, to attend the SWUJW board meeting and to see our own leaders move the organization forward in its development to consider a major project of social justice was thrilling! Of course, we've had for many years the SWUUSI orange juice booth in support of the Clara Barton camp for diabetics, but that no longer seemed enough. Our conferences are now strong, our newsletter is viable, and our organizational structure has revived. We find ourselves ready to move into new territory. As we considering a major project, it's important that we have a strong, realistic sense of what we as UU women are already doing to promote greater justice.

Times have changed. Many of our groups are providing a safe place for women to do major transformational work at the personal level, and that proves to be very powerful, ultimately leading to deeper commitments to help others. Sometimes that's enough. Sometimes it isn't. Clearly, many of our women are already active in the general social justice work of their churches, and, unlike days of old, easily assume positions of leadership. Some of our women's groups have ongoing projects or undertake special projects on a regular basis.

As we reflect on the changing role of SWUJW, we need to ask:

⇒ *How important is it for a local women's group to take on a project promoting greater peace and justice?*

⇒ *How important is it for SWUJW to take on a project promoting greater peace and justice?*

These questions will be addressed in upcoming issues of SWWIRL. Be thinking about what your particular group is or is not doing, and why. Be looking for a survey from SWWIRL to help us know ourselves and one another. Be watching for writers and artists who might help us choose from the many possible pathways. Feel free to contact me at [treejwg@hotmail.com](mailto:treejwg@hotmail.com) or 2015 Houston Place Denton, TX 76201.

Thanks again to those Little Rock Women of 2001 who brought us those Little Rock Women of not so long ago!



### **Planning Committee Meeting Minutes** (edited)

*Meeting called to order at 6:10 PM Saturday, February 10, 2001, by Connie Dunn, outgoing President*

1. Getting SWUJW workshops into the Spring and Fall District Conferences. - We offer a \$50 honorarium to the presenter of a SWUJW Conference workshop at either district Conference with deal with women's issues. This initially began because there used to be just men's oriented workshops, and more recently the honorarium continued because there were few spiritual workshops. We have a SWUJW workshop planned for the Spring Conference, (Elizabeth Miller is facilitating it) but in the future we must plan further ahead. It was suggested that someone be appointed to coordinate SWUJW sponsored workshops in advance of each district conference. Sarah Oglesby volunteered and was appointed to be coordinator of district conference workshops.

2. Tax Exempt status for SWUJW - Treasurer Barbara Rodman will investigate the issue.

3. SWUJW Service Projects/Social Justice - Sarah Oglesby presented on a desire for a Social Service project. All Souls in Tulsa is involved in MicroCredit Circles in Third World Countries, and offer things made for sale. This is an example of something SWUJW might be involved in as a social service project. According to Connie, we have around \$10,000 which we need part of as a contingency fund for the annual SWUJW conferences, but we don't need to sit on all of this. Sarah continued that \$3000 "starts a bank." Brenda Baldwin motioned that Sarah head a committee that would make a report at SWUUSI. Suggestions were made that this issue needs to be advertised to the membership in SWWIRL and the web site. Barb Rodman feels that more people will choose to be involved in SWUJW if there was more of a focus on Social Action, and eliciting ideas from members. Suggestions to incorporate SWUJW business meetings into lunch. The motion was restated to read Brenda Baldwin motioned that Sarah Oglesby be appointed Head of a committee to put out a call for proposals for social service projects, and the proposals be presented at SWUUSI, including the MicroCredit Circles. Janet Gardner seconded, motion passed. Brenda Baldwin further made a motion that SWUJW establish guidelines for conferences so that the SWUJW Business meeting be incorporated into a meeting of the entire conference. Motion withdrawn.

4. Possibilities of thematic approach to SWWIRL, changing number of editions or timing - Next SWWIRL Newsletter, edited by Brenda Baldwin, will include a report on this conference and an appeal for social justice issues. Summer Newsletter, to be edited by Jackie Gibbons, will include a poll to determine what social justice projects members are interested in pursuing.

