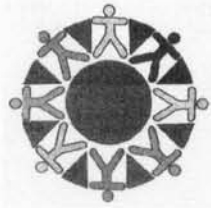


VOICES OF WOMEN

Newsletter of the Central Midwest District UU Women's Connection (formerly CMWD-UUWF)

Summer 2006

Women of Spirit



On a historic weekend in November of 1977, twenty thousand women and men left their jobs and homes around the country to end discrimination against women and promote their equal rights at the first federally funded National Women's Conference in Houston, Texas.

Where do women stand now? Where do our hearts and spirits lead us in the 21st century? What issues fire us into action? Twenty-five amazing women met at the King's House retreat center in Henry, Illinois, June 2-4 to explore these and other questions. I was inspired to hear stories of social and political activism by women from across the Central Midwest District at the Women's Connection Spring Conference!

...a small sampling:

- o Velaine's first social action was to protest door-to-door against McCarthyism.
- o Faye advocates for persons with mental illness by writing to legislators.
- o Rachel participated in a candlelight march to prevent the Iraq war.
- o Ginny joined NOW and marched with them.
- o Rosemary remembers campaigning for Adlai Stevenson.

So many women, and many more stories....
Each person touching many more lives!

The Women's Connection Spring Conference was created by diverse women's stories woven together with the generous gifts of energy, talents, faith, friendship, and financial support from across our District. If you produced a workshop, embellished a quilt square, caressed a drum, shared a story at our ingathering, or paid your membership dues, then you share in the success of the Women of Spirit Spring Conference. You have my gratitude as an individual whose spirit benefited from the experience, and the Governing Council sends our thanks for helping Make Connections!

Submitted by Cheryl Springwood, Councilor

Thanks

At the end of the fiscal year two of our valued UU Women's Connection Governing Council-women, Betty Jachim and Pat Baker will be leaving. Both have served with constancy and single-minded purpose. Helping to rewrite the by laws which spell out just such transitions within the council, was but one project they took on. We are grateful and appreciative of their vision, the gift of their time and good ideas that have served the women of the district so well through the transitions of the last three years. They have helped assure women in the CMWD of a strengthened and viable organization to carry on important work. Thank you Betty and Pat.

Leadership openings—No experience needed

With this transition beginning January 1st we appeal to you to say "yes" to leadership in the UU Women's Connection. Terms are 3 years. If you think you might enjoy our work of supporting retreats, educational programming, grant making, communication, public relations and more, through consensus and shared leadership, and if you can meet quarterly, please contact individual council members listed in this VOW or email them at connections@uuwomensconnection.org for more information.

Say "yes" when nobody asked.

--Lao Proverb



*Women's
Banner
Project*

The women of the Central Midwest District have begun the creation of a quilted banner, which will hopefully become iconic at General Assembly, District Assembly, and other Unitarian Universalist events!

To learn how you can participate, see p. 5.

Lake Geneva Fall Conference

The UU Women's Connection and the Springfield SISTERS proudly present: **My Body: Live, Love, Laugh**--Lake Geneva Fall 2006 Conference--Nov. 10-12, 2006 at George Williams College Retreat Center, Williams Bay, Wisconsin.

Retreat attendees will explore techniques from various workshops to connect and energize the mind and spirit. Featuring: dance and movement, toning, rituals of women's life transitions, the impact of environment on the body workshops and much more will be presented by talented women of the Central Midwest District.

My Body: Live, Love, Laugh brochure will be mailed in mid-September. If you have never attended this popular conference on the shores of Lake Geneva visit the UU Women's Connection website www.uuwomen'sconnection.org for brochure and registration posting. Also, check www.myspace.com/wccmybody to interact with other attendees and for more conference information.

Imagine experiencing the crisp air, rustling leaves, moonlit nights and uplifting presentations and much more to await you there. Join UU women to celebrate body, mind and spirit.

For more information contact Co-chairs: Rhiannon Gurley rhi_connection@yahoo.com or Ceceilia Haasis ceceilia_haasis@yahoo.com.

