

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST WOMEN'S CONNECTION CONFERENCE AND RETREAT GUIDELINES

The primary goal of each retreat or conference is to provide an opportunity for women within the district to participate in an enjoyable, fulfilling program experience and have the chance to refresh, restore and refocus. A secondary goal is to at least break even financially. The UU Women's Connection provides financial support for its conferences and retreats by advancing deposits and/or supplying seed money. The governing council provides a valuable resource; someone to serve as a liaison between the Women's Connection and the retreat/conference committee.

At the end of the process, the retreat or conference committee is expected to submit a financial report, tally evaluation forms and pass these, along with any helpful notes or overall retreat report to the next year's committee. *These post-event activities are to be completed within sixty (60) days of the retreat/conference.*

The following pages include:

1. General guidelines to be applied to all UU Women's Connection sponsored retreats; or Conferences;
2. Specific information for the Spring Conference and the Lake Geneva Fall Retreat;
3. Supplemental reference materials such as template for the registration form, examples of \ brochures, confirmation letters, publicity, etc.
4. Final Report and financial recap guidelines

GENERAL GUIDELINES

The date of the next retreat or conference is selected at the current year's conference, taking into account each retreat site's policies on giving date preference to its regular clients. The Connection council and liaison will consult the CMwD calendar for possible conflicts with other district-wide events. While the weekend of the next year's retreat is firm from year to year, next year's chair and the Women's Connection Retreat Liaison will confer and have an alternate date confirmed by other Council members so that there is no avoidable scheduling conflict. The weekend is confirmed with the retreat center at the end of the current retreat. Deposit is paid and housing and workshops rooms are tentatively set. In recent years there is much less flexibility for changing the date.

Ideally, a retreat/conference planning committee agrees to plan and execute a retreat or conference at least a year in advance. It is recommended that the committee meet informally with some of the members of the current year's committee, if only to make specific arrangements to obtain information from the evaluation sheets for the current program. Evaluations and personal contacts are the best source of useful up-to-date information for planning a meaningful program.

The core group planning for the event need not be large; however, there MUST be a designated coordinator or contact person in order to facilitate contact with the Women's Connection through its Liaison. The first order of the committee business is to enlist committee members, such as chair, treasurer, registrar, workshop coordinator, vendor coordinator, ambiance coordinator to name a few. (See Committee Jobs description document)

The next year's committee can solicit ideas for future themes, workshops, activities, presenters and/or speakers during the current year's event. Another way of collecting this same sort of information is through questionnaires completed by participants. With this information in hand, an early

brainstorming session can help identify usable themes and resources. It can also help eliminate those ideas that just won't work, so you can focus on the speakers or leaders who are actually available as well as programming ideas that will provide a well-rounded, full program schedule. It is good to draw from the talent of the planning church's membership or community.

Additional help can best be located by contacting people who are active supporters of the Women's Connection and other women's activities. The home church's bulletin board, newsletters and email circles can help spread the word and bring in more new volunteers and participants. Even those who can't give a large block of time may well be happy to join with others in assembling registration packets, nametags, brochure mailing, etc. Finally, the women of the home church can provide financial support directly to the committee or indirectly through scholarships or grants to its own members.

WORKSHOPS

Once the plans are being implemented, be sure to send contact letters/emails asking workshop and worship leaders to provide brief descriptions of their workshops and biographical information that can be used in the registration brochure and/or packet. Ask about space, material, group size limit requirements or preferences they may have. Spell out any financial arrangements that will be provided. Later on, a confirmation letter, reminding them to be sure to register for the weekend is appropriate.

Payment for services of speakers and workshop leaders is probably the most difficult area of conflicting needs. On the one hand, we want to keep the cost of attending Women's Connection events reasonable enough for the bulk of our membership and to break even financially; on the other hand it hampers the planning committee if it has to rely too heavily on donated services for programming. Note that planning committee members do not received waived registrations unless they are workshop presenters. They are welcome to apply for a retreat scholarship. (See pages 6 and 7.)

