



Voices of Women

UU Women's Connection Newsletter

Summer 2009

Fall on the Lake (November 6-8)

Featured Speaker /Musician/Storyteller

Rev. Dr. Rebecca Armstrong is a minister, musician and mythologist. She is a second-generation folk singer and storyteller raised in Chicago by George and Gerry Armstrong, often called “the mom and pop” of the Chicago folk music scene. She appears on numerous recordings and has performed all over the world,



including South Africa where she was privileged to open for Nelson Mandela's acceptance speech of a world peace award during the 1999 Parliament of the World's Religions. She is a featured speaker in the recent film “*Never Turning Back.*”

Further information about the 2009 fall retreat at Lake Geneva can be found on page two, **Fall 2009 on the Lake.**

“What Women Want” DVD Offer

Thanks to panel discussions taped at the 2008 Lake Geneva Fall retreat the UU Women's Connection is happy to offer a DVD, “What Women Want” featuring Dr. Nancy Vedder-Shults, 2008 Fall Retreat Keynote; Dr. Holly Kerr, Northshore UU Church member and activist in Deerfield, Illinois and Elizabeth Marsh, Urbana, Illinois, University of Illinois 2008-9 Channing-Murray Foundation intern.

Panelists respond to a variety of questions posed by Delinda Chapman, veteran program host of the “Learning Curve”, which she has been produced in Springfield, Illinois for 9 years. The three “What Women Want” programs aired in Springfield this year are now being offered to other local public access stations and CMwD congregations or women's groups. Requests for the DVD may be submitted to VOW editor, Pat Goller. Make your request by e-mail.

Connections@uuwomensconnection.org

Mailing/duplication fee is \$3.00.

Spring Conference Notes

Not only were there the usual attractions--scenic and natural setting, relaxing, stress-free time with sisters, thought provoking ideas at Pilgrim Park Retreat Center near Princeton, Illinois, there was time to play games, walk the trails, shop the auction items and book store, get a massage or even nap throughout the laid back weekend. Thank you is due to all those who created workshops and other programming at the weekend conference. Linda Haynes, Eugena Austin of Virden, Illinois and Diana DeWeese of Springfield, Illinois conducted creative workshops in card making, painting and sewing on Saturday. Pat Goller and Bonnie Gudat, Springfield and Chillicothe, Illinois respectively, provided a “make and take” station called “Digging in the Dirt” for gardeners and plant lovers. Kate Magrath from Eliot UU Chapel in St Louis facilitated “Singing in Sacred Circle”.

Thank you to Jennifer Evans of Oak Park, Illinois, Unity Temple UU Congregation who facilitated a Margaret Fuller Conversation and tea on Saturday afternoon and Kathy Kline, Decatur, Illinois UU Church who led Sunday Worship.

Thanks also to Rosemary Sammons who reported on her adventure at the Texas Women's Convocation at the Friday opener and to Dorothy Brumbaugh, Joliet, Illinois UU Church who created and hosted an entertaining Coffee House/open mic on Saturday evening. Velaine Carnell and Betty Mathias of the Hinsdale, Illinois UU Church, facilitated the retreat's traditional Silent Auction. There were many fun offerings at the auction and book sale this year thanks to conference participants.

Does your congregation or organization need help defining or redefining its mission? Rev. Dr. David Owen O'Quill, conference keynote, might just be the person to help. In his Saturday keynote address, "Mission to the Generations" and in a follow up workshop on Saturday morning he discussed how church, religion and culture are "revolving together in these chaotic times." Mission is not about the organization ringing the "same old bells" calling people to worship on Sunday when many are alienated from the church as an institution. Organizations and congregations must look to the core of commitment and bring the mission to the present. It is character building, leadership and content driven and looks at cultural issues. It is about connection.