Far Better Late Than Never

A great discovery: Sanora Babb's *Whose Names Are Unknown*, an excellent novel that was to have come out in 1939, but didn't get published until 2004! Why? Her book was preempted by Steinbeck's blockbuster, *The Grapes of Wrath*, printed a few months earlier. It was shelved because it would have been seen as anticlimactic. In a mere 222 pages she vividly depicted the Dunne family and their neighbors' struggles through hunger, despair, hope and crushing reality as they decide to leave and go on to search for work. Her effort differs from Steinbeck's in style, focus and maintains a better balance between the Oklahoma/California and male/female parts of the story. Her memoir, *An Owl on Every Post*, reveals that many of the Oklahoma incidents and images of the daily grind of poverty and hunger were based on her own family experiences.

More facets of Sanora's story: She was a journalist who wrote short stories, magazine articles, poetry, novels and a memoir. Born 1907

in the Oklahoma territory, living for a time in a dugout home on a hardscrabble farm, she didn't go to school until she was 11. After some college courses, she headed for Los Angeles to become an Associated Press reporter, just in time for the 1929 crash and more hard times. She was a volunteer social worker in government migrant work camps and was married to award winning cinematographer James Wong Lower for nearly forty years. Sanora was an outspoken, far-left liberal activist, an independent woman who dared to be herself. And, we're totally delighted to say that she lived to see *Whose Names Are Unknown* published before dying at age 98 on December 31st of last year. Sanora was a great dame and one might consider her magnum opus her life, not just her book. Submitted by Betty Jachim.

UU Women...

Speak Out, Act Up!*

Velaine Carnall's early activism included spreading the word door-to-door of the dangers of McCarthy as Congressman, running for the school board to oppose two John Birch Society members, and civil rights era organizing for Fair Housing rights. In its early years Velaine served on the board of the Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights and more recently as Executive Director of RCRC.

On the job as a Health and Human Services program analyst Velaine studied issues of teen pregnancy and domestic violence. She has engaged in demonstrations with NOW and has marched in Washington at least twice.

Most recently Velaine helped raise funds at Spring Conference so that our grant recipient, Sara Carpenter, could display her Project Dirty Laundry at UU General Assembly in St. Louis.

Most recently Velaine helped raise funds at Spring Conference so that our grant recipient, Sara Carpenter, could display her Project Dirty Laundry at UU General Assembly in St. Louis. Velaine has belonged to League of Women Voters for 50 years and continues her activism by escorting clients at the women's clinic, serving on her Hinsdale church Social Action Committee, and reading such books as Jimmy Carter's *Our Endangered Lives*.

She recalls that an SCLC speaker said it takes only 1% of the people to make a revolution--the rest are apathetic. Velaine Carnall chooses to be part of that 1%.

**A column highlighting social activism and. raising awareness of the many paths to action. Know a UU woman who makes her voice known? Send information to Dorothy Brown-Brumbaugh, address on last page.*

Feminist Primer:

Thinking about the terminology of the feminist movement.

Feminism: When the word first showed up in the dictionary in 1851 it had one definition: "the state of being feminine." In 1895 an additional meaning emerged: "advocacy of women's rights".

Suffrage: The century's-long fight for women's rights is not just about casting a ballot, but about securing women's rights to participate as full citizens: to hold property, keep their own wages, have guardianship of their children and to vote. Suffragists sought these rights as a direct outgrowth of classic liberalism, the three hundred-year-old political philosophy detailing the natural rights of 'man', his inalienable rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Unitarian and Universalist Suffragists worthy of further study are: Fanny Baker Ames, Alice Blackwell Stone, Sarah B. Cooper, Burdett Coutts, Abby Morton Diaz, Abigail Scott Duniway, Katherine Philips Edson, Verdi Maria Mack Martin Fish, Lizzie Crozier French, Matilda Joslyn Gage, Lucia Fidelia Wooley Gillette, Jean Gordon. (See www.uuwhs.org)

Equal Rights Amendment, first drafted by Alice Paul and the National Women's Party in 1923, had been introduced in every session of congress until it finally passed in 1972. By the 1982 deadline it fell short of passage by 3 states. American women still do not have constitutionally guaranteed equal rights. See ERA UPDATE on page 4.