(continued on page 11)

*(Planning Meeting, continued from page 10)*

5. Maidens - Several maiders came forth asking for Maiden oriented workshops. There is something already set for 2002. Suggestions were made for a Maiden representative on the board, but the maidens thought that an adult that represented there needs would be better. Suggestions were made that the Maidens present gather the names and addresses of other Maidens, and write a report for SWIRL from the perspective of the Maidens. The President announced that she would appoint a chair of a committee to represent the Maidens.

6. Clara Barton Camp donations - At the last meeting, we voted to not support Clara Barton donations at SWUUSI, because no one volunteered to work the traditional orange juice for donations fund raiser. However, the fundraiser happened anyway. Jackie Gibbons volunteered to publicize the Clara Barton Camp in an article in SWWIRL.

7. Future Planning Session - Several dates and places were discussed, but the importance of more meetings was emphasized. The Board will suggest several dates to women interested in serving on a planning committee. Janet Gardner mentioned that it is very important to have a membership drive at all conferences. Brenda Baldwin emphasized that we need SWUJW guidelines for conference organizers that would include things like timelines, checklists, keeping track of members, tax status, scholarships, seed money, and collection of dues. Maybe a committee of last 5 conveners.

At 7:10 PM the meeting was released.

Respectfully Submitted, *Carol Phillips*

### ***Microcredit - Empowering Women to Transform Communities in Poverty***

*By: Sarah Oglesby*

In October 2000 I had the opportunity to visit El Salvador and meet some extraordinary women. I traveled with a non-profit citizen's lobby called RESULTS. There were 20 of us, and our goal was to meet women who were participating in microcredit programs and running tiny businesses. We visited three non-profit organizations that offer loans for micro-entrepreneurs and interviewed women who were participating. Microcredit is an anti-poverty strategy designed to reach women and families in poverty. Women are organized into borrowers' circles that act as each other's collateral and also support each other through the process of starting and running a small business, saving and investing money, and sustaining their families. The groups usually meet weekly to post payments on their loans, add to their savings accounts and to share their daily struggles and successes. These groups exist all over the developing world, (and some in the developed world as well) funded by organizations like FINCA (Foundation for International Community Assistance), the Grameen Bank, the World Bank, USAID (The United States Agency for International Development), and individual donors. Many loans are targeted to rural areas, where families struggle to make ends meet and few opportunities exist to develop the local economies. More than 90% of these loans are given to women, as research has shown that women are more likely to use money from their businesses to educate children and pay for basic health care needs and other sustaining services.

My trip to El Salvador demonstrated for me the capacity of women to make a difference for their communities. Because each woman may invite other women to join a new borrowers' circle and because the circle is so supportive, women are beginning to change not only their own lives, but the lives of many other women with whom they share this possibility. One woman we met had used her loan to buy two pigs, which she bred. She then invested the returns on her pigs in developing her small piece of property to include a couple of small rooms she rents to other families. Over time, she has managed to help at least 10 other women and has bought other small plots of land that she plans to also build on and rent. She lives in one room, with a woodburning stove outside, some electricity, almost no furniture, and no appliances. Her pride is beyond measure. Before her first loan, she told us, she had nothing and her older brother used to make fun of her poverty. A single mother, she wanted to prove him wrong and pay for her daughter's education. Now, he comes to her for advice and help, she says, and her daughter has plans to attend university. When we asked what her daughter might study, this proud mother told us her daughter wants to be an engineer. Her plans for the future? To help at least 100 more women in the next 5 years and to continue working at the village bank as an organizer.

I met countless women whose stories will stay with me forever. Their businesses, though simple, made it possible for them to sustain families and develop plans for the future. They sold used clothing, firewood, vegetables, fruits, household goods, home made specialties like pupusas (a regional food which is like a tortilla with cheese and meat in the middle) and many other simple but needed items. For some, running a business was a new idea and for some it was something they'd always done but never been able to make a profit at because of the exorbitant rates charged by informal lenders. For all, it was an opportunity at last to be proud, respected, and successful.

