
Voice Of Women

Central Midwest District of the Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation

Summer 2003

CMWD UUWF

Task Force 2003

Sue Thom, CMWD-UUWF

The UUWF Task Force met at the UU Church of Joliet on July 12th, 2003. The group was organized at the Annual Spring meeting (2003) in Bloomington, Illinois. The Task Force's charge was to assess the current function of the UUWF and whether that function/structure needs to change.

The morning was taken up with reviews of past minutes and reports. The treasurer reported a balance of \$8,584.05 after sending expense money to the Lake Geneva planning committee and expense money to Pat Goller for planning the "Peace Works" project. Betty Jachim reported on the "who" and "when" of membership and mailing lists. Betty emphasized a need to reconnect with church groups that have large memberships. Pat Baker gave a report on the search for our Spring Retreat site.

Then a brainstorming session was held. Everyone offered opinions, beliefs, and suggestions about the problems/concerns and possible direction of the UUWF. Three major focuses were identified as crucial to the future of the CMWD-UUWF.

STRUCTURE: purpose, dues/finance, membership, leadership(form, style, continuity), annual meeting, name of organization.

COMMUNICATION: newsletter, retreat information, shared history, feedback from large units, personal outreach, "we" & "they" thinking, women's issues

PROGRAMMING: Retreats, simplicity, themes, recruiting leadership, distances, attracting new participants, affordability

The meeting concluded with several decisions on a course of action. We will begin by having 40th Anniversary celebrations at the Lake Geneva and Spring Retreats. We will present a short program at Lake Geneva reflecting on our history as an organization and on a vision for our future. We will present a brief questionnaire in a short breakout session. We will urge participants to fill them out and return to the Task Force to use in further decision making.

Pat Baker, Jeanne Fitch, and Mary Lou Steadman will work on firming up a location for the Spring 2004 retreat. Pat Baker, Betty Jachim and Pat Goller will contact churches with large unit membership and arrange meetings with them. The next Task Force meeting will be held at the Lake Geneva November retreat.

Peace Works for All

Update by Pat Goller

Prayers For Light

lousy night to write about peace,
try to be faithful and trace hope like a scar
I or the reader will notice. I pray for
a burst of light to rejuvenate a poem
now critically wounded.

Television violence, live feed of bombs
igniting Baghdad, ends my attempt.
Before me, the darkest moments of night
how difficult it is to think at the end of my day
when the shapeless shadow of war covers the Iraqi sun.

by Joe Coffey, longtime peace activist in Springfield, IL, April 1, 2003

The last VOW trumpeted a May 2003 launching for our peace project: "Peace Works For All: A Weekend Gathering of Teens".

Then the drumbeat of war trumped our trumpets.

Before the war, the very hospitable Peoria UU church leaders had taken our project to heart and to their board for approval. The church's Community Action Committee had offered help with the workshop's public Rally for Human Rights. The local women's group had pledged help with food and other tasks. Brochures and applications went out. *UU World* was contacted and was interested. Plenty of home hospitality sites were arranged for registrants. In short we were, as they say, good to go.

Then we went to war in Iraq. So many peace lovers felt feelings expressed by the poet quoted above, including young people who considered signing up for Peace Works. Perhaps it was "shock and awe" in our own hearts that left us stymied. In any case we didn't have enough participants. We cancelled because it was financially impossible to do it without more teen registrants.

But now we are wetting our lips again and getting ready to sound new sweet notes for peace. Again we announce "Peace Works For All" and an opportunity for high school students to gain peacemaking skills they can practice in their own communities. The need is great and the time is now.

At the CMWD - UUWF 2003 annual meeting in April our membership gave us not only encouragement, and dozens of

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ideas, but also an increased grant to make this project come alive.

Now we are following up on responses to our June plea mailing for a host site to all congregations in the district churches. A fall launch in Rockford is set. (Ed. Note: September 26 and 27.) A second is set in Mequon, Wisconsin. (November 14, 15.) And a third is tentatively set for December 5, 6 in Alton, Illinois. (We needed a **NEW** host church, as the Peoria congregation might be moving at that time.)

