



# Voices of Women

Unitarian Universalist Women's Connection Newsletter

Fall 2008

## **PEACE OF CAKE**

***Fall at Lake Geneva, November 7-9, 2008  
promises "food for women's souls."***

Fall Retreat keynote, Nancy Vedder-Shults, well known ritualist, musician and innovator from First Unitarian Society of Madison, Wisconsin, will expand on the theme of women as peacemakers. Her Saturday morning keynote address, "Goddess Visions of Peace and Plenty" will give participants a sneak preview of her forthcoming book, *From Common Sense to Inner Wisdom*. Nancy will also participate in the panel discussion and videotaping.

Mid-morning workshop facilitators will use the theme of peace to introduce the vibrational universe and journaling. "Cup Cakes" workshops will deal with women's sexuality, body issues and committing to peace in an often-violent world.

The 26<sup>th</sup> annual Lake Geneva Fall retreat also offers an exciting panel discussion of women of action and peace, including two videotaping sessions moderated by Delinda Chapman, Abraham Lincoln UU Congregation in Springfield, Illinois. For eight years Delinda has hosted and produced a Public Access program in the Springfield market which often lifts up women's volunteer work in the greater world of peace, poverty and other social action.

"What Women Want" panelists include: Nancy Vedder-Shults, keynote speaker; Holly Kerr; (North Shore Unitarian Church in Deerfield, Illinois) and author, Jackie Jackson of Springfield, Illinois. Another panelist is yet to be named. The resulting videotaped programs will be distributed in various television markets in the Central Midwest District.

The UU Women's Connection councilwomen plan some interesting surprises at Lake Geneva Fall Retreat this year. Plan to join us at the Williams Bay, Wisconsin Retreat Center. You can find further information and registration details at the RETREATS page of our website: [www.uuwomensconnection.org](http://www.uuwomensconnection.org). Or contact registrar, Diana DeWeese, at 217-546-5834 or [kidi71@aol.com](mailto:kidi71@aol.com).

## **Feeding us Warmth**

The Urbana-Champaign Illinois UU Church provided meeting space, hospitality and warmth to the UU Women's Connection Council during its third quarter meeting, August 16th and 17th.

Many thanks to our long-time member and former UUWF officer, Doris Jones, and Sandy Hannum, who promoted and supported our meeting and the Saturday evening Margaret Fuller Conversation Salon. We are also grateful to Doris' two sons, Doug and Dwight who assisted with transportation, facility help and pizza delivery.

The Saturday evening Margaret Fuller Conversation Salon in UC-UU's comfortable library dealt with the question, "What do women want?" The discussion generated creative ideas, hopes and concerns about women in these chaotic times.

*There's someone out there who needs you. Live your life so that person can find you.*

~Balinese dancer

## Channing Murray Foundation Campus Outreach Program

The Channing-Murray Foundation is known at the University of Illinois-Urbana-Champaign campus and community for its good music, great food, and the opportunity to engage in nonjudgmental spiritual exploration. Writing, dance and arts workshops flourish. The Foundation also hosts a wide array of community forums, concerts, poetry slams, and student theatrical productions.

Located on the corner of Oregon and Mathews, on the UIUC Urbana, Illinois campus, Channing-Murray welcomes everyone regardless of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation or religious background, inviting students and the community to participate in activities and events at the Foundation. Don't miss the **Red Herring Restaurant** located in their building and voted the "best vegetarian restaurant in Urbana-Champaign." The foundation's website [www.ChanningMurray.org](http://www.ChanningMurray.org) has a calendar of events at the coffee house, as well as other program information.

**Cakes T3 Workshops Proceed.** Two Train-the-Trainer (T3s) district workshops for *Cakes for the Queen of Heaven, In Ancient Times* by Rev. Shirley Ranck will be presented in Peoria, Illinois and Milwaukee Wisconsin, November 15<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> respectively. For information about T3, registration or to purchase the two-volume feminist curriculum follow prompts at: [www.cakesforthequeenofheaven.org/register](http://www.cakesforthequeenofheaven.org/register) One-day T3 events are \$30 and prepare women to facilitate the curriculum in their home congregations.

Volume one, *Cakes, In Ancient Times* curriculum introduces participants to ancient Goddesses, and weaves their stories with major concerns of women today. Volume two, *On the Threshold*, release was just announced. This six-session continuation of the course journeys back to reclaim the stories of powerful women found in ancient Judaism and early Christianity. As well, the volume looks at the global silencing and brutal treatment of women that has accompanied the rise of patriarchal religions and societies.

Finally, discussions turn to the exciting new world-view and feminist "theology" that has emerged in present times. Both volumes and

supplemental Carole Eagleheart music CDs are all available at this website: [www.uuwr.org/store.htm](http://www.uuwr.org/store.htm). For more information and to share your *Cakes* experiences check out the *Cakes* blog at [www.CakesForTheQueenOfHeaven.org](http://www.CakesForTheQueenOfHeaven.org)

## UU Women's Connection Grant News

**Spirals in Motion** presents

**AMAZONS AWAKENING WOMYN'S  
RETREAT with Special guest,**

**Jennifer Berezan**

[www.edgeofwonder.com](http://www.edgeofwonder.com)

October 17-October 19, 2008

Aurora University, George Williams Campus  
and Lake Geneva Retreat Center at  
Williams Bay, Wisconsin

**Debby Gaines**, who has been planning women's retreats for the UU Church of Rockford, Illinois for six years, founded **Spirals in Motion** which provides opportunities for women to experience body-mind-spirit celebration in today's world of stress, deadlines, technology and distractions.