There are many ways to get involved with microcredit. In Tulsa, All Souls Unitarian Congregation donates money to FINCA which supports microcredit programs in Central America and several areas in Africa. The organization I traveled with lobbies for microcredit funding in the foreign aid budget and through the World Bank infrastructures. If you want to know more about how you, your congregation, or any organization can get involved in microcredit, you may visit the microcredit summit webpage at [www.microcreditsummit.org](http://www.microcreditsummit.org) or e-mail me at [sco5320@dccd.edu](mailto:sco5320@dccd.edu).



# Calling All Women's Groups

Please let us hear of what you have done,  
are doing and/or plan to do  
in the area of social justice!

We'd like to include these reports in the Summer SWWIRL. Please let Jackie Gibbons know (2015 Houston Place Denton, TX 76201 or [treejwg@hotmail.com](mailto:treejwg@hotmail.com)) as soon as possible if you will be sending a report. The deadline for submissions is tentatively set as June 1<sup>st</sup>.

## Along My Spiritual Path

By: Beverly Archibald

I would like to share with you my joy in being ordained as a minister in The Order of Teleos on January 12, 2001, in Scottsdale, Arizona. This event marked a very important milestone for me on my spiritual journey.

The Order of Teleos is an energy network of like-minded individuals who are devoted to the embodiment of Love on the pathway to greater knowing. It is a sanctuary without walls, an energy network and a soul center of celebration.

Teleos is a Greek word which means the perfect pattern within, that guides and directs our unfolding and our individualizing process. As ministers of The Order of Teleos, we seek to embody in individual and communal form the Ancient Wisdom and the inner knowing of each individual.

Central to our beliefs are The Love Principles, which open the way to unconditional Love. These principles have served me well for many years, both as affirmations and, more recently, phrased as daily intentions. Living these principles is one of the main purposes of my life at this time.

### The Love Principles

- ♥ *Receive all persons as beautiful exactly as they are.*
- ♥ *Be the change you want to see, instead of trying to change anyone else.*
- ♥ *Create your own reality consciously.*
- ♥ *Provide others with opportunities to give.*
- ♥ *Have no expectations, but rather abundant expectancy.*
- ♥ *Problems are opportunities.*

*Choice is the life process.*

*In every new moment of awareness,  
you are free to make a new choice.*

These simply stated, straight-forward principles have enabled me to stretch and grow spiritually as I seek to live in harmony with our environment and my fellow human beings.

For further information on The Order of Teleos, you may access the website at [www.consciousnesswork.com](http://www.consciousnesswork.com).

## Speaking of Ordaining Women...

- The Catholic Archdiocese of Chicago committed to a \$1 million campaign to attract priests. Part of the campaign involved erecting billboards reading:

If you are waiting for a sign from God, this is it.  
Consider the Priesthood.

Many people were troubled that the archdiocese would go to such great lengths to recruit celibate men to the priesthood when so many others want to serve. Thinking of the pain of the women who feel called to serve as priests but cannot, Mary Beth Lang proposed that the Women's Ordination Conference (WOC) put up its own billboard. WOC members initially raised \$12,000 – enough for a billboard and 30 signs at subway and "el" stations throughout the city. The sign stated:

You're waiting for a sign from God?  
**This** is it.

**Ordain Women.**

More information on the WOC can be found at their website <http://www.womensordination.org>. One of the ways the WOC and Catholic women around the world silently show support of women's ordination is wearing purple stoles to church functions. So – should you ever have the occasion to visit a Catholic church, wearing a purple stole is a way to show your support of equal rights for women in the priesthood.

- Episcopalians continue to put pressure on the conservative Diocese of Fort Worth (TX) to accept women as priests. The Fort Worth diocese has stated that they are "reasonably compliant" with church laws on female priests under an unusual cooperative agreement with the Episcopal Diocese of Dallas. If a woman in the Fort Worth diocese feels called to the priesthood, she is put under the direction of the Dallas Episcopal Bishop. Should a church in Fort Worth want to hire a female priest, they have to become a part of the Dallas diocese first. The Fort Worth Episcopal Women's Caucus continues to advocate for female priests in the Diocese of Fort Worth.

