



Voices of Women

Unitarian Universalist Women's Connection Newsletter

Winter 2011-Spring 2012

54th Annual Spring Conference

June 1-3, 2012

Pilgrim Park Retreat Center

Princeton, Illinois

Keynote: Pam Blevins-Hinkle



Come discover the power of our your own voice and your own creativity with musician Pam Blevins Hinkle

“Expressing our essential and singular beauty is a sacred task. We must find and unleash our unique voice, personality, and calling in the world. The biggest barrier? Our own fear!” ...PB-H

Pam is a classically-trained flutist, choral director of college and community choirs, and arts administrator. She plays (flute, percussion, kazoo, coffee cans and colanders!) and sings in a band called THIN AIR, whose performances are entirely improvised. Experience the power of group singing and the fun of musical games that create sounds from sublime to hilarious!

A Farewell Note

Pat Goller

UU only a short while, a stranger to the CMwD, it was frightening to be asked to lead the district's first and only independent UU women's organization--the UU Women's Federation. That was just after 9/11. There was a lot to be afraid of

then, or so it seemed. Still, I tend to be attracted to things that frighten me. Even though I didn't know many in the district and couldn't conceive of how to lead without a full slate of officers and board members, I said, "yes." It was an "edge time." Star Hawk explained in her workshop a couple of years ago, "edges, where one ecosystem meets another are dynamic, full of possibilities, chaos, and creativity." How could I resist?

By January 2005 "The UU Women's Connection" emerged as UUWF's successor. Only seven years ago, the Connection had its first official meeting at the home of Mary Lou Steadman in Bloomington, Illinois. Now a brand new nonprofit, independent of, but working within the Central Midwest District of the UUA, we were officially launched.

Thank you to so many women from all parts of the district whom I came to know over the years. They helped make the Connection possible. A stab at naming the names of those women is attempted on the Connections website blog, *Pushing the Edge*. The list is far too long to do so here.

For now though, heartfelt thanks to councilors and officers past and present; to our loyal units, individual members and to the many women who have planned and carried out so many wonderful UUWF or Connection retreat programs. Thank you to those who have assisted with special programs like 2010's women's leadership recognition and 2008's Fifty Year Allerton Reunion. Thank you to those who used our grants and other support over the years to make a difference in our world.

Thank you to all the hundreds of women who shared their voices and ideas at more Margaret Fuller Conversation Salons than I can number. Many times Connection programs emerged from these conversations. Thank you to our various church hosts who fed us and put us up and gave us space for our quarterly business meetings.

Finally, thanks and love to the person who made my twelve years with the UUWF and the UU Women's

Connection possible: my husband, Randy Pratt. He kept the home fires burning on my many trips out of town (at least six or seven times per year) and supported my volunteering with treasure and time, encouraged me when things were difficult and celebrated when things went well. He helped with many Connection cyber and computer projects like the e-list, the member databases and countless VOWs. He “put up” the Connection website www.uuwomensconnection.org and wrote “code” for my design ideas there. Now thanks to him, I can post content, photos, newsletters, or even put up a new page.

The 2011 fall retreat on Lake Michigan this past year provided a metaphor for the future of our organization in my mind; it is one for my own life after the Connection, as well. Though it was the 29th annual fall retreat since the women at Rockford began on Williams Bay, the spot in Kenosha on Lake Michigan was familiar and brand new at the same time. We are at home on the water for this fall retreat, intrigued by the new shore on the ocean-like vastness of Lake Michigan. The unseen shore on the other side calls us to the broader world. During the retreat, we walked to the beach to bless the waters of the world.

An unusual and unexpected storm the week before had deposited sand on the grassy areas near the beach. We were among the first to investigate the shore with bits of colored glass, shells, sea weed, pieces of drift wood with barnacle hitchhikers--pretty little treasures the storm had blown ashore. We joined water birds investigating the small tide pools teeming with life. Our footprints mingled with bird prints in the sand on the storm swept beach. Looking for a port there, were we also what the storm blew in?