This retreat's focus is to provide a safe place to connect with other lesbians who are seeking spiritual growth and a community of like-minded women, while providing an opportunity for personal development, relaxation and fun! Though most of the workshops are geared towards lesbians and bi-sexual women, supportive friends are welcome. The retreat includes a concert and a workshop by Jennifer Berezan, a book discussion and a Nia exercise class. The brochure listing housing, meals and registration information may be downloaded at [www.uuwomensconnection.org](http://www.uuwomensconnection.org) For more information contact Debby at [dancingsupergoddess@yahoo.com](mailto:dancingsupergoddess@yahoo.com) or by phone (815) 985-7025. Needs-based scholarships are provided by UU Women's Connection of the CMWD.

## New Beginnings for Wisconsin RCRC:

The following are comments from Rabbi Bonnie Margulis who lives in Madison, Wisconsin about the renewed RCRC efforts in Wisconsin. She serves on the national RCRC staff as Director of Clergy Programming.

*I had been the State Coordinator of the Wisconsin Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights from 2/79-10/91. So I knew that during the 30+ years leading up to the U.S. Supreme Court decision in April of 2006 (where the protection for the woman's health was thrown out by the Supreme Court) plenty had changed on the Choice political landscape.*

*Barrier legislation of all sorts had been passed in many states, i.e. parental consent laws, waiting period laws, blocking insurance coverage for women in the military, etc. Plus significant changes had been made in the make up of the federal courts including the U.S. Supreme Court.*

*But what got me back in the game was the shock of the 2006 ruling. **That was a huge red flag fore me.** To me it signified in no uncertain terms that Roe v. Wade's days were numbered. That the unthinkable - the question of whether abortion procedures should be legal - would come back to the state legislatures for debate. (Wisconsin already has an abortion ban on the books dating from 1849)*

*And now, on what could be the eve of the High Court dismantling legal abortion, the opposition is fixated on equating all non-barrier methods of birth control with abortion.*

*There are other pro-choice groups out there that are better known and better funded, but only the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice has the power to take the higher moral ground in the debate.*

In 2008 the UU Women's Connection made annual donations to the Missouri and Illinois RCRC. See the 2008 Winter VOW and Annual Report for listing of 2009 gifts and donations.

*For years I've been stringing and unstringing my instrument while the song I have come to sing remains unsung.*  
~Rabindranath Tagore

## Wisconsin RCRC Awards Dinner in Milwaukee

**Rev. Carlton Veazey**, founder of the Black Church Initiative and currently the President and CEO of The Missouri Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice will give the keynote message for the November 6, 2008 **Faith and Justice Awards Dinner** in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. It is titled:



### *Choice from an African American Perspective*

*For more information about the **Faith and Justice Awards Dinner** or to make a tax deductible donation to the Wisconsin RCRC contact:*

Cathy Thompson, Wisconsin RCRC  
P. O. Box 8495, Janesville, WI 53545-8495  
(608) 756-0156

*Each woman is created in the image of God and therefore has the power, the intelligence and the faith to make good choices about her own body and her own life. ~ Rev. Bernice Powell Jackson  
United Church of Christ*



### **Annual Meeting October 26th**

The **2008 Annual Meeting** will be held at Seven Circles Retreat Center near Edwards Illinois. (Just west of Peoria, Illinois) Members who wish to attend the meeting or give input to the work of the UU Women's Connection may contact any councilor listed in this issue for details.

## Goodbye. Hello.

We will be bidding a *bon voyage* to Councilor and Vice Chair, Cheryl Springwood, who be leaving for Spain with husband, Chuck and sons, Jacob and Josh for 2009. Cheryl has served the on the transitional board and then Council of UU Women's Connection since before the first official meeting in 2005. Cheryl has brought a young working mother's perspective to the Council, with great ideas about how to assist women overcome barriers to participation at retreats and other programming.

We also regret to say that, due to work and personal considerations, Patricia Nolan is not able to complete her term as a Councilor. We're especially grateful for her early work leading toward the 2008 Spring Conference held at Pilgrim Park.

But . . . hello to two new councilors, Tori Kilhoffer of Blooming-Normal UU Congregation and Nicole Lisk of Eliot Chapel in St Louis, Missouri who will step up to leadership in 2009. Check the Winter *VOW* and Annual Report for details.

### Thoughts on Leadership: Preparing the Supreme Meal.

It is interesting to think on the idea that the Women's Connection's newsletter is named *VOW*. Leaders, it might follow, "vow" to prepare and feed the "supreme meal" of programming at the Lake Geneva Fall Conference in November, **Peace of Cake: Food for Women's Souls** and other Connection events.