## DID YOU KNOW??

...that SWUW has a library of books, audio tapes and video tapes of interest to women? These materials are available for two week periods without charge (except return postage) to any woman or group of persons officially associated with a Unitarian Universalist society in the Southwest District. Some curriculums are also available, and they have different lending policies. Please check out this wonderful resource by selecting "Library Resources" from the index page of the SWUW website <http://sites.netscape.net/swuww/> or by contacting Connie Nolen at the District Office (817-446-0099).

## ***What Do Women Want?***

*By: Barbara Patton*

Comedian Bill Hicks said he has learned a lot about women. He thinks he learned exactly how the fall of man occurred in the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve were in the Garden, and Adam said one day, "Wow, Eve, here we are, at one with nature, at one with God, we'll never age, we'll never die, and all our dreams come true the instant that we have them." And Eve said, "Yeah. . . it's just not enough, is it?"

Just what do women want? Men have lamented this question for ages. The theme of this article is "What Do Women Want, Why They Want It and How They Will Get It." To delve into the mystery of "it" requires a look into history with the life story of a woman named Sarah Grimke. Sarah's life made an impression on me because in the middle 19th century she answered these three questions in her speaking and writing about women's rights.

Sarah was born in 1792 in an upper class slaveholding family of Charleston, SC. She was an intelligent child who craved education. She learned Latin, Greek, and mathematics. Her father was a chief judge of the SC Supreme Court. He told his daughter she would make a fine lawyer, if only she had not been born a girl. When she was older, her schooling turned to French, watercolors, and embroidery while her brothers had the opportunity for higher education.

This denial of a higher education became the motivation for Sarah's search for equality and freedom for women. In Charleston, Sarah found the social conventions stifling to her need for growth. When she was in her late 20's, Sarah moved to Philadelphia where she discovered the Quaker teachings. During the early nineteenth century, the social norms did not allow women to speak in public. However, Quakerism affirmed the equality of men and women and allowed women to express themselves publicly. In addition, Quakers were pioneers in the antislavery movement.

When Sarah's younger sister, Angelina, moved to Philadelphia, the two sisters felt they were called to a noble work by speaking out on the antislavery issue. In 1838 the Grimke sisters defied social custom by touring New England and speaking out for slaves. They were viciously attacked by the clergy as being unwomanly and unchristian. This attack awakened a sleeping giant - the issues of women's rights. Sarah wrote a series of letters comparing the plight of all women to that of slaves and defended the rights of women as intelligent human beings. During that time, women's lives centered around home and family. Women had no rights. They could not vote, own property, or even make a will. They were considered legally "dead in the law." Sarah was interested in showing the parallel between the condition of slaves and women being deprived of human rights. Her reply to the church constituted one of the first serious discussions of women's rights by an American woman.

Sarah's strength of conviction gave her the courage to confront the religious power structure that was a major

force in 19-century society. Sarah confronted the clergy's use of scriptures as its authority for keeping women in an inferior position. She pointed out that Jesus' teachings were meant to be equally empowering to both men and women followers. Sarah's defiance stemmed from her anger not only over the restricted rights of women, but from the church's assumed control over women's beliefs and lives. Sarah based her defense on the scriptures, thereby meeting her critics on their ground.

What do women want? In this case, Sarah knew exactly what "it" was – the opportunity of an education, freedom from religious subservience, and equal standing with men. In her 60's, Sarah's letters moved from anger and blaming to relying on good reasons that appealed to people's values and their concept of good. With this approach, she answered the question "Why do they want it?" from the standpoint of being for the public good. Since women form one half of every class of society, she argued that the national interest as a whole would benefit with women's participation in business and public affairs. She turned her disappointment of not having an education into creative energy to raise the consciousness of the nineteenth-century men and women.

The last stage of Sarah's writings answer the question "How do they get it?" Her growth and development moved from resentment of men's educational and employment privileges, through good reasons for the whole, to a creative affirmation of who women are. Sarah discovered a woman cannot turn to a man to solve her dilemma. As one author said, "Those who are creating the problem are not those who can solve it. Insulated, they don't even know they're in a burning house." Sarah began to focus on women's capabilities and dignity rather than what they had been denied by society. Women had been isolated and lived narrow lives. This had taken its toll on their feeling that they were powerless and inferior. Sarah's quest was to raise their consciousness to make their private experiences legitimate, concrete and valuable. With all of Sarah's intellectual and spiritual searching, one can almost see this white-haired woman as she sits alone writing to the women of the world. She attempts to lift the veil of subservience and seeks to create a new self-defined image of strength and self-reliance.