Want to find out more about David's consulting service or Micah's Porch, a new church launch with a Unitarian Universalist mission to an emerging generation of postmodern un-churched young adults of urban Wicker Park Chicago to which he is minister?

www.MicahsPorch.org

To Be or Not To Be? Many conversations over the spring conference weekend revolved around the conference's falling registration numbers at the Pilgrim Park Center over the past few years and the viability of continuing in the 52nd year. But with the input from Dr. O'Quill and the promise of women who attended to bring at least one friend with them next spring Connection Council committed to holding the conference next year. A spa weekend to pamper registrants and planners alike for the weekend is being considered.

Keynote and theme for the 2010 spring weekend will be announced soon on the UU Women's Connection website:

www.uuwomensconnection.org

GIRLFRIEND GETAWAY Mark your calendar and plan to attend the Spring Conference, June 4-6, 2010 for a relaxing weekend of sheer pampering with your girlfriends on the retreat's 52nd year. Take advantage of the most reasonably priced CMwD retreat and the newly offered payment plan to make this spring escape a possibility for you. Scholarships, first-time attendance and childcare greets are available for both UU Women's Connection fall and spring conferences.

Fall 2009 On Lake Geneva It is What it is....

By Jennifer Evans,
Oak Park Planning Committee Chair

Don't miss the UU Women's Connection Fall Retreat November 6-9, 2009--"**It is What it Is...healing in hard times**" presented by the women of Unity Temple UU Congregation of Oak Park with Keynote speaker Rev. Rebecca Armstrong a well known minister, musician, and mythologist. (See page one.)

Rev. Armstrong's keynote "**LIVING THE GOLDEN YEARS - WITHOUT THE GOLD! Peering into the pot at the end of the Rainbow with new eyes**" will look to ancestral wisdom especially to the Wise Old Woman to peer into the possible future we are creating. She will dig into the treasure trove of myth and fairytales while exploring the highly charged symbolism of gold through story and song.

Experience the healing power of stories with us.

The retreat will also feature a medicine wheel as a woman's lifecycle journey. The medicine wheel was created by women from Unity Temple drawing on many Native American traditions. (Continued)

2009 Fall Retreat The planning committee is excited to showcase this emotionally moving ritual that has become a staple for our own women's group and is a new experience with each use.

We'll also offer experts from Yerkes Observatory, healing workshops, women's ware vendors, drumming, bonfires, and relaxation in the beautiful natural setting of George Williams College/Aurora University Campus and retreat center on Lake Geneva at Williams Bay, Wisconsin.

Thanks and Tip o' the Hat to the Berrien UU Fellowship of St Joseph, Michigan who hosted the Connection Council for its Spring Quarterly meeting. Not only did Gretchen Ohmann of the St Jo fellowship offer home hospitality to six women of the council, she arranged and hosted a Margaret Fuller Conversation Salon at the fellowship hall on the evening of May 9th. Councilors also attended Sunday Service and stopped by a farmer's stand for some great Michigan asparagus before heading home!

Carrot to New York Representative

In an announcement on July 21, 2009 the National Organization for Women welcomed the reintroduction of the **Equal Rights Amendment** and the renewal of a national dialogue regarding women's equality. "We applaud Rep. Carolyn Maloney (D-N.Y.) for her dedication and commitment in working tirelessly to help women achieve constitutional equality. Throughout the history of this country, women have faced systematic and purposeful discrimination. Women were conspicuously absent from the U.S. Constitution when it was drafted more than 200 years ago, and today, women still have no explicit legal guarantee of equal protection. While the 14th Amendment to the Constitution is commonly believed to be a source of protection for women, the amendment was not drafted to ensure legal protection from sex discrimination, and the 14th amendment does not provide women with sufficient legal remedies for sex discrimination. As such, we know the ERA must be ratified to ensure meaningful and lasting equality for all women."