In the past it has been customary to pay guest speakers and presenters who are not members from within the district. This can take the form of cash, travel, waived registration and/or housing expenses. (Note: The UU Women's Connection budget provides money for student minister grants to attend our retreats or conferences; this might help a committee in program leader recruitment.)

In general, it's been the practice to support workshop leaders and presenters who are UU Women's Connection members by waiving the registration fee and paying for copying and material expenses.

Even though their registration fee can be waived, if they are participating in other aspects of the conference, they should register. If they intend to eat meals in the dining hall or stay overnight, they must register and will be expected to pay for those expenses. The final decision on these matters belongs to the committee but this needs to be considered in the overall budget plan. Consider how it might impact the Women's Connection budget as well as other Women's Connection events. The Women's Connection liaison can be a valuable resource in helping you with this balancing act.

One of the committee planners' first questions in recent years is how much is usually paid to keynote speakers. Paying other workshop presenters or even waiving room and board for them is not recommended. Waived fees, including registration, become a hidden cost of doing the retreat and must be considered in the final accounting.

Lastly, a "thank you" note after the event should not be forgotten.

FINANCES

FUND RAISING for future Women's Connection programs is not part of the committee's responsibilities, though a silent auction, raffle, or similar event can be included in the program schedule. Strictly commercial endeavors are not allowed. Theme related sales and orders are acceptable. In recent years a used book sale has been a popular fundraiser. If you wish to include any other fundraiser as a program item, the conference committee is expected to organize the fundraiser and account for receipts and approval must be obtained through the connection liaison. The brochure and confirmation letter must be sure to explain and publicize any auction and/or book sale and remind registrants to bring suitable items to the conference with them. The governing council must approve any other fundraisers through the retreat/conference-planning liaison. Any profit from a fundraiser will be included in the overall profits for the conference.

TREASURER

It is important that someone be in charge of keeping accurate financial records so that the required report can be filed and finances finalized within sixty days of the event.

As stated in the introduction, making a profit on UU Women's Connection events is not the primary goal; but at least breaking even on the conference is an important consideration in planning. In any case, advanced money received and profit, if any, is to be remitted to the Women's Connection treasury. Each planning committee is asked to complete a financial report to account for all moneys advanced and collected and to see that the Women's Connection retreat and conference funds are replenished within sixty (60) days of the conference or retreat. See the attached report form for details on how to make your final report. Feel free to contact the Liaison or the Connection Treasurer for assistance in making the financial report. Note: Retreat Center deposit and seed money paid from the Connection budget must be repaid. (See Financial Recap.) Ask the treasurer the amount of the retreat center deposit so you may account for these in your financial recap. The Connection treasurer will issue a seed money check upon request. This may be sent after the current year budget has been approved by the council in January. Membership dues and scholarship donations collected are not a part of the conference profit, but are listed in the financial recap.

Seed money for required deposits, planning and materials is available through the Women's Connection Treasurer. Arrangements can be made as soon as the annual budget is approved, the dates are reserved and the committee is ready to begin its work. Expenses from the seed money should be disbursed by check. You can either use an existing account (E.g. Church or women's group) or open one specifically for this purpose. The retreat coordinator can be given an advance to cover smaller, out-of-pocket expenses; she will, of course keep a record to account for each expense item.

Because each retreat or conference theme and program is unique, there is no single standard list of expenses you will encounter; however, the following categories cover a majority of them:

1. Fee for keynote speakers and/or workshop leaders. (Be sure to consider any room and board or travel costs paid for them as conference expenses and prorate them as such. E.g. keynote speaker's room and board is a part of her fee. Workshop presenters frequently have their registration fee waived.) While we want to honor these women with a reasonable fee for facilitating workshops, many want to share their talents, expertise with other women participants.
2. Brochure printing and mailing, confirmation letters mailing, registration packets and nametags.
3. Postage, copying, phone calls and other committee expenses.
4. Refreshment and reception costs, if not donated.

