

From President SUE STONE: SOUTHWEST WOMEN TAKE ACTION AT SWUUSI

I am just back from SWUUSI, with lots of good memories of sharing and good times with the wonderful women of the Southwest District. Our "Lunches Plus" were again a success, thanks to **Helen Siders** who led and organized the programs, and to everyone who participated. The lunchtime gatherings provided a relaxed and convenient time for women to get together to talk and plan and get to know each other. We shared poetry and stories, listened to music and sang together, made new friends and renewed old relationships. I can't think of a better reason to go to SWUUSI again and again!

Annual Social Action

Our Tuesday morning collection for the Clara Barton Camp raised over \$200. Thank you so much to everyone who helped with this. A flyer for the registration packet and "working the crowd" seemed to make the difference this year.

Women's Conference Report

On Wednesday we had the annual SWUUSI business meeting for Southwest UU Women. **Margaret Deininger** reported on plans for the 1996 Women's Conference, which will be held February 9-11 in Memphis TN. Plans are well

underway, and it promises to be a wonderful conference, with the theme of "*Dancing the Circles of Life.*"

Resources

Julia Harris, Women and Religion Chair, told us about new additions to the Women's Resource Library, 9 films and 15 audio tapes. She is planning to include the list of resources and the list of women's organizations in the district in SWWIRL, rather than printing them separately. This will get them out for more of you to use, and will also be less expensive.

THE INWARD SEA

There is in every person an inward sea, and in that sea there is an island and on that island there is an altar and standing guard before that altar is the "angel with the flaming sword." Nothing can get by that angel to be placed upon that altar unless it has the mark of your inner authority. Nothing passes "the angel with the flaming sword" to be placed upon your altar unless it be a part of "the fluid area of your consent." This is your crucial link with the Eternal.

—Howard Thurman *Meditations of the Heart*

Scholarships Created

The main item of business was scholarships for the Annual Women's Conference. Money has been provided by the Austin conference committee to set up a scholarship fund, and the members present agreed that SWUUSI will take charge of the fund and administer the scholarships for all future women's conferences. Those needing scholarships will apply to a SWUUSI committee, which will make the decisions and send the money to that year's conference committee. **Sylvia Wheeler, Helen Siders and Marie Harris** will serve as the first scholarship committee.

They presented guidelines, which were reviewed, revised and approved. The guidelines will be listed elsewhere in this or a following issue of SWWIRL. Conference organizers and participants will be given an opportunity to donate to the scholarship fund.

Workshops on UU Women's Concerns

The issue of workshops for future conferences was discussed. A workshop on menopause is in the works for the Fall conference in San Antonio.

...continued on page two

President's Report,

continued

Julia Harris, Anita Louise and Maggie Joseph are working on an exciting idea for next year's SWUUSI, tentatively titled "*Meeting the Baba Yaga,*" or exploring "negative" female images and goddesses.

Janice Bunch and Helen Siders are serving as a committee to develop a workshop for the Spring conference. Please contact them if you have suggestions. We want to meet your needs with the workshops we sponsor at District conferences.

Other News

The members approved a grant of \$200 for **Anita Louise** to develop a church school curriculum for elementary ages

titled "*When She Was Young: Stories of the Earth Goddess in Early Times and Places.*"

New members of the Planning Committee are **Janice Bunch** and **Edie Catrell**.

Mary Francis was appointed to the nominating committee.

Our love and best wishes go to **Past President Fran Faris**, who is recovering from a heart attack. Goddess bless, and get well soon! We love you.

—Sue Stone

editor's note: Notes and letters to Fran Faris may be sent to her at 2541 Delmar Drive, Dallas, TX 75233

FREE INFORMATION PACKET: School to Work and Gender Equity in Education Reform

School-to-work offers an innovative approach to education reform and can significantly impact the lives of half the work force — women. A free information packet on the role of gender equity in school-to-work initiatives and education reform is now available from the Women's Educational Equity Act (WEEA) Publishing Center. Print materials in the packet include "STW and Gender Equity: Opportunity for or Barrier to Economic Parity" by Katherine Hanson, Joyce Malyn-Smith, and Vivian Guilfooy of Education Development Center; a fact sheet on school to work and gender equity; information on relevant electronic networks; and listings of available resources and services.