Summer Reading and Movie List

Compiled at 2009 Spring Conference, Pilgrim Park Retreat Center, Princeton, Illinois

BOOKS:

March by Geraldine Brooks

The Flux: Women on Sex, Work, Love, and Life in a Half Changed World
by Peggy Orenstein

The Bitch in the House: Women Tell the Truth, Solitude, Work, Motherhood, and Marriage
by Cathi Hanaur

Loving Frank: A Novel by Nancy Horan

Towing Jehovah by James Morrow

The Shadow of the Wind
by Carlos Ruiz Zafon

Twilight Sage by Stephenie Meyer

The Gospel of Jesus: According to the Jesus Seminar Editor: The Jesus Seminar

Aquarian Gospel by Levitt Dowling

Olive Kitteridge by Elizabeth Stout

MOVIES:

"Mama Mia"

"Star Trek"

"The Visitor"

"Dogma"

"UP"

"Waltzing With Bashir"

Book Review

American Bloomsbury by Susan Cheever

Simon & Schuster, December 2006

Review taken from Publisher Comments

Even the most devoted readers of nineteenth - century American literature often assume that the men and women behind the masterpieces were as dull and staid as the era's static daguerreotypes.

Susan Cheever's latest work, American Bloomsbury however, brings new life to the well-known literary personages who produced such cherished works as *The Scarlet Letter*, *Moby-Dick*, *Walden*, and *Little Women*.
(Continued)

BOOK REVIEW Rendering in full color the tumultuous, often scandalous lives of these volatile and vulnerable geniuses; Cheever's dynamic narrative reminds us that, while these literary heroes now seem secure of their spots in the canon, they were once considered avant-garde, bohemian types, at odds with the establishment. These remarkable men and women were so improbably concentrated in placid Concord, Massachusetts, that Henry James referred to the town as the "biggest little place in America." Among the host of luminaries who floated in and out of Concord's "American Bloomsbury" as satellites of the venerable intellect and prodigious fortune of Ralph Waldo Emerson were Henry David Thoreau -- perpetual second to his mentor in both love and career; Louisa May Alcott -- dreamy girl and ambitious spinster; Nathaniel Hawthorne -- dilettante and cad; and Margaret Fuller -- glamorous editor and foreign correspondent.

Perhaps inevitably, given the smallness of the place and the idiosyncrasies of its residents, the members of the prestigious circle became both intellectually and romantically entangled: Thoreau serenaded an infatuated Louisa on his flute. Vying with Hawthorne for Fuller's attention, Emerson wrote the fiery feminist love letters while she resided (yards away from his wife) in his guest room. Herman Melville was, according to some, ultimately driven mad by his consuming and unrequited affection for Hawthorne. Far from typically Victorian, this group of intellectuals, like their British Bloomsbury counterparts to whom the title refers, not only questioned established literary forms, but also resisted old moral and social strictures.

Thoreau, of course, famously retreated to a plot of land on Walden Pond to escape capitalism, pick berries, and ponder nature. More shocking was the group's ambivalence toward the institution of marriage. Inclined to bend the rules of its bonds, many of its members spent time at the notorious commune, Brook Farm, and because liberal theories could not entirely guarantee against jealousy, the tension of real or imagined infidelities was always near the surface.

Susan Cheever reacquaints us with the sexy, subversive side of Concord's nineteenth-century intellectuals, restoring in three dimensions the literary personalities whose work is at the heart of our national history and cultural identity.

Intern Pursues Parish Ministry

Elizabeth Marsh, Starr King ministerial student, 2008-09 Channing - Murray Foundation* intern on the University of Illinois Urbana campus and "What Women Want" panelist at the 2008 Lake Geneva Fall Retreat will be serving as an intern minister during the 2009-2010 church year at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Rockville, Maryland. She will be participating in the full life of the congregation, including worship and preaching, pastoral care, administration, and religious education. Elizabeth hopes to pursue a UU parish ministry.