5. Materials for craft projects, decorative/ambiance items.

6. Usage, site and insurance fees.

Don't forget the final report. See the attached financial recap report form for details on how to document financial accounting.

REGISTRAR

There must be a registrar and/or someone to be liaison with conference site management and staff. It is also important that someone be in charge of keeping accurate financial records so that the required report can be filed and finances finalized within sixty days of the event

MEMBERSHIP DUES

Each participant will be asked to indicate on the registration form whether she is a member of UU Women's Connection. Non-members will be given an opportunity to become a member by paying Women's Connection dues (\$10 in 2006/7). Members will have their renewal date printed on the mailing label used for the brochure. A members, whose membership renewal date has expired or will expire by the conference, will be expected to renew her membership as a part of registration. A copy of the Women's Connection membership list will be provided to the registrar by the mailing list coordinator. Anyone who becomes a member through the registration procedure must be added to the Women's Connection mailing list in a timely fashion. It is the responsibility of the registrar to provide the Connection Treasurer and mailing list coordinator with new member or updated member's names, addresses and church/society affiliations and to remit any dues collected to the Women's Connection Treasurer.

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION FEE

The conference registration fee is presently fixed at \$50. Any registration fee change is not the purview of the planning committee. All workshop presenters and UU Women's Connection council members may have their registration fee waived, if they choose and indicate this on their registration form. Some work shop presenters or Council members will not choose this option. All other conference participants pay the registration fees, regardless of whether they are in attendance full or part time. Also, an additional fee of \$20 is assessed to those whose registration form is postmarked later than the deadline date set by the committee. Participants not paying room and board fees are also assessed appropriate single day user and meal fees. (For reference, the 2007 "Saturday Only" fees were \$60 for Lake Geneva -- \$50 registration and \$10 for noon meal.)

MAILING LIST/LABELS

The mailing list coordinator will provide a set of Women's Connection mailing list labels or data base so that the committee can prepare and mail out its own brochure and registration forms. The cost of the printing and mailing of the brochure is part of the planning committee's budget. The Women's Connection retreat liaison can provide samples of prior years' budgeted and actual cost information. Present all receipts to the Women's Connection Treasurer for proper credit and accounting at the time of the financial statement and retreat report is done. The Women's Connection mailing list coordinator will also provide the registrar with a current membership list, which includes dues renewal dates. Feel free to contact your Liaison or the Treasurer with your questions.

PUBLICITY /CONFERENCE BROCHURE

A retreat or conference can hardly be publicized too soon or too often. Even before the details are worked out, early reminders of dates and known program elements can interest participants to schedule and plan to attend. Early publicity can also elicit ideas or volunteers for programming. A

good place for posters and/or flyers is at other UU or women's events. Flyers and other publicity in the district and region will be handled through the Council. The planning committee will be notified of deadlines related to these releases for district website and mailings and UU Women's Connection website and newsletter. Releases to church offices need to take into account lead times for inclusion in the local newsletters. Connection communication portfolio council members can be helpful in providing news releases. At minimum, you can count on getting your copy in the UU Women's Connection newsletter and website. Finally, your brochure will give full details, including information on registration and the availability of scholarship grants. **The cost of this brochure mailing is included in the planning committee's budget and is the best publicity for the retreat/conference.** The UU Women's Connection Treasurer can provide budgeted cost information.

Lead-time for the conference brochure needs to be 6 to 8 weeks. If the general mailing is not first class, don't forget to allow at least ONE extra week for bulk mail delays. NOTE: first class mailing is advised and encouraged. Check potential first class rate increases when doing budget planning.

Including the phrase "Dated Material" in the address section may help speed delivery. Please include the phrase "Return Service Requested" below the return address on the brochure so that forwarding addresses from undelivered brochures can be used to update the mailing address file. These are sent by the registrar to the Connection data base councilor.