At the 2011 Central Midwest District’s Annual Assembly the president of the board announced changes in store for the region and the Association. The GA continued the discussion in North Carolina and a recent announcement sealed the deal. Instead of our present “district” organization, we have begun the task of combining CMwD with Heartland to the east and Prairie Star to the west forming a larger regional entity.

Much like Lake Michigan when we stood there on the beach this past fall, a larger world has opened to us. A larger world of programming, participation and potential awaits us in this new arrangement. We are on the “dynamic edge” again as we see new

challenges that bring us face to face with a possible future and beckon us to carry on.

I am so lucky have been along for this amazing ride: UUWF board to task force to interim council to first council to the continuing work. I am filled with gratitude, only a very small sorrow at leaving and so grateful for the memories.

Don’t cry because it is over. Smile because it happened.
– Dr Seuss

UU Women’s Connection 2012 Goals

1. A leadership event will be planned to recognize women district-wide in March of 2012.
2. Recruit up to three new councilors by the end of 2012.
3. Recruit a church to assist in the planning of the 2012 fall retreat.
4. Publicize our resource library at our quarter meetings, in the VOW and on the website.
5. Find a contact for each church in the district by the end of 2012.
6. Use the internet to survey membership for interests by the end of 2012. What do our members need from the Connection?

From the 2012 Chair

Deb Czarnopys-White

Ladies, I step into very big shoes being Chair this year. I bow to the knowledge and experience of all previous chairs, council members and UU Women Connection members. We actually make decisions by consensus and I am very humbled and grateful for the existing Council members. I am looking forward to an exciting Spring Retreat and having our Fall Retreat at the DeKoven Center in Racine, WI. We will be exploring new adventures at both events. As we all know, nothing happens without help from so many of you, contributing ideas, workshops, and your very important membership. As always, we are looking for more Council members, so please feel free to contact any of the Council members or myself to let us know of your interest.

Lending Library

The Connection is developing a lending resource library. Any woman wanting to borrow any of the curricula should send a request to Connections@uuwomensconnection.org

The Goddess Diaries – a CD created by Carol Lee Campbell. She created the Diaries as an experiment after years of working as a women's advocate in the DC area. Inspired to produce a show about real women's lives she asked women in her community, many of them members of her congregation, to write down their stories and then she tied them together through a common thread: the agricultural seasons of the year. Borrowed from the ancient Western European calendar of equinoxes, solstices and cross-quarter days, each monologue represent a specific time in the growing/harvest season and each season becomes a metaphor for these life events.

The Water Ritual by Carolyn McDade and Lucile Longview – the script for the original workshop service *Coming Home, Like Rivers to the Sea: A Woman's Ritual* – distributed at the 1997 General Assembly of the UUA in Phoenix, Arizona.

Return to Wholeness, The New Book of Crone Stones by Carol Lee Campbell. Accompanying the book is a set of crone stones created by the author.

Sourcebook for *Rise Up and Call Her Name* – a woman-honoring journey into Global Earth-based Spiritualities written and edited by Elizabeth Fisher. Juli also donated *The Queen of Myself* by Donna Henes

Unraveling the Gender Knot – Challenging the Systems that Bind Us – by Barbara Schonborn, Alison Campbell, and Rosemary Matson – a Study Guide for the book - *The Gender Knot – Unraveling our Patriarchal Legacy* by Allan G. Johnson which can be purchased through the UUA Bookstore online. The course examines ways the patriarchal system we live in affects girls and women, boys and men.

Becoming Women of Wisdom – Marking the Passages into the Crone Years – a curriculum in thirteen circles – by Melody Lee with Karen Edwards and Dorothy May Emerson. The curriculum is designed to prepare women to take on the important role of Wise Women in their communities.

Cakes for the Queen of Heaven

Part 1 - In Ancient Times, and Part 2 - On The Threshold

Where do you find women role models?

Tori Kilhoffer

I recently attended a screening of the film "MissRepresentation" and was profoundly moved by what I saw on the screen and by the discussion afterwards among the women who attended. It was a provocative look at how women are portrayed by the media.