Radical Feminism arose in the late 1960s and identified the oppression of women as a sex-based class. Using tactics effective in the civil rights and antiwar movements of the time, radical feminism brought women's liberation issues to the attention of the mainstream media. They wanted not just to establish power for women, but also to abolish the notion of power itself. Holding "speak outs" they tackled topics about then unmentionable subjects of abortion and rape, the myth of a vaginal orgasm and pointed out oppression wherever it was seen. It was relatively short lived from around 1968 to 1972, but its influence is vast.

National Organization of Women (NOW) is the feminist organization of record established in 1966 by Betty Freidan and others to "take action to bring women into full participation in the mainstream of American society" and bring women into a "truly equal partnership with men." Its statement of purpose has evolved today to a less classically liberal position. "NOW is dedicated to making legal, political, and social and economic change in our

society in order to achieve our goal, which is to eliminate sexism and end all oppression." As the suffragists kept the movement alive for 50 years, NOW celebrates an almost equally impressive 40th Anniversary this summer.

Liberal feminism is a term rarely used but properly describes the type of feminism at work today. If you want to "level the playing field", "break the glass ceiling" or "make room for women at the table of power" then you are espousing liberal feminism. From the ERA to Title IX to Roe v. Wade to the Violence Against Women Act to landmark sexual-harassment suit detailed in the film *North Country*-all rise out of liberal feminism. Liberal feminism is at work in the countless local, state, and federal bills that attempt to codify that gender should not be a factor in education, employment, housing or anything else.

Womanism: black feminism: Cellestine Ware, Pauli Murry and Shirley Chisholm were a few of the women in the early liberation movement arising out of the civil rights movement who formed the National Black Feminist Organization in 1973 to broaden the black liberation struggle to include women's concerns. Alice Walker in her 1983 book, *In Search of Our Mother's Gardens* coined the term "womanism" to describe black feminism.

Anti-porn feminism: For more than two decades the debate has raged. Are pornography, prostitution and sex work always bad for women? Anti-porn feminism grew out of the radical feminism of the late 70's and early 80s as did its counterpart pro-sex feminism or sex positive feminism. Remember Gloria Steinum's statement on the anti side of the issue? "Porn is the theory, rape is the practice." Although porn and sexuality are even more pervasive in our culture today the legacy of this movement clearly perpetuates the myth that all feminists are against pornography or even sex.

Lesbian feminism asserted itself in the 70s when some feminists felt that lesbianism was the natural extension of feminism and until the patriarchy was overthrown, cavorting with men was seen tantamount to treason. Some women's organizations such as Ti-Grace Atkinson's The Feminists, established a quota for the allowed number of members married or living with men. The period gave rise to "women-born-women-only" spaces and events such as the Michigan Womyn's Musical Festival. It wasn't until the '80s and '90s with the rise of queer theory and identity articulated by Michel Foucault and Eve Sedgwick that a newer breed of lesbian feminism emerged whose approach is more fluid.

Third wave feminism: If you are under 40 and a feminist you are a Third Wave feminist, no matter your politics. In 1992 responding in part to the Clarence Thomas hearings

Continued on p. 5

ERA Update

"Isn't it wrong that the Equal Rights Amendment has floundered for so long? I am proud to stand here today as a man supporting equal rights for women. But it is also wrong that we still NEED to be here - fighting a fight that should have been won for our grandmothers." Sen. Jon Corzine, Friday, March 2, 2001

Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) Statement: "Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex." This statement, drafted and proposed by Alice Paul and the National Women's Party in 1923, had been reintroduced in every session of Congress until it finally passed in 1972 during a push by second wave feminists. State ratification (by 3/4s of the states) seemed sure when in the course of one year 22 of the 38 required states ratified. The campaign then slowed and finally failed to win ratification stopping short of 3 states in 1982.