Design and contents of the brochure is up to you, but check your plans against the following sections to be sure you don't forget something vital. The final brochure draft will be approved by your Council Liaison prior to mailing.

REGISTRATION FORM

The conference brochure should give enough information about the program schedule, including registration times/places so that participants can gauge travel, arrival and departure times. A registration form template will be provided to your committee and the liaison will assist you in adding information pertinent to your retreat, such as: retreat center room and board rates, tee shirts information, workshop material fees, etc. The registration form can include whatever information the committee feels necessary for conference preparations such as workshop and event preferences. Blue highlighted areas on the registration form template allow for personalizing your brochure. Adding logos, graphics are best added as watermarks to prevent loss of pertinent information. One tip about placement of the registration form within in the brochure: remember that it will be filled in, sent, so consider whether the registrant will later miss what's printed on the other side.

Here are the basic requirements for a registration form:

- Name, address, home and work phone numbers and email address.
- Emergency contact information.
- Member? If yes, what unit and/or church? If no, specify dues cost. (\$10 in 2006/7)
- Program leader/presenter or UU Women's Connection Council member? (If so, registration fee may be being waived)
- Registration fee: (\$50)
- First-time attendees check-off. (Fee waived for earliest 5 first time registrants (2004-2007.)

- **Make sure to clearly indicate to whom/what group the check should be made payable.**
NOTE: Checking account may NOT be opened in the UU Women's Connection name, as an account with this name must be supervised by the Women's Connection Treasurer. It is suggested that if an account is opened for the purposes of planning the retreat that it reflect the name of the women's group planning the retreat. Therefore registrants will make checks payable to this account name.)
- Times and dates of expected arrival and departure.
- Accommodation preferences (list choices and costs).
- Accommodations considerations: e.g. age, physical limitations. (Note: Both retreat sites have non-smoking buildings.)
- Roommate preference: Name(s) must be specified if double, triple or quad requested.
- Dietary preferences/needs: vegetarian? special diet?
- Day registrants: Other than Saturday lunch, what meals are required? (Can be offered to non-registered vendors, as well.) Check with the retreat center for up-to-date prices for meals.
- Scholarship or grant wording (See below)
- No childcare provided on site. Nursing infants are welcome. \$20 child care grants are available to help defray the cost of at-home child care.
- List all costs (participants are charged for all meals between arrival and check-out time. A daily user fee may be charged, even for single day participants.)
- Include registration deadline, late fee surcharge, to whom the check should be payable, where to send registrations (with full registrar name, address, phone number and email address)
- Refund policy.
- Scholarship fund contribution.
- Workshop choices, first and second choices
- Extra workshop materials charges, if any.
- If offered, cost of tote bags, cost and size of T-shirts.
- Open Mic signup – what talent will be shared.

See particular requirements for Lake Geneva and Pilgrim Park in later sections.

GRANTS/SCHOLARSHIPS

The council will provide specific statements about scholarships and grants that must be printed word-for-word in brochures or registration forms. The section will include the deadline for Scholarship application, the contact person and space for enough information so that the committee can consider need (both circumstances and dollar amount) in deciding how to allocate the limited resources.

The conference registrar will send the Women's Connection Treasurer a list of those women seeking scholarships. The Treasurer will review the list to determine if the requesters have recently received a scholarship and if there are sufficient funds for all or only some of the scholarship requests. She will send a list of approved scholarship requests to the Council Liaison and conference registrar. Membership consensus is that full scholarships should not be given, so local churches will be given an opportunity to assist their members. Nor should repeat grants be given unless there aren't other qualified applicants. The number of scholarships that are granted for any given retreat depends upon the amount of scholarship donations via retreat registrations at past and present retreats as well as the number designated in the yearly Women's Connection budget. Check with Liaison or the Treasurer to determine that number for any given retreat.

First-time attendees waived registration fee is awarded to the first five women to register. Childcare grants are awarded as requested. These do not need to be reviewed by the three person committee mentioned above. Ministerial student retreat scholarships are also available.