The WEEA Publishing Center is the only federally funded national clearinghouse of gender-fair education and curriculum materials and services.

phone 1-800-225-3088

FAX 617/332-4318

Internet:

WEEAPUB@EDC.ORG

Southwest Unitarian Universalist Women MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Dues \$5.00/year

Date Paid _____

Name _____

Address

Name of Women's Group

Name of Church or Fellowship

Please Read: If you belong to a Women's Group in a UU church or Fellowship, your SWU UW dues may be paid as a group, should your group agree. Designate a contact person above and enclose a list of members' names, addresses, and phone number and a check or money order for dues of \$5/yr times the number of names. Individuals become members by filling in this form and mailing it with their dues.

Check should be written to SWU UW

mail to: Gail Huggett, Treasurer
12314 South 14th Street, Jenks, OK 74037

*Dues include your subscription to SWWIRL

Do Traditional Models of Femininity Put Girls at Risk?

Femininity ideology, as defined by Wellesley Center for Research on Women Associate Deborah Tolman, is an internalized set of traditional cultural ideals and beliefs about what constitutes being a "normal," "acceptable" or "good" woman in our society. In a new study on *Femininity Ideology and the Risk of Unintended Pregnancy*, funded by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, Tolman will explore the hypothesis that traditional femininity ideology is associated with a high risk for unintended pregnancy.

The five year study will begin by developing an instrument to measure femininity ideology. Tolman said, "We are assuming that one of the ways that women in any culture are placed in subordinate positions is psychologically, through the internalization of this ideology." Tolman's team is working with the concept that femininity ideology is essentially the "strongarm" of patriarchy, and that, therefore, there are discernable themes that cut across different cultures.

One identifiable theme focuses on appearance in order to attract male attention. For white girls, this means being thin, having or wanting blue eyes and blonde hair. For African American girls, this can mean having "good hair" and light skin. Obviously, this conception will not have complete overlap across cultures, but Tolman believes that there is enough commonality to justify the concept. In order to explore this "hypothesis" of theme and particular content, the research team is now conducting focus groups with girls from different cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds.

25% of 8th grade girls are sexually active.

This data, along with items from other scales, the perusal of theoretical and fictional material as well as other cultural products such as music videos, teen magazines and surveys, movies and TV, will inform the items constructed for the scale, which will be multi-dimensional and measure:

1. girls' ability to "recognize" cultural norms of femininity ideology (at the thematic level); and
2. the extent to which girls have internalized these norms.

The scale will also provide a space for girls to fill in the particulars of these themes for their communities. Once the instrument is developed, a survey will be administered to 500 culturally and socioeconomically diverse 8th grade girls and, after some preliminary analyses, 40 girls will be chosen for in-depth interviews. Through these interviews Tolman hopes to discover how their femininity ideologies shape their sexual relationships, decisions and actions.

Eighth graders were chosen because they are at a point in the psychological development where conceptions of gender

are often quite rigid. It is also a time when some adolescents first begin sexual involvements (25% of 8th graders are sexually active) and are starting to enact their own sexual scripts.

Two years later this same group of girls will be surveyed and interviewed again in order to examine a second hypothesis. Tolman surmises that as girls grow older, they develop a more critical perspective on gender relations and their femininity ideology may change. Yet, while their ideas may have changed, their actions may remain the same because girls first learn how to negotiate intimate and sexual relationships at a time in their psycho-social development when their femininity ideology is likely to be more traditional and rigid. Tolman is working to obtain additional funding to expand this project to include the study of other problems including abusive relationships and coercive sex, as well as the resiliencies girls may develop — the ability to avoid pregnancy, to have safer sex and to avoid coercive relationships.

Tolman became interested in girls' femininity ideology as a result of her previous work on girls' experiences with sexual desire. A grant from the Spencer Foundation's small grant program allowed Tolman to work with a group of young women to explore girls' experiences of desire and to develop an intervention. The intervention enables the girls to develop a sense of self that is empowered and entitled to their own sexuality and sexual relationships. Tolman is writing a book about her work on adolescent girls' experiences of desire to be titled Dilemma of Desire.

reprinted from the Spring 1995 *Research Report* of the Center for Research on Women, Wellesley College, 106 Central Street, Wellesley, MA 02181-8259

BACK TO SCHOOL Could there be something in the very nature of the school as an institution that prevents it from fully realizing its mandate to inform, educate, and develop both the individual and her society? Or, to put it another way, could there be something in its *manner* of being that prevents it from realizing its *reason* for being? At the high school where I teach, as at most, students come and go in sets of thirty or so at approximately one-hour intervals, an arrangement convenient to the daunting task of administering a crowd of more than 800 young people, but not necessarily conducive to their education or in the best interests of society. The arrangement is instead both relatively expedient and indicative of the schools' custodial function—in essence, their primary one, since we have structured schools in such a manner as to allow this function to precede all others. Schools *keep* students first, and any education that happens along the way is incidental and achieved against the odds. It may be, finally, that schools temporarily *prevent* us from getting the education we persist in getting outside and beyond schools, where the conditions of life provide more natural motivations and learning is less abstract.