Think a moment about your own life. When trouble begins, do you look first to blame, then begin to find reasons or understanding to shift your perception from victim to a more creative approach. Then lastly, do you look within to find your own strength. Sarah progressed through these stages as she blended her experiences and her knowledge into wisdom.

*What do women want? They want a sense of personal power or control over their life! Why do they want it? They realize with effective self-management they can fulfill their own dreams. How do they get it? By affirming their own accomplishments, their own nature, and by respecting themselves and their work whether it is in the home or in the public sphere. This is the bottom line! The rest is the icing on the cake!*



### Aging Surprises

Daughter  
 Girl  
 Sister  
 Then mother  
 Grandmother  
 Crone

When I was a child, I played like a child, like a girl  
 I played with the boys, I watched the football jocks,  
 I loved the men –  
 men and more men.

Losing my hormones, what a shock -- the confusion  
 I became invisible to the men, the men who had adored me.

They found me then. They loved me.  
 They taught me the power of women.  
 The wisdom of years shared with me.

Strong  
 Giving  
 Powerful  
 Awesome

It surrounded me, it hugged me, it filled me up.  
 Spirit-shared infusing me with my power, my awesomeness.

I am woman now.

Janet (Gardner) Martinique



*SWUUV Women's Conference*

## *Gather The Spirit: Weaving Our Lives*

**Radisson Plaza Hotel  
 in Downtown Fort Worth**

**February 22-24, 2002**

**Keynote Speaker** – Cristina Biagga

**Motivational Speaker** – Liza Ely

**Workshops:** *Patter – From Nerves to Nirvana – Toning – Nia – Grandmother, Granddaughter – In The Footsteps of The Goddess – Sexuality and Religion – Spirituality – Living Intentionally – Politics – Health – and more...*

**Maiden Program**

**Ritual**

**Vendors**

**Off-site Activities** – *Water Gardens – Japanese Garden – Kimball Art Museum – Modern Art Museum – Zoo – and more...*

*(All accessible via the Fort Worth Trolley)*

Please visit our website regularly to receive updates on plans for 2002.

<http://sites.netscape.net/swuuv/2002>

**A note about our theme** – *The theme is meant to capture our goal of gathering the spirit of all the women in attendance, drawing on the spirit of those who have gone before, weaving that spirit into our live and sending it on to those who will come after us. We are still working on a graphic representation of the theme for T-shirts and brochures. Should you wish to submit a proposal, please send it to:*

*Brenda Baldwin  
 4400 Inwood Rd  
 Fort Worth, TX 76109*

### Future SWUUV Women's Conferences

**2002 – Fort Worth, TX**

Convener: Brenda Baldwin  
 (swuuv2002@hotmail.com)

**2003 – Austin, TX**

**2004 – Oklahoma City**

**2005 – Tahlequah/Tulsa**

## About Our Contributors...

**Beverly Archibald** (a.k.a. Rev Bev) participates in the Fort Worth Women's Expressions Group. Retired from Texas Wesleyan University, she is an avid bridge player and frequent traveler. Beverly is a former Peace Core volunteer and lived in the Middle East for 8 years.

**Cynthia Crawford**, as a lifelong UU, has felt fortunate to grow up in home and church environments that promote an uncensored imagination's freedom to roam. She loves to tinker with ideas which bar no possibilities and which include humor mixed with a dash of the eccentric. Her interests in travel, dance, reading, snail mail correspondence, and whatever else presents itself around the bend, leave her with little time to practice her profession of public elementary school children's librarian.

**Beverly Fogleman's** primary interest is in doing what she can to help children develop their talents and capabilities. A social worker, Beverly's favorite job was in the Community Service Development Center at the University of Texas at Arlington. Since her husband's retirement, they are traveling as much as possible.