Three State Strategy: In 2003 a movement to reintroduce the ERA in state legislatures for ratification in the final 3 states picked up steam. Why does the ERA ratification remain viable after only 35 of the 38 states approved the amendment by the 1982 deadline? Legality begins with a discussion of the "Madison Amendment" concerning Congressional pay raises, which went to the states for ratification in 1789 and reached the three-fourths goal in 1992. The fact that this 203-year ratification period was accepted as valid had led ERA supporters to propose that Congress has the power to maintain the legal viability of the ERA and the existing 35 state ratification. Only three more state ratifications would be needed to make the ERA part of the constitution.

In 2005 Representative Robert E. Andrews introduced a Three State Resolution (HRes 155) in the US House of Representatives requiring the House to take any legislative action necessary to verify the ratification of the ERA as part of the Constitution, when the legislature of an additional three States ratify.

What states did NOT ratify by 1982? Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Mississippi, Missouri, Nevada, North Carolina, South Carolina, Oklahoma, Utah and Virginia.

ERA resolutions have been introduced into these state legislatures: Arkansas, Illinois, Florida, Missouri and Virginia.

Active campaigns have been mounted in Alabama, Arizona, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, Nevada, Oklahoma and South Carolina.

ILLINOIS

Illinois came very close to ratification in 2004. The Illinois House passed the resolution by a bipartisan vote of more than three-fifths super-majority required by the state, but the measure failed to garner the necessary votes in the Senate though it came out of committee with a recommendation for passage. Another ERA ratification resolution was introduced in the 2005 Illinois legislature, but was not been brought before the state senate for a vote. A network of organizations called the Illinois Network for Equity, which includes Business and Professional Women/Illinois and the American Association of University Women/Illinois, continues to work for ERA ratification. For more information, e-mail eraillinois@cs.com or vote@laurelprussing.com.

MISSOURI

In Missouri, a well-organized coalition has been working for a number of years to achieve ERA ratification. Currently, efforts are underway to reintroduce the ERA ratification resolution in the Missouri legislature. To find out more about Missouri's ERA efforts, contact Shirley Breeze at SBreeze@mindspring.com.

CONCLUSION by Roberta Francis, National Council of Women's Organizations Task Force.

While women enjoy more rights today than they did when the ERA was first introduced in 1923 or when it passed out of Congress in 1972, hard-won laws against sex discrimination do not rest on a constitutional foundation; they can be inconsistently enforced or even repealed. Elements of sex discrimination remain in statutory and case law, and courts have had difficulty applying a consistent standard to gender-based classifications, which are not inherently suspect or comparable to racial or ethnic classifications under equal-protection analysis.

The need for a federal Equal Rights Amendment remains as compelling as it was in 1978, when now Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg wrote in the Harvard Women's Law Journal: "With the Equal Rights Amendment, we may expect Congress and the state legislatures to undertake in earnest, systematically and pervasively, the law revision so long deferred. And in the event of legislative default, the courts will have an unassailable basis for applying the bedrock principle: All men and all women are created equal."



Feminist Primer, cont.

what became the Third Wave Foundation was established by Rebecca Walker and Shannon Liss to mobilize young women to become politically active. Its hallmark is a commitment to a multiracial, multi-gender and multi-class organizing effort. Third wave feminism applies to a large range of political beliefs, from the in-your-face punk-rock tactics of the riot grrrls to power feminism (*Beauty Myth/Fire with Fire* by Naomi Wolf) to feminism-is-for-everybody of Amy Richards and Jennifer Baumgardner and to magazines such as *Bust* and *Bitch*. It includes girlie Feminism with its *Manifesta: Young Women, Feminism and the Future* published in 2000 reclaims make up and other "girly" accouterments and the value of traditional female activities such as cooking, crafting and talking about sex. Third wave feminism also includes sex positive feminism, born out of the '80s porn wars with its authors and spokespersons Betty Dobson, Susie Bright and bell hooks.

Post feminism is a term coined by the media, which as early as 1981 began to proclaim the death of feminism implying that feminism has outlived its usefulness. Gains by women in politics, the business world and in sports point to the far reaching success of the movement yet women continue to earn less than their male counterparts and laws attempting to codify equality can be applied unevenly or changed. Constitutional guarantee of equality still does not exist. As one bumper sticker says: "I'll be a post feminist in the post patriarchy."