D. Guterson, English teacher, writing in the 1990 *Harper's Magazine*

BOOK REVIEW

by Sue Stone

Women's Bodies, Women's Wisdom:
Creating Physical and Emotional Health and
Healing by Christiane Northrup, M.D., published
by Bantam Books, now out in paperback as well

as hard cover. This is a wonderful and inspiring book on women's health. It takes a holistic approach to the subject, including not only up-to-date and practical medical information, but suggestions on diet and exercise, and especially explorations of the connections between emotional suffering and physical illness. Dr. Northrup has seen that emotional and psychological trauma contribute to obstetrical and gynecological ailments, and has created a new kind of health care practice to help women change the conditions of their lives which lead to health problems. She describes how women can heal by learning to listen to the wisdom of their own bodies. By attending to and healing their emotional wounds, her patients have been able to heal their diseases as well. I found the stories of her patients to be very moving and some were quite miraculous. I now have a deeper appreciation for my own body, and more faith in my ability to create health for myself. I highly recommend the book for women of any age. I wish it had been there for me years ago.

"...Who'd choose to be God? To know the whole story, its violent clashes, its melees, its deadly conclusions, before it even begins? Too sad. And too demoralizing. For a soldier on the eve of battle, ignorance is the same as hope. Though neither one is bliss."

—Margaret Atwood, *The Robber Bride*

"The Fourth World Conference on Women" happens September 4-15 in Beijing. Check out the progress of the international gathering shaped by feminist leaders from five regions worldwide on Internet:
<http://www.iisd.ca/linkages/women.html>

Plan Now!

Southwest UU Women's
Annual Conference

FEBRUARY 9 - 11, 1996

Memphis, Tennessee

"Dancing the Circles"

Women and Labor

Two Who Have Gone Before Us...

Helen Marot (1865-1940) was educated in Quaker schools and began her career as a librarian. She published a *Handbook of Labor Literature* in 1899 and that same year conducted an investigation of working conditions in the custom tailoring trades. In 1902 she investigated child labor in New York City for the Association of Neighborhood Workers. She helped form the New York Child Labor Committee and with **Florence Kelley** and **Josephine Goldmark** drew up a report on child labor that was the principal impetus to passage of the Compulsory Education Act passed in 1903 by the New York legislature. In 1906 Helen became the executive secretary of the New York branch of the National Women's Trade Union League. Her executive ability, organizing talent, and sheer drive built the group into a formidable force in labor organization. She was largely responsible for creating the Bookkeepers, Stenographers and Accountants Union of New York, a pioneering effort in organizing white-collar women. In 1909-10, Helen was the principal leader and organizer of the first great strike of shirtwaist makers and dressmakers under the banner of the new International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union. Helen Marot wrote and served

on editorial boards. She was also a member of the U.S. Industrial Relations Commission in 1914-1916.

A contemporary of Helen Marot was **Margaret Dreier Robins**, (1868-1945). As a volunteer, Margaret served in the women's auxiliary of Brooklyn Hospital and in 1902 became a member of the State Charities Aid Association's city visiting committee for insane asylums. In 1903 she was chair of the legislative committee of the Women's Municipal League, a post in which she led a campaign for legislation regulating private employment agencies. After marrying in 1905 she moved to Chicago, where she was elected president of the Chicago branch of the Women's Trade Union League, and then president of the National Women's Trade Union League from 1906-22. Margaret played a major role in organizing support for the strikes of 1909-11 against the garment industry. She was the principal force behind the League's establishment of a training program for women union leaders in 1914 and was an editor of the League's journal, *Life and Labor*. In the 1930s she became an ardent supporter of the New Deal.