CONFIRMATION LETTERS AND MAPS

It is essential to send each person a letter confirming receipt of her registration form and money in a timely manner. This is part of the registrar's retreat duties. Consider the first time participant. Not only must arrangements be made for personal and familial needs, she must have time to choose, collect or obtain the suggested "to bring" items for the programming, such as: auction item, percussion for drumming, worship/ritual clothing, shoes for the special terrain. A good map is also vital. Don't assume the participant knows the exits, turn-offs and checkpoints. Also consider the arrival time. Directions that may work in daylight are often useless at night! And be sure to cover any parking considerations.

PROGRAM SCHEDULING

There are no set rules here, except to take travel, site, weather, and time/light into consideration. The Planning Committee must provide for meals, check-in/check-out, hygiene and preparation times. Include break and free times. Registrant gathering areas are important for networking and casual times together. Vary the types of activities (not too much continuous sitting; include some stretching or motion). A tentative weekend schedule should be included in the retreat brochure.

NAMETAGS/CONFERENCE PACKETS

Nametags are important. They should be available when conference/retreat participants check in and receive their registration packets. They can be prepared in advance or created by the participants, using materials you supply. They can be valuable tools for mixers and games as well as their obvious function in identifying participants. Legibility is vital. Try to use large, clear, basic script styles. In any case, see to it that at least participant's first name is in large type. Some committees include the participants' scheduled workshops and lodging on their nametags, thus eliminating the need to personalize each registrant's conference package. Nametag holders are saved from year to year with additional ones being purchased, as needed.

The retreat or conference packets most likely reflect the conference theme and/or logo and are, thus, unique to the event. The following are standard, expected contents:

- The retreat or conference schedule of events
- Workshop details
- Biographical information about leaders and presenters
- List of the names and addresses of all participants
- Vendor List
- Site Rules and Map
- Evaluation Forms (see supplemental material)
- Paper and pencils are helpful extras
- Flyers for other upcoming UU women's conferences/retreats
- To Do List for Registrants

SAMPLES/EXAMPLES

- 1. Scholarship/grant request wording**
- 2. Registration form template**
- 3. Confirmation Letter example**
- 4. Brochure examples (2)**
- 5. Retreat evaluation form**
- 6. Financial Recap Form**
- 7. Sample To Do List**
- 8 Committee Job descriptions**
- 9. Vendor Registration form (Lake Geneva only)**

SPRING CONFERENCE SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Pilgrim Park Camp, 26449 1340 N. Ave, Princeton, IL 61356

Phone – 815-447-2390 Fax – 815-447-2205 www.il-odm.org

The Pilgrim Park Conference is scheduled for the first weekend in June. Though alternate dates within a week on each side of that date are possible, consistency is important from year to year. The date for the next year's conference is usually selected at the current year's conference by the Women's Connection Council. The Pilgrim Park Camp calendar provides for options, but has to take into account contractual agreements with other groups. The UU Women's Connection retreat liaison assists in this task and takes into consideration the CMwD and UUA calendars as well as past conflicts and/or agreements regarding scheduling. Dates should be planned with the Women's Connection Liaison and Treasurer.

Review carefully the booking policies and pricing sheet for lodging, meals, snacks and miscellaneous supplies and equipment needs. Rates are subject to change, therefore, get the list of current rates for meals and available accommodations as soon as possible, so that there won't be any surprises in planning. These are available through the Women's Connection Liaison. Be sure to include this information on the registration form, so participants can estimate their expected total cost. (This will be based on the accommodations, and number of meals between arrival and check-out time.) All fees are due at the time of registration. A usage fee is charged for each day a participant is in attendance, regardless of whether the participant is attending the conference for the full day or only part of the day.

There are three types of lodging available: rooms with single beds; rooms with a double bed, and dorm-like rooms with a mix of single beds and bunk beds. The registration form must ask whether the registrant has special needs. Special needs should be coordinated with Pilgrim Park staff before the conference.