Good Reads Anytime

Solitude of Self: Thinking About Elizabeth Cady Stanton by Vivian Gornick

The Beauty Myth by Naomi Wolf

Manifesta: Young Women, Feminism and the Future by Amy Richards

Let Me Play: The Story of Title IX; The law that changed the future of girls in America by Karen Blumenthal

To Be Real: Telling the Truth and Changing the Face of Feminism by Rebecca Walker

Inventing the Rest of Our Lives: Women in Second Adulthood by Suzanne Braun Levine

Bella Abzug: *They used to give us a day—it was called International Women's Day. In 1975 they gave us a year, the Year of the Woman. Then from 1975 to 1985 they gave us a decade, the Decade of the Woman. I said at the time, who knows, if we behave they may let us into the whole thing. Well, we didn't behave and here we are.*

Get Connected! Check these links!

www.mediaprojects.org **Media Projects, Inc.** producers of **Sisters of 77** documentary film shown at 2006 spring conference. The video may be borrowed from UU Women's Connection. Email: connections@uuwomensconnection.org

www.aauw.org American Association of University Women, catalyst for change since 1881, voice for women and girls, more than 100,000 members.

www.feminist.org/welcome The Feminist Majority Foundation (FMF), since 1987, cutting edge on women's equality, reproductive health, and non-violence.

www.beingjane.com Since 2004, Being Jane is redefining feminism as women coming together to raise the bar, embrace the vitality of being a woman and champion the connection to future generations.

www.now.org The National Organization for Women (NOW) is the largest organization of feminist activists in the United States. NOW has 500,000 contributing members. NOW's goal has been to take action to bring about equality for all women.

www.4era.org/myths.htm Single purposed 4ERA organization explores the Myths...and Facts about Equal Rights.

Women's Banner Project

Women at the Spring Conference, June 2-4, were invited to embellish muslin squares, which will be quilted together into a banner under the experienced guidance of Clara Barton Society member, Clarise Jefferson. The project will continue at the Lake Geneva retreat, where more women will be invited to appliqué, paint, embroider, or otherwise embellish squares with their personal vision of women and the Women's Connection. If you would like to participate (by yourself or with others), but cannot attend the Lake Geneva retreat, please contact Cheryl Springwood and she will joyfully send you a square! Diversity is a beautiful thing!



Celebrate

Women's Connection

UU Women's Connection

Dorothy Brown-Brumbaugh

P.O. Box 3974

Joliet, IL 60434

www.uuwomensconnection.org

UU Women's Connection Governing Council

Pat Baker (Program Portfolio)

1528 Fontana Dr., St. Louis, MO 63146-3831

314-434-3314 tellinguu@mac.com

Dorothy Brown-Brumbaugh (WC Recorder,
Communication Portfolio)

P.O. Box 3974, Joliet, IL 60434

815-726-8869 DBB8869@hotmail.com

Jennifer Evans (WC Vice-Chair, Program Portfolio)

531 Woodbine, Oak Park, IL 60304

708-386-1840 jenniferevans1@comcast.net

Pat Goller (WC Chair, Communication Portfolio)

1331 W. Glenn Ave., Springfield, IL 62704

217-787-0687 patrandy@sbcglobal.net

Betty Jachim (WC Treasurer)

6341 Blackhawk Trail, Indian Head Park, IL 60525

708-784-0742 bjachim@sbcglobal.net

Cheryl Springwood (Program Portfolio)

1208 S. Broadway, Normal, IL 61761

309-454-9453 cspringwood@yahoo.com

Don't forget to visit our website for more info.

Membership/Mailing List Update

Have you moved? Let us know so you won't miss a thing.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Church/Group _____

Time to renew membership dues/support?

**It is if your mailing label shows a date earlier than 6/2006.
Be sure to include a check for \$10 payable to UU Women's
Connection with the above information.**

Send update and checks to our treasurer: Betty Jachim