LABOR DAY, SEPT 4

The best hymn for labor day is the beautiful old anthem of the garment workers:

Bread and Roses

*As we come marching, marching in
the beauty of the day
a million darkened kitchens
a thousand mill lofts gray
are brightened by the radiance that
a sudden sun discloses
for the people hear us singing
Bread and Roses,
Bread and Roses*

*As we come marching, marching
unnumbered women, dead,
go crying through our singing their
ancient cry for bread.
Small art, or love, or beauty, their
hungry spirits knew.
Yes, it is bread we fight for
but we fight for roses too.*

*As we come marching, marching
we battle too for men
for they are women's children and
our freedom is their gain.
Our lives shall not be sweated
from birth until life closes.
Hearts starve as well as bodies.
Give us bread, but give us roses.*

*As we come marching, marching
we're standing proud and tall,
for the rising of the women is the
rising of us all!
No more the drudge and idler, ten
who toil while one reposes,
but a sharing of life's glories:
Bread and Roses,
Bread and Roses*

Crone's Corner

Although Fran Farris is recovering from a heart attack and is not the author of this issue's *Crone's Corner*, we're saving her place with the same column name.

A review of a book by Barbara G. Walker, *The Crone, Woman of Age, Wisdom, and Power* offers us some croneish guidance. Walker's 1985 crone study is divided into The Lost Crone, The Wise Crone, The Terrible Crone, The Crone and the Cauldron, The Crone Turns Witch, The Doomsday Crone and The Future Crone. These observations are from the first chapter, "Studying the Crone."

"Because Goddess worshipers use the term *power* much more loosely, they need to understand that, to men, it means the capacity to threaten or destroy....

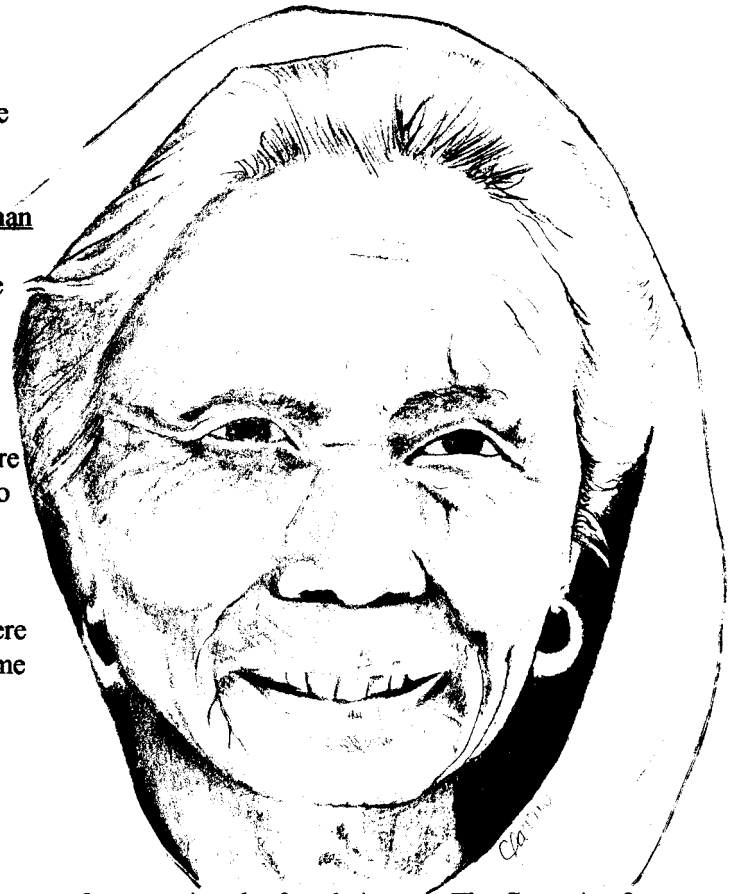
The real power that women can exert through psychological archetypes may be retrieved from pre-Christian symbol systems, where no attempt was made to conceal it. If feminist spirituality is to become firmly established, it must be at bottom rational. This means taking account of what the archetypes signify, in terms of the collective human psyche that evolved them, rather than as explanations of the external natural world.

On the psychological level, then, it will be necessary for women to investigate that part of pre-Christian religion that was most particularly obliterated because men found it most intimidating: the negative aspect of the all-powerful Mother, who embodied the fearful potential for rejection, abandonment, death. Most ancient religions made a definite symbolic place for this darker feminine image. It was perceived as present and powerful, in equal proportion to the beautiful, sensual, divine giver of birth, light, love, and nurture — just as night must coexist with day, winter with summer. Ancient cyclic images of the cosmos necessarily recognized a recessive period in every cycle, since a continuously affirmative system (such as the Christian notion of heaven) would cease to be cyclic at all.