Although there was much obvious sexism in the film, the thing that struck me most was not how much imagery women see that is potentially harmful to our self-worth. The most eye opening part for me was how little positive imagery we are shown. The world is full of amazing women doing amazing things and they get so little positive media coverage. Well I, for one, want to see and hear women's stories. That is why I am involved with the UU Women's Connection. Retreats, conferences and quarterly meetings are where I go to find the real role models that the media is not giving me. I have met some amazing women here.

I would like to encourage everyone to join this conversation by going to the Missrepresentation.org website or by discussing on our facebook page. I don't know that I see all of the sexism that the movie suggests is present, but there is no doubt in my mind that this is an important conversation to be having right now.

UU Women's Connection 2011 Annual Report

2011 Chair – Diana DeWeese

Moving On!

We started the year with a Strategic Planning session and First Quarterly meeting at Williams Bay. Due to the business model of Aurora University, the council decided that continuing to hold our fall conference at Lake Geneva was not financially feasible. A few years ago, we were able to offer low-cost dormitory beds, but those rooms were now being used by students. The campus administration also required an attendance count 30 days before the conference. Most women send in their registrations after that 30-day deadline – some even the week of the conference. The council decided to move the fall conference to downtown Kenosha, Wisconsin. The conference keynote and workshops were held at a harborside hotel, at a storefront yoga center (thank you Heather Poyner!), and at the Bradford Community UU Church in Kenosha. More conference news later in this report!

Visiting UU Congregations in CMwD

2011 was an ambitious year for UU Women's Connection. We traveled to Missouri, Wisconsin, the Chicago area and Springfield, Illinois for our quarterly meetings.

Many thanks to Melinda Farhangi and the men and women of the UU Church of Columbia, Missouri for hosting our Second Quarterly Meeting. The programming the Connection offered to the women of the congregation included a "slice" from Cakes II – Mary Magdalene.

In August, our Third Quarterly Meeting was held in the Chicago area, hosted by the Countryside UU Church in Palatine, with help from the Northshore Unitarian Church in Deerfield. We went as a group to the Art Institute for a "Goddesses and Women of Power" tour. Simply Amazing! Who knew how images of the feminine divine we would find! On Sunday I dressed up as a Babushka and read the book Thundercakes to the children in the RE program at Countryside.

In October, at the end of the fall conference, council women attended Sunday services at the Bradford Community UU

Church in Kenosha, WI and the Olympia Brown UU Church in Racine, WI. Both services were memorably. Personally, I learned so much more about the traditions of Halloween – like the origins of the word "bonfire" and Jack O'Lantern – than I ever knew.

Spring Conference – "Joy of Now"

We celebrated the "Joy of Now" at our Spring Conference at Pilgrim's Park. Teri Freesmeyer was our Keynote. It was a wonderful weekend where we focused on how we can invite the present into our life and how we can nurture a satisfying and fulfilling connection with ourselves, others and the world around us. Many thanks to both Teri and Sue Wilhelm for planning this conference.

Fall Conference – "Breathe – A Lakeside Experience"

Please read the Fall retreat report on the following page for a full report.

Council

Peggy Patty joined the council in March and was immediately put to work on organizing the fall conference! After many years of service this was Pat Goller's last year on the council. Gratitude for her service was given at the fall conference in October and at the annual meeting of the council in November. Pat will continue to work for the council by helping to maintain our website and database. A very important role, for which we are daily grateful.

2012 Conferences

Our 54th Annual Spring Conference will be June 1-3, at the Pilgrim Park Retreat Center in Princeton, IL. Our Keynote will be Pam Blevins Hinkle, choral director of college and community choirs, and arts administrator. Come and experience the power of group singing and the fun of musical games that create sounds from sublime to hilarious! Pam will be accompanied by Bonnie Ettinger, ALUUC's talented pianist. The two of them have for years created an amazing music program at the Midwest UU Summer Assembly.

Following up on recommendations from women who attended our fall conference, and an on-site visit by council women, the Connection Council decided to hold our Fall Conference, October 19-21, 2012 in Racine, Wisconsin, at the DeKoven Center a full-service retreat and conference center located on an 11-acre wooded campus on the shores of Lake Michigan.