(Editor's Note: I've been reading about this sort of supreme meal preparation in one of my favorite inspirational books, *Instructions to the Cook* by Bernard Glassman and Rick Fields. (Crown Publishers, Inc NY))

The Zen principle discussed in *Instructions* councils us to provide the supreme meal to "all the hungry ghosts in four directions."

We all can experience the existential hunger of these ghosts. This might explain the passion to attend an appealingly themed retreat, because of the potential for feeding our own hunger and finding new skills to cope with our complicated daily lives.

Program planners, Councilors and other volunteers make a vow to put that supreme meal on the table for others. We all prepare such meals for our sisters in the Central Midwest District and serve them at two yearly retreats and other supplemental programming

According to Glassman and Fields, the "vow of the Zen cook is not something we promise to do and then feel bad or guilty about it when we don't accomplish it." Rather, a vow is an intention to do something." Perhaps we think that our meal must be limited, because our ingredients are limited—be it food, money, time, talent, etc. But a vow is not limited, by space or time. "We can make our vows as small or as large as we want. We can make a vow to feed one person, for instance, or we can make a vow to feed hundreds or thousands of people. We can vow to build housing for one homeless person or for hundreds.... We can even vow to end hunger or homelessness. The only thing that limits our vow is our imagination."

A vow has a very practical function too. "It's like a compass that shows us the direction to go in and that keeps us on course. But a vow itself is never enough. By itself a vow is all potential. It's like yeast or starter. But if we want to see our vow manifest in the world, if we want to bake a real loaf of bread for instance, one that we can eat ourselves and serve to others, we have to add flour and water and knead them all together. We have to add determination. When we add determination, vision takes on a life and force of its own. The loaf of bread we imagined comes out of the oven, ready to eat." (Continued)

Let the vow of the women who take on leadership positions in the UU Women's Connection governing council, retreat planning committees, special project committees or grant committees be this: "to continue to provide the supreme meal to all who hunger, including ourselves".

Participation and leadership in 2008-09 programs starts with a vow to feed members, friends, planners, councilors, perhaps even all the hungry ghosts in the four directions. 2008 is the year we celebrate our beginnings fifty years ago at Allerton and is appropriate for renewing vows. Won't you step up to leadership or membership? Come. Cook. Eat. Be fed.

## 2008 Membership Offer

The spring issue of *VOW* promoted the UU Women's Connection offer to groups of women at congregations to join us as sustaining members during 2008 with the motto "8 for 8 in '08." Individual membership is normally \$10, but is reduced to \$8 in 2008 when eight women join together. Some units formed and joined for the reduced sustaining membership rate; others, already formed, took advantage of the reduced \$8 rate. The year and this special offer will end December 31<sup>st</sup>. So don't miss the opportunity to join as sustaining members for only \$8.

**What does sustaining membership bring?** You receive our quarterly newsletter, *Voices of Women*, retreat brochures, program mailings and the priceless satisfaction, which comes from supporting other UU women in our district through scholarships, grants and programming.

Additionally, you pool your resources with other women in the Central Midwest District to support organizations such as the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice, the UUA's Clara Barton Washington Internship for Women, the UUWF's Margaret Fuller Grant Awards program and the Connection grant program, which in 2008 awarded a \$500 grant to **Spirals in Motion**. (See page two)

*The most important religious task of the 21st century will be learning to take pluralism seriously.*

"Statement of Feminist Theology," *Cakes for the Queen of Heaven* ~Rev. Shirley Ranck

## Loaves and Fishes

This is not the age of information.  
This is **not**  
the age of information.

Forget the news,  
and the radio,  
and the blurred screen.

This is the time  
of loaves  
and fishes.

People are hungry,  
and one good word is bread  
for a thousand.

~ David Whyte ~ from *The House of Belonging*

### UU Women's Connection Governing Council

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**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

*The vote is a power, a weapon of offense and defense, a prayer. Understand what it means and what it can do for your country.*

--Carrie Chapman Catt

**Your sustaining membership support makes UU Women's Connection programs possible.**

October 25-26	2008 Annual Meeting and Council Retreat 7 Circles Heritage Center Edwards, IL
November 7-9	Lake Geneva Fall Retreat Geo. Williams/Aurora Univ Williams Bay, WI
November 15	Cakes T3, UU Church, Peoria, IL
November 22	Cakes T3, First Unitarian Society of Milwaukee, WI
Feb 26-March 1, 2009	SAVE THE DATE International Convocation of UU Women Houston, Texas
June 5-7, 2009	SAVE THE DATE Spring Conference Pilgrim Park Retreat Cent. Princeton, Illinois

**Is it time to renew membership dues/support?**

It is, if your mailing label shows a date earlier than November 2008.

Include recent update below and check made to "UU Women's Connection" to Treasurer, Diana DeWeese, 716 S. Douglas, Springfield, IL, 62704.

Units of 8 or more may take advantage of 2008's break on dues and submit \$8 per member. Include membership list and contact information for each woman.

**Membership/Mailing List Update**

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

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

CHURCH/GROUP \_\_\_\_\_