The possibility of a future true morality is contained not in the fear of God, but in the still unknown meanings of the old, grim Goddess who represented fear itself. She is the one we most need to understand: not the pretty Virgin; not the fecund Mother; but the **wise, willful, wolfish Crone**.

Men feared the Crone image enough to leave it alone. They assimilated the Virgin and Mother phases of the ancient Goddess to Christianity, combined them, and deprived the combination of divine status; but the Crone phase was too darkly threatening to be so handled.

Because she retained so much of her original prepatriarchal character, she is a valuable study object for modern feminists desirous



of reassessing the female image. The Crone is of value, too, as an indication of the power of women's nay-saying, hence of their best hope of exerting control in a male-dominated world where they are expected always to say yes. The Crone established the cyclic system of perpetual becoming, whereby every temporary living form in the universe blends eventually into every other form, nothing is unrelated, and there can be no hierarchy of better or worse, We and They.

Archetypes suppressed by any culture will tend to arise again and again, threatening the establishment that suppressed them. The Old Woman, who acknowledges no master, may be our best guide in this long, dark, labyrinthine spiritual journey."

There, doesn't that make you want to know more about this aspect of the Goddess? (I especially liked the "wolfish" and "acknowledges no master" parts.) Walker's book, *The Crone*, was published by Harper & Row and should be available by order through any bookstore.

—Carol Farris

Gleanings

THE PLUM TREES

*Forget the room of one's own-
-write in the kitchen, lock
yourself up in the bathroom.
Write on the bus or the welfare
line, on the job or during meals,
between sleeping or waking.
While you wash the floor or
clothes listen to the words
chanting in your body.*

--Gloria Anzaldua

"...You can look at war as a massing of arms and matériel and troops, but you can also see it as something else--as a delicate web of interwoven choices made by human beings, made out of a certain consciousness. The decision to order an attack, the decision to obey or disobey an order, to fire or not to fire a weapon. Armies and, indeed, any culture that supports them must convince the people that all the decisions are made already, and they have no choice. But that is never true. So, mad as it may seem, this is the terrain upon which we base our defense of this city--the landscape of consciousness."

Starhawk, *The Fifth Sacred Thing*

Such richness flowing
through the branches of summer and into

the body, carried inward on the five
rivers! Disorder and astonishment

rattle your thought and your heart
cries for rest but don't

succumb, there's nothing
so sensible as sensual inundation. Joy

is a taste before
it's anything else, and the body

can lounge for hours devouring
the important moments. Listen

the only way
to tempt happiness into your mind is by taking it

into the body first, like small
wild plums.

by *Mary Oliver*, 1983 Pulitzer Prize for poetry winner

*Poetry is the way we help give name to the nameless so it
can be thought.*

--Audre Lorde

Isn't poetry a form of prophecy, and aren't prophets known for
their talent for flourishing in inhospitable deserts
and other bleak surroundings? --Jan Clausen

The Crossing Press publishes many books of interest to women. To receive a
current catalog, call their toll free number: 800-777-1048

Back-to-school time and continuing education about sexism...

The fact that more females than males attend postsecondary courses is more an indication of economic conditions than that classrooms are bias-free environments. The sexism of the larger culture echoes in education. While there are some strategies known to help mitigate the negative effects of sexism, they all require attention and perseverance. These paragraphs from *Women in Higher Education* (1934 Monroe St., Madison, WI 53791-8401) may be helpful:

Sexism will not be "cured" by women, any more than racism will be eliminated by people of color. It's necessary to identify key members of the majority who are sensitive to these issues, and to work with them to educate others.

For pluralism to become a reality, both people and schools need to reconsider their values. Usually change won't occur unless it's in the best self-interest of the person or institution.

To facilitate change, find and use the "vested interest" of appropriate individuals (both carrots and sticks). And help detractors understand the value of difference so that they can tolerate it, or even endorse it, as a freeing experience for themselves and the larger community.

One way to increase interpersonal appreciation is to explore similarities with others. Shared interests guarantee neither tenure or promotion, but they do form a common basis for appreciation and respect, which can help to bridge potential future areas of disagreement or style.

Including women and minorities as responsible, adult, contributing members of college communities challenges the very foundation of the traditional American educational system. But don't give up! As more women enter college communities, change is happening. Maggie Kuhn, founder of the Gray Panthers, reminds us that, "One good thing about old age is that you tend to outlive your enemies."

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