It is exciting that a project such as this can enliven congregational life as it did in Peoria. I remember so well RE director Amy Popp's encouraging words to me on the eve of the war. "This is absolutely the right thing to be doing now." She is right. Working on the Peace Works pilot project during a time when chaos and war, bombing and death were – and, sadly, still are – daily headlines, gave us focus. Renewed determination moves us forward. Your input and ideas are welcomed. Contact me at dome@interserv.com

OUR STORY

Forty Years of UUWF

The following is a series of historical notes tracing the evolution of the Central Midwest District of the UUWF. Compiled by Joanne Fought, these vignettes offer a glimpse of the times and the brave, industrious women who pioneered our path of women's activism.

UNIVERSALIST WOMEN

The first organization of Universalist Women was held in 1869 in Buffalo N.Y. Attending the Universalist Biennial Convention, they met separately and formed the Women's Centenary Aid Association which was the first national organization of church women in the United States. Organized to raise \$35,000 of the \$200,000 sought by the denomination for the 100th Anniversary of John Murray's first sermon in America, they then planned to dissolve. By 1871, they had oversubscribed their goal by \$1,000 dollars and realized that they were so committed to the importance of working together for the common good of the denomination; they reorganized as an independent body to raise and control the disposition of their own funds. A charter was granted by a special act of Congress in 1873 and the group was incorporated.

The President, Mrs. Caroline Soule, was placed in the field as an agent in 1873 to interest women in the work of church extension and to raise funds to support liberal institutions and colleges. By 1891, the Centenary Aid Association, had raised \$250,000 and was devoted to mission programs in their own church as well as other churches. For years the Women's Centenary

Association established teaching posts, scholarships and professorships to St. Lawrence, Lombard and other liberal colleges, instituted social action in prisons and performed other reforms and political action. The General Convention recognized the organization by electing one of its members to the Board of Trustees in 1877. And the Association sent a member the World Peace Conference in Paris in 1883.

Throughout the early 1900's the Association became more active by sending a missionary to Japan, introducing a study program at Ferry Beach, set up a Department of Institutes and Camps, assuming the supervision of the North Carolina Missions Program and establishing Jordan Neighborhood House in Suffolk, Virginia. *The Bulletin*, a publication for communication between local, state and national was established in 1913 and the Clara Barton Birthplace was purchased to create a program for diabetic children. In 1939 the group name was changed to The Association of Universalist Women or AUW.

THE ALLIANCE OF UNITARIAN WOMEN

The Women's Auxiliary Conference was formed at Saratoga, New York in 1880 with primarily eastern churches, but the Women's Unitarian Conference was formed in the West the following year. The first cooperative venture was POST OFFICE MISSION, which supplied tracts and mission materials for church vestibules. They began to contribute to the Church Building and Loan Fund to help the American Unitarian Association erect new churches and produced a monthly newsletter for shut ins called "The Cheerful Letter." In 1888, the group changed to an independent organization, "The National Alliance of Unitarian and Other Liberal Christian Women" and was incorporated in 1902. Circuit preaching was established in the south along with schools during this period.

The Alliance took up permanent headquarters at 25 Beacon Street in 1898 working with the American Unitarian Association and shared evolving publications such as *The Bulletin*, *Word and Work*, *The Unitarian Newsletter* and the *General Alliance Reporter*. By 1955 the *Unitarian Alliance News* was published quarterly. Junior Alliance groups were formed in 1902 followed by a system of Life Memberships in 1905 to honor branch presidents and the British League of Unitarian Women was formed in 190. In 1910 several Unitarian women went to Hungary to join in the celebration of the 400th anniversary of the birth of Francis David, the first Unitarian bishop (founder of Unitarianism in Hungary) and as a result the International Union of Liberal Christian Women was formed. International work was begun in the Unitarian Schools in

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the Chasi Hills of India, an effective institution and circuit of churches and schools under the auspices of Brahmo-Somaj, the Indian liberal movement.

The first full time field secretary, Rev. Minna C. Budlong was employed in 1923 and the name was changed to "The General Alliance of Unitarian and Other Liberal Christian Women." A successful newsletter, "The Axis" was published in 1935, but changed names to "Alliance World" because of the closer contacts with the Unitarian Service Committee providing relief materials to the European countries. A Commission of World Order supporting the United Nations was established in 1947. During the next few years until 1955, an effort was made to decentralize and put decisions in the hands of many. The "Alliance of Unitarian Women" was adopted as the name in 1960. The Alliance has helped support Meadville Theological School, The Starr King School for the Ministry, Hackley School for Boys on the Hudson and Proctor Academy in Andover New Hampshire.

THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST WOMEN'S FEDERATION

In 1962, joint meetings of the Alliance of Unitarian Women and the Association of Universalist Women were held. The "Alliance News" and "Association of Universalist Women Bulletin" had a joint section called "The Bridge." Final vote to merge was made at concurrent separate annual meeting in May, 1963, two years after consolidation of their respective churches.

The Association of Universalist Women turned over to the merged organization, the Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation, approximately a quarter million dollars in securities, invested funds, cash and property. Unique indeed it was that this organization remained a non dues, non delegate body, financing its total program by voluntary contributions.

CENTRAL MIDWEST DISTRICT UUWF

Joint meetings of Association of Universalist Women of Illinois and the Alliance of Unitarian Women of the Western Conference were held in the Universalist Church of Oak Park, Illinois. A recommendation drawn up by Lucille Kazmark was presented to both groups at a joint luncheon. It read, "*WHEREAS it is desirable to arrive at some plan of mutually working together, IT IS RECOMMENDED that steps be taken in this direction by the exchange of non-voting representatives for the Association and the Alliance on the local and/or the Area Boards in the Midwest, so that we may become acquainted with specifics in each group; AND WHEREAS, there is a need to understand the organizational setup of each group better in order to have a meeting of minds, BE IT RECOMMENDED that a planned effort at union be made in the near future after a period of exploration*"

Plans were made to involve both groups of women in area meetings and at the Allerton Park Institute. An Ad Hoc Committee was formed and met at Oak Park on February 9, 1964. It was decided to hold a joint meeting for the purpose of organizing the Central Midwest District of the UUWF. The Chicago Area Associate Alliance could schedule their Board meeting at Allerton during June, 1964. Plans were completed and the joint meeting was held on June 16. At that meeting an Interim Board was appointed by Hester Huff and Frances Hess. The governing structure of the board was to be simple with a chairman and a secretary. All units in the Districts were to receive and act on the report of the Interim Board at the meeting of the Central Midwest District in Joliet, November 20, 1964. The financing of the business Interim Board was to be provided by the AUW of Illinois.

On November 20, 1964 at the District Meeting the By-laws were adopted and officers elected. They included: Chairman-Lucille Kazmark, Secretary/Treasurer-Margaret Harris, and Directors-Jessica Barr, Nancy LeShane, Lois Lindel, Marjorie Rutherford, Della Langdon, Phyllis Hanlon and Robertine Rice.

ALLERTON

Allerton predates UUWF. It was called the Allerton Institute. In 1957 the Association of Universalist Women held their first Institute at Herrick House near Elgin and registration was \$2.00. In 1958 the Institute met at Allerton and continued meeting there until 1998. That means CMD/UUWF met at Allerton for 40 years until 1998. The continental UUWF is 40 in 2003.

The legend is that a group of Universalist Women were at another meeting place, campground or not-so-hot place getting it cleaned up and ready for their meeting. Robert Rice (Oak Park Minister) was at a meeting and found that the women could book Allerton for their 'Institute', which it was called at that time. He quickly called his wife, Robertine, to tell her about it and the women jumped at the opportunity.

On a 1965 Allerton Program lists Ruth Davis as Coordinator and Hester Huff as the Registrar. Information about Hester Huff and the Hester Huff Roll of Recognition, honored at Allerton for many years, is found on page four of this Newsletter.

CONGRATULATIONS UUWF 40TH ANNIVERSARY!

1963-2003

*Honor the Past,
Celebrate the Present,
Look to the Future*

Hester Huff Roll of Recognition

The Women of CMwD-UUWF established a way to recognize outstanding UU lay women for service in the District. The Roll of Recognition was named in honor of Hester Huff, who was a role model and mentor to many in the early days of the organization and a leader both before and after the merger. Hester served as Dean of the Allerton Institute for several years, acting as liaison and coordinator. Those who knew her remember her fondly as the "Mamma of Allerton", the perfect housemother who superbly cares for every detail and person in her charge. These women followed Hester's path:

1981	Lucile Kazmark
1982	Ruth Davis
1983	Marion Y. Baker
1984	Gloria Grimm
1985	Elise Cade
1986	Clarise Jefferson
1987	Women's Alliance/Third & Beacon Churches
1988	Carol Wike Nudo
1989	Bonnie Olson
1990	Jo Jameson
1991	Doris Jones
1992	Susan Karcher
1993	Pat Baker
1994	Janet Nortrom
1995	Lorraine Weber
1996	Helen Johnson
1997	Joanne Fought
1998	Sandy Drenth

CMwD UUWF Spring Conference

The Spring Conference was held at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Bloomington-Normal this year. There were 48 attendees who enjoyed a weekend highlighted by beautiful weather and wonderful women. The weekend activities were further accented by the gourmet meals prepared by Chef Chad Sanders, a member of the Bloomington congregation.

On Friday evening everyone was on their feet, clapping out rhythms and beating drums under the gentle guidance of Oforiwa Aduonum. Dr. Oforiwa, a native African and Assistant Professor of Music at Illinois State, brought a large collection of her African drums and accessories for us to experience. She mesmerized us with her powerful stories and had an innate ability to make all of us feel like experienced drummers.

Saturday morning our keynote speaker, Ruth Jacquot, PhD, guided a group of women through Ewing Park to enjoy the birds and the woods. Later she led all of us through her journey and shared how she has tried to be "Open to Life's Possibilities". It was an engaging presentation that helped us reflect on the many opportunities and choices we make throughout our lives. We are often challenged to be open to new adventures and to take the risks that may come our way in order to reach our fullest potential.

Workshops included the financial plight of older women, the history of aprons and the UUWF Clara Barton Internship for Women's Issues housed in the UUA Washington Office. The business meeting incorporated a discussion on the future of the district UUWF and the appointment of a task force to look at structure. The closing ceremony found many participants eagerly awaiting the retreat next year!

CMWD UUWF Task Force 2003

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Joanne Fought	2232 N. Elmwood Ave	Peoria	IL	61604	309.685.5923	joannefought@aol.com
Pat Goller	1331 W. Glenn Ave	Springfield	IL	62704	217.787.0687	dome@interserv.com
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Rosemary Sammons	1501 Bristol	Westchester	IL	60154	708.345.1981	
Mary Lou Steadman	5 Lily Lane	Bloomington	IL	61701	309.661.8762	dambaw6@aol.com
Sue Thom	429 Macon Ave	Romeoville	IL	60448	815.886.6123	lilythom@aol.com

FOR MEMBERSHIP DUES PAYMENT,
SEND \$10 CHECK PAYABLE TO CMWD-UUWF

MEMBERSHIP DUES, SEND TO:

Rosemary Sammons
1501 Bristol Ave.
Westchester IL. 60154

ADDRESS CHANGE: SEND UPDATE TO:

Betty Jachim
6341 Blackhawk Trail
Indian Head Park, IL 60525

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

CMwD-UUWF Annual Meeting and Spring Conference

April 2-4, 2004

Radisson Hotel ~ Bloomington, IL

RCRC/Illinois

Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice in Illinois

Besides our regular networking and legislative monitoring duties, we've busy handling the grants we've received from CFW (the Chicago Foundation for Women). After submitting the report on our second grant under the "Our Voices, Our Choices" Reproductive Rights Initiative, we were able to secure a third grant, for \$6000, to continue and extend our outreach to and for women of color, where education on sexuality and reproductive choices often faces both cultural and religious obstacles.

On August 16th, a Girl's and Women's Health Fair will be held in Ford Heights, IL with the cooperation of God Can Ministries, Planned Parenthood, South Suburban Family Shelter and various health care organizations. There will be free presentations on abstinence, birth control, HIV/AIDS, healthy love and domestic violence. The Cook County Health Department will provide free HIV testing. Other health oriented groups will also be represented. This is an interesting mix of advocates and providers that doesn't often come together. In other words, "Can we talk about it?"

On October 18th a seminar, "The Black Church and African American Women on Reproductive Rights", a gathering of African American women, will be convened to explore the biblical, theological, ethical, moral and spiritual dimensions of reproductive rights. Participation will be "by invitation only" and limited to no more than one dozen participants (clergy, doctoral students, seminarians, and faculty/staff) from the greater Chicagoland area. The planning for this gathering is being coordinated by the Rev. Penny Willis, board member and Project Coordinator for RCRC, sponsoring agency, and project consultant, the Rev. Dr. Deborah F. Mullen, director of the African American Ministry Program, McCormick Theological Seminary.