Other 2011 Goals

To save money and go green, we began the process of sending the newsletter – Voices of Women – electronically to members and friends. Thank you Pat Goller and Deb Czarnopys-White for getting this going!

This year we began membership dues payments via Paypal. Thank you Nicole Nichols, our treasurer, for setting this up!

We significantly expanded our lending Resource Library. (See Lending Library on previous page) We are also creating a library of retreat and programming options available from both individuals and churches around our district that other churches and event planners may use. Thank you Juli Cicarelli for your generous donation to the lending library!

To increase visibility of the Connection we sponsored a booth at the District Assembly in April, and shared a booth with other women's organizations at General Assembly in June.

The scholarship donations collected from members and friends of the Connections will now be recognized as donations to the "Emily Meter Scholarship fund" in honor of long time member Emily Meter who passed away in 2010. Many thanks to all the sisters who have made donations so that other sisters are able to come to our conferences!

2012 UU Women's Connection Budget

Income

Dues	\$1,500
Interest Earned	25
Scholarship Donations	500
In – Fall Conference	9,200
In – Spring Conference	4,000
Grants Received	300
From Checking	2,075
Total Income	17,600

Expenses

Administrative	
Board Travel	\$500
Conference Registration Reimbursement	900
Copying	5
Meeting Expense	200
Phone and Communication	5
Supplies	50
Total Admin.	1,660
Incentive Grants (Childcare \$40 each)	240
Social Action and Grants	200
VOW, Web, PR	1,500
Scholarships	500
Out – Fall Conference	9,200
Out – Spring Conference	4,000
Emily Meter Scholarship Event	300
Total Expenses	\$17,600



The UU Women's Connection 29th Fall Retreat

As the brochure said – “Join Sisters at the edge of beautiful Lake Michigan as we gather to relax and enjoy the blessings of community, new inspiring workshops and eclectic waterfront delights”. Our keynote address “She Who is Not Busy!” was given by Rev. Georgette Wonders, the minister of the Bradford Community UU Church. Our workshops including Singing in Sacred Circle with Gayle Clark-Taylor and the Singing Sisters of the Bradford Comm. UU Church, family constellation work with Karen Carnabucci, vibrational healing through meditation with Nadine Johnson, shamanic breathwork with Carley Mattimore, crafting with Sage Hagy, creative writing with Juli Cicarelli, and making a didgeridoo with Heather Poyner. Thank you Joanne Fought for leading us in aerobic exercises - that early morning dip in a cool! swimming pool! Brr! Thank you Deb Czarnopys-White for leading us in several dances of universal peace! Thank you to all the drummers! Thank you Peggy Patty for being the chief planner for this conference.

A highlight for many women was the blessing of the waters done on the shore of Lake Michigan on Saturday morning. It was a spiritual and reflective time surrounded by beauty. At this conference, attendees were asked to make their own lodging and meal arrangements. This made conference registration a breeze for the registrar (me)! The restaurants in downtown Kenosha offered women a wide range of menu choices and affordably priced meals. Kenosha's museums and shops enticed visits during the free time in the conference schedule.

2011 UU Women's Connection Council

Debbie Czarnopys-White, Chair.....	618-787-2929
Sage Hagy, Vice Chair	847-498-9333
Tori Kilhoffer, Recorder.....	309-963-6090
Nicole Nichols, Treasurer.....	314-569-7103
Diana DeWeese, At large	217-546-5834
Juli Cicarelli, At large	847-797-0634
Peggy Patty, At large.....	217-636-8875



UU Women's Connection
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www.uuwomensconnection.org

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Time to renew your membership? It is, if the date on your mailing label shows a date earlier than March 2012.

Units of 11 register for \$100 in 2012. Register a unit of 10 members, get the 11th membership free!" Individual memberships are \$10.

Membership/Mailing List

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


NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____

E-MAIL: _____

CHURCH/ORGANIZATION _____



2011 "Get Connected" Calendar

March 2-4..... 1st Qtr. Council Mtg. St. Louis, MO
 June 1-3..... Spring Conference, Princeton, IL
 October 19-21.....Fall Retreat, Racine, WI
 November 3.....4th Qtr. Council Mtg. Springfield, IL