**Jackie Gibbons** was editor of the Fall 2000 SWWIRL, will be the editor of the Summer 2001 SWWIRL and has served the Denton (TX) UU Fellowship in various capacities for 20 years. She was on the staff of the Dwight Brown Leadership School for three years and is now offering workshops in toning and "Women and Wisdom." She is a lifelong teacher, musician, and lover of Earth.

**Linda McConathy** is a member of Westside UU Church and the Fort Worth Women's Expression Group. Her volunteer work includes serving on SWUJW's 2002 Conference committee and as secretary for the Fort Worth Friendship Force, an organization dedicated to promoting world peace. Other interests include learning Spanish and traveling. She is an RN and works for a hospice.

**Laura Nagel** is a member of First UU Church of Houston. Before relocating to Houston this past summer, Laura served as board president of First Jefferson in Fort Worth during their capital campaign for a new religious education wing now under construction. Laura recently accepted a position as consultant in the UUA Congregational Fundraising Program. Recently, Laura rushed out to see the video "Almost Famous" when friends said she bore an uncanny resemblance to the mother played by Frances McDormand. Despite Laura's wishes and protestations to the contrary, her daughter Erica, who had watched the film too, said there was no way Laura would be allowed to go on a rock band tour.

**Sarah Oglesby** has been interested in women's issues and issues of poverty and empowerment most of her life. Some of her best early memories are of ERA marches, NOW meetings and pro-choice rallies attended with her mother, a public administrator and an activist. As an adult, Sarah has worked for the Texas Tenants' Union in Dallas as an organizer in low income, HUD-insured housing and with El Centro College, an urban community college in downtown Dallas, directing a program designed to assist

first generation college students, low income students and students with disabilities. Since 1993, she has been active in Results, a grassroots non-profit citizens lobby that lobbies for programs/funding to address hunger and poverty.

**Barbara Patton** has presented her original program "Body Mind Harmony" at the Fort Worth Women's Expressions Group. She lives in Fort Worth, participates in Toastmasters Plus Two and is chairperson of Changing Relationships (a monthly class, meeting at First United Methodist Church, for people of all faiths who are making changes in their lives).

**Linda VanBlaricom** is a crone, a long time member of UUCLR, currently worship chair, past president and past most things but feeling the menopausal zest and loving it! She is a woman with many interests and loves including running, the violin, watercolor, dogs, her church and friends. Professionally, she is a psychotherapist but in a transitional place and exploring new options.

**Donna Wills** attended her first SWUJW Conference in Little Rock this year. She is exploring her spiritual options and found the conference a comfortable place. She enjoys nature, crafts, her family and her friends. She once combined most of those interests when she conspired with two dear female friends to erect a tent without the aid of poles. Duct tape has a predominate place in her life.

**Lela Woods** is a member of Westside UU in Fort Worth and participates in the Women's Expressions Group. A gardener by nature and nurture, she recently became the sole-proprietor of a picture framing business and is adjusting to this new role as she spreads her wings.



## Little Rock Memories

Good directions... Winding road... Great directions...  
 Trees... Oops! Wrong place... There it is!... Friends...  
 Warm welcome... More friends... Hugs... Energy...  
 Exquisite altars to the four directions... Feminine voices...  
 Meditation... Increasing energy... Sleep... A new day...  
 Women everywhere... Bright sun, cold air... New  
 experiences... Powerful, heroic women... Rest... Magical  
 setting.... Beautiful women... Wine... Fun... Humor...  
 Bringing in the sleaze... Officers... Cowgirl... Strip-  
 tease... Excitement, anticipation... Dancing... The Red  
 Tent Room... Champagne... Dear friends... Massage...  
 Chocolate... Cold night... Spiral on the hillside...  
 Feminine voices around a fire... Exhausted sleep...  
 Another day... Gathering together... So hard to say  
 goodbye... Looking forward to Fort Worth.



# ***SWWIRL – SouthWest Women In Religion Letter***

**A quarterly publication of SWU UW – SouthWest Unitarian Universalist Women**

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