Meals are served buffet style at 8:00 AM, NOON and 5:30 PM. Special dietary accommodations will be made by providing specific needs information to staff prior to the conference. Snacks may be provided by the committee or conference participants and made available between mealtimes. Snacks may also be purchased at a per person rate from Pilgrim Park. Refer to the Pricing Sheet that accompanies the contract for details.

Contact Pilgrim Park well in advance of the conference to make arrangements for meeting rooms, tables, chairs and lecterns, and other possible offerings, such as: AV equipment, easel, easel pads, chalkboards or white boards and copy service.

Meeting room set up, audio visual and special needs will be coordinated with Pilgrim Park staff before the retreat. Refer to the Booking Policies and Policies and Guidelines for Groups and Their Leaders for further details.

LAKE GENEVA SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS

George Williams College (GWC)

Aurora University

350 Constance Blvd.

P.O. Box 210

Williams Bay, WI 53191-0210

Phone Number: 262-245-5531

Fax Number: 262-245-8549

<http://www.aurora.edu/gwc/index.htm>

A virtual tour of the campus can be viewed at this website:

<http://www.aurora.edu/gwcampus/virtualtour.htm>

The Lake Geneva Committee will provide space, as needed, for a member's informational meeting or table as specified by the council liaison.

The conference is normally scheduled after November 1 because some GWC's fees are reduced in the fall, beginning November 1. Carefully reviewing the pricing information in the signed contract with GWC. Meals, lodging, room rental are all separate fees. Lodging availability is revisited with each contract. Carefully plan meeting room space to maximize utilization. Audio visual equipment is now included in the meeting room rental fee but must be ordered prior to the conference.

The UU Women's Connection Treasurer will advance funds by prepaying the required deposit fee for the committee. This prepayment must be considered in the final financial recap for the conference. Each participant completes payment of all fees (registration, dues, room and board, etc.) with registration. Rates will be based on accommodations, and number of meals between arrival and check-out time. GWC submits a single, total bill (minus prepaid deposits) for all costs, including participant room and board; this must be paid by the committee treasurer in a timely manner. The committee, committee liaison and/or treasurer must verify the charges and pay this bill. It is a good idea for the retreat treasurer and other planners to be available to review the invoice for the retreat at the end of the weekend. The committee may request that changes and an amended invoice be mailed to the appropriate committee person, such as the treasurer. It is helpful if the committee members who review of the invoice are prepared to ask for appropriate changes at the end of the weekend when the initial invoice is reviewed. The Connection treasurer will notify you of the time of this meeting at the office of GWC. A final amended bill will be mailed to the retreat committee treasurer for final payment within a reasonable time. Since a financial recap of the retreat must be submitted to the Connection within 60 days, payment is best made when this final invoice/bill is received by the retreat treasurer. That will leave time for the check to the retreat center to clear before the financial recap and check are sent to the Women's Connection within that 60 day period.

Rates are subject to change, so be sure to get the list of current rates for available various accommodations available as soon as possible, so that there won't be any surprises in planning. For example, as of 2007 meeting rooms will have charges of \$100-\$500 per day based on the room size. Check with the center for current rates for meeting rooms as well as housing and food rates. Specific meeting rooms will be reserved when deposit is paid and must be verified or released back to the center if the committee elects not to use them.

The housing options ranges from dormitory style living with bunk beds to cottages and motel-type units. On the registration form, if the lodging selected is Oak or Hickory which each have bunk beds, ask if an upper bunk is acceptable or preferred. A lower bunk may be a necessity due to age or physical limitations. Lakefront and other higher priority housing are often available for women with

special needs or disabilities. Participants locating in off campus housing may cause significant financial penalties due to required number of contracted spaces and, thus, should not be encouraged. The planning committee will provide adequate on-campus housing at a wide variety of rates to fit registrants' needs.