UU PRAYER? Elizabeth, a woman of many talents and interests conducted a workshop at Lake Geneva 2008 called "Prayer of Transformation" in which participants explored the ways of maintaining a practice of prayer that might change us and therefore have an effect in our world. "Prayer can often be a misunderstood and confusing topic, especially among Unitarian Universalists" according to Elizabeth. "Does there need to be another entity to whom we pray? Or is prayer more for the person praying than the entity 'receiving' it?" (See prayer created at the fall retreat on the next page.)

**For more information about the one-of-a-kind ministry of the Channing-Murray Foundation at the University of Illinois in Urbana check out the Foundation's website: www.channing-murray.org*

The following is the **fall retreat prayer** written by Elizabeth Marsh's 2008 Lake Geneva Fall Retreat workshop participants:

Healing Goddess, Loving Mother, Eternal Presence.

We have come together in community, acknowledging that our actions fall short of living our spiritual values.

Help us in our daily struggles, that we may be mindful of our covenants, and be open to new visions of life, light, and love that pervade the universe.

We are thankful for the sisters who create our sacred space in every moment.

*Thank you Healing Goddess
Thank you Loving Mother
Thank you Eternal Presence*

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*"Prayer does not change things; prayer changes people and people change things."  
--Lon Ray Call*

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## Congratulations to Nicole and Cory

UU Women's Connection Treasurer, Nicole Lisk, was married June 20, 2009 to Cory Nichols.



*Nicole and Cory Nichols in their first dance as Mr. & Mrs.*

## Carbondale Unitarian...Here we come!

Women of the Carbondale Illinois Unitarian Fellowship, fresh from the early Spring UU Women's Convocation in Austin, Texas set out to see what programming they could find for the women of their congregation in CMwD. The Connection Council, it just so happened, was planning their annual council retreat and 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter meeting there in August. Connection Councilors present a variety of programs to host congregations at their quarterly meetings. Just added to the programming bag of tricks, they will present a brand new session from the recently released *Cakes for the Queen of Heaven. On the Threshold*, part two of the breakout feminist curriculum by Rev. Shirley Ranck. They will also help prepare these women to present the full curriculum parts I and II. For information and details about attending the August 15th program at the Carbondale Unitarian Fellowship check the Connection website for time, date and details:

[www.uuwomensconnection.org](http://www.uuwomensconnection.org)

***One must live in the middle of contradiction,  
...there are simply no answers to some of  
the great pressing questions. You continue  
to live them out, making your life a worthy  
expression of leaning into the light.***

--Barry Lopez, *Arctic Dreams*

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

It is, if your mailing label shows a date earlier than November 2009. Include recent update below and send check made to "UU Women's Connection" to Treasurer, Nicole Nichols, 1461 Meadowside Drive, St Louis, Missouri, 63146.

**SPECIAL MEMBERSHIP OFFER IN 2009: "9 for \$9 in 2009" Register units of nine or more in 2009 for only \$9 each member. Individual memberships are \$10.**



#### Membership/Mailing List Update

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

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ E-MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Clip and send.

#### "Get Connected" Calendar

- |                |                                                                                                                              |
|----------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| August 7-9     | Women & Religion<br>Summer Woman Spirit<br>Renora Lodge & Retreat Center<br>Watervliet, MI.                                  |
| August 14-16   | UU Women's Connection<br>3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter Council Meeting &<br>Council Annual Retreat<br>Carbondale, IL               |
| August 15      | <b><i>Cakes II: On the Threshold<br/>Train-the-Trainers Seminar</i></b><br>Carbondale Unitarian<br>Fellowship                |
| November 6-8   | <b>2009 Annual Meeting<br/>Lake Geneva Fall Retreat</b><br>Geo. Williams/Aurora Univ.<br>Retreat Center<br>Williams Bay, WI. |
| June 4-6, 2010 | UU Women's Connection<br>Spring Conference 2010<br>Pilgrim Park Retreat Center<br>Princeton, IL.                             |