The goal is to create space for African American women to share in conversation on the topic of the Black church and reproductive rights, one which is often not readily an open topic: so they may hear a variety of viewpoints and theological perspectives on the topic of women's rights to decide on reproductive issues and the role of the church in making such decisions; to educate and inform women in African American churches regarding faith-based responses to reproductive rights; and to talk about the need for a theologically informed statement on the Black Church and the Ethical/Moral Basis of Reproductive Rights for African American Women.

RCRC wishes to pay tribute to the memory of a very special man, Bill Carnall.

Though supposedly retired, he was still active in many causes. He was a true advocate for the Pro-Choice coalition, supporting us in both word and by marching with us. He was a very special friend to women. His finest contribution to them was that he coordinated and recruited others to escort women seeking reproductive health services at area clinics. He will be missed by those who knew him personally and also by those who knew him only as someone who walked beside them when they needed a friendly presence.

More Good Info for those interested in monitoring mergers of hospitals and health care facilities that may result in not so Choice-friendly institutions can be found via the Catholics for a Free Choice. They produce many reports of interest to us all because we are impacted by the institutions they cover. Two recent publications of special interest: Catholic Health Care State Reports: Illinois and Student Bodies: Reproductive Health Care at Catholic Universities. Try their website: www.catholicsforchoice.org for more info and available publications. Another good site that keeps up with potential and pending mergers is www.mergerwatch.org.

Save this Date

CFW the Chicago Foundation for Women Annual Luncheon and Symposium

Chicago Hilton and Towers – September 25, 2003

This year's keynote will be given by former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright. This annual convocation of people and organizations whose activities serve and support women and girls is a great opportunity for information gathering and networking. The funds raised here help make possible the grants given to organizations such as RCRC. Flyers and invitations will be available in August. You can reach them by phone at 312.266.1176, by fax at 312.266.0990, or via info@cfw.org.



Sources of Wisdom

CMwD- UUWF ~Fall Retreat~ November 7-9, 2003

*There are many different sources of wisdom,
and different kinds of wisdom at different life stages.*

Set aside a quiet time for discernment and reflection on the shores of Lake Geneva, Wisconsin.

In a variety of workshops, **experience** intellectual, kinesthetic, emotional and spiritual paths to explore your own wisdom.

Our **keynote** speaker will be the Reverend Jacque Meli, recently ordained at the North Shore Unitarian Church of Deerfield, IL. She writes, "Within the pages of the Hebrew/Christian scriptures, there is a feminine face of the divine. She is Sophia/Wisdom. This feminine form of the divine can speak to us still today."

* CORRECTIONS * CORRECTIONS * CORRECTIONS *

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The following are corrections to the Lake Geneva Fall Conference Brochure:

~ There is an error in the brochure for the fall retreat, "Sources of Wisdom". It was erroneously stated that Ann Nick is a conference committee chair, when in fact Ann is chair of the Ritual Committee. Please direct all your conference inquiries to Karen Tajbl, tajbl@mindspring.com (847-520-0075).

~ Workshop(B), "Awakening Intuition through the Arts" with Sue Sinnamon, will be a full three-hour workshop from 1:00 -4:00.

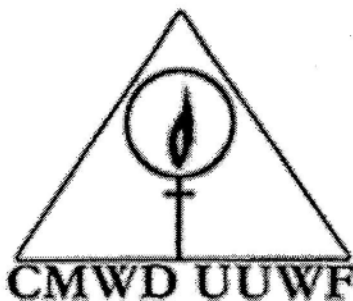
~ The "Dreamshop" workshop will be exclusively conducted by Sandy Drenth.

~ Registrations are processed on a first come, first served basis, so get your registrations in early for the best chance at getting your choice of housing and workshops.

Voice of Women
Central Midwest District
Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation
6341 Blackhawk Trail
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This newsletter is a special benefit of membership in CMWD UUWF. Your renewal date is indicated on your address label. If you do not see a date, you need to join right away to keep receiving the VOW.



UU Women
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