Because of the terrain, some transportation assistance may be required for getting some of the participants to/from meals, meetings and workshops. At least, you should be aware of the campus layout in planning where different sessions, events or displays are to be located. Some committees offer transportation on campus as requested.

GWC can furnish a variety of services and amenities. Contact them immediately for the list and charges. Women's Connection has sometimes taken advantage of their snack program; sometimes we've provided our own. Besides the expected tables, chairs and lecterns, here are some other possible things to use: insurance, video tape player, projector and screen, blackboard, bulletin board, flip chart, extension cords, piano, microphone, etc.

Lake Geneva food service provides for both vegetarian and vegan meals. Other dietary needs might be accommodated. Prior to the conference, at least a week, send the staff a list of the dietary restrictions provided by the registrants. You do not have to provide the names of the registrants.

Directions to the campus and a map of the campus can be found at:

<http://www.aurora.edu/gwc/prospective/contact.htm>

Currently, the map does not include the anticipated relocation of the dining hall. Please contact GWC staff to find out when a new map will be published on the internet. The driving instructions for getting to the campus are also on this website. Note that the instructions do not include getting from the campus entrance to registration or to the dining hall or lodging. Please be sure to include detailed instructions in the confirmation letter to retreat registrants.

If the weather is inclement or a registrant is unfamiliar with the area, it is a good idea to provide a committee member's cell phone number that could be called if a registrant is lost. The committee member should also have a map of Wisconsin and a detailed map (with county road markings) of the Williams Bay area.

At Lake Geneva, in recent years vendors have become popular, offering a variety of clothing, jewelry, books, artwork, drums, etc of interest to women. A sample vendor registration form is included. The vendor list from the previous conference should be included in the conference report. The vendor registration fee has recently been \$35. If they are participating in other aspects of the conference: attending the keynote or workshops, they should register. If they intend to eat meals in the dining hall or stay overnight, they will be expected to pay for those expenses. The committee's vendor coordinator will be responsible for:

- obtaining the vendor list,
 - mailing the vendor registration form,
 - collecting the fees and submitting them to the committee treasurer,
 - preparing the vendor list for the conference packet,
 - notifying the committee's Lake Geneva liaison of the number of tables that will be needed by the vendors,
 - assigning "booth space",
 - greeting the vendors when they arrive and directing them to their assigned "booth space",
- collecting feedback from the vendors and determining if the vendor would like to be invited to return next year.

History of Spring and Fall Conferences

The Spring Conference is an outgrowth of the 1960's merger between the Unitarian and the Universalist denominations and the associated Unitarian Women's Alliance and the Universalist Women's Federation. The members of the CMwD-UUWF (Central Midwest District Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation) came together each spring from 1962 to 1998 at the Allerton House Conference Center in Monticello, Illinois to enjoy the opportunity to be together with other liberal women to study issues, exchange ideas, share experiences, and just have fun. They were convinced that it was the ideal location for their conference and annual meeting. But, due to increasing use of the conference center for University of Illinois scheduled events, the CMwD-UUWF conference had to find a new home. The conference has been held in several locations including hotel venues and King's House in Henry, Illinois. In 2006, it was decided to move the spring conference to Pilgrim Park Camp near Princeton, Illinois.

The Lake Geneva Fall Retreat was initiated by the Women's Alliance of the Rockford, Illinois Church. Having held retreats for their own members at George Williams College for about ten years, in 1981 they invited other women within the district to join them. Since then, district wide attendance and participation has increased to its current levels. From 1983 on, individuals or women's groups have taken on responsibility for planning and holding the retreat from other UU churches within the CMwD.

At the CMwD-UUWF annual meeting on June 4, 2005 the name of the organization was changed to the Unitarian Universalist Women's Connection.

Both of the spring conference and fall retreat are sponsored and organized by the UU Women's Connection. CMwD Women & Religion Committee and/or other groups offer other gatherings of CMwD women such as WomanSpirit (a winter conference) and Camp Renora (a summer conference). These are publicized in Connection newsletters and promoted at the fall and spring retreats.