

Voice Of Women

Central Midwest District
Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation

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Fall/Winter 1991/2

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

When I think about UUWF I always wonder what happened at that first Universalist Women's group when they decided that they wanted some funds of their own to do with as they thought important. I wonder if the church board in that church decided to take the money given by the women to buy new stained glass windows when the women wanted a new stove. Did some male board member object to their desire for support for special charities? Were the women made aware of the power of women after the wonderful work of the Civil War Sanitary Commission which was introduced and highly supported by women. The leadership names might be male but the real force was the women.

Were they inspired by the work of Mother Byckerdyke from Galesburg? Here was a woman that General Grant told his officers "outranks me". Were they concerned about appalling conditions among immigrants, deeply concerned about 12 to 14 hour days worked by children as young as five years old, deeply moved by the lack of improvement in "insane asylums" following the work of pioneer Dorothea Dix or were they just sharing the huge impetus that the Suffrage Movement gave to most American women?

Do we need such independence today? It is interesting to see that more and more of the leadership of churches and district is drawn from women. Do we still have special needs for communication and independent action? Are there areas in which women's special problems need to be addressed? Do we need conferences and retreats where women can share experiences, make friends, and enjoy support from women they would not otherwise have a chance to meet? If the answer is yes, are we willing to support such programs with our memberships and contributions of time?

As an "old timer" at Allerton Conferences, I remember well the conference on Abortion, the first ever held by a group of church women. It was such an untouchable subject at the time that we really felt that we were on dangerous and fearful ground. Yet since then the nation has changed its opinion. Now the "right" to an abortion is being challenged. There is more need than ever before for women to reinforce those who would protect that right!

A new year has begun for CMD-UUWF, a new year demands new resolutions, approaches, and interests. Nothing is static so we are forced into new ways of looking at things. Our new board will review the old year. We hope that you, the membership, will tell us what changes you want and what new topics too discuss. It is the duty of the Board to carry out the wishes of the membership, but we must know what those wishes are.

Do you want..

continuation of the Lake Geneva and Allerton Conferences?
A new District project. If so, what project? CMD-UUWF acting as
a Clearing House for women's affairs? Closer relations with
Continental UUWF? Or do we want to know more about the wider
world and what should be our place and responsibility as women in
the new order? Do we need to deepen our knowledge of the
problems of women across the world? Are we the women who need to
gather and learn more of our responsibility.

As we look at the events of this August in Russia we must face
the fact that the world is changing faster than we can follow.
Last year on a trip to Russia and Siberia I was constantly
reminded of the awing problems that a change to a more democratic
society would bring. But I did not imagine the split up of the
Soviet Union. I realized how difficult it would be to start a
business when there is no system of supply. I did not see long
lines (except for McDonalds and Elizabeth Arden) but I was deeply
distressed by stories of waste. One of the most interesting was
the story of the man who was called into Russia to direct a farm
operation growing tomatoes. When they were ready to ship he was
told by the trucking section that it would be two weeks before
trucks could be sent to pick up the tomatoes. It took many days
to ship the tomatoes and by the time they got to market they were
nothing but mush. Another was a story that about 1/3 of the
wheat crop being "lost in transit", improperly harvested and
taken by the black market. Recent reading on China makes me even
more aware of the problems of just feeding the world population,
let alone providing a decent standard of living. Recently I read
that the present population of the world was as large as the
number of all people who had lived in earlier generations. This
number may be vastly exaggerated or correct, but we know that the
pressure is great and increasing daily. Should we be concerned?
Should we be studying the problem? Are we the people who will
seek new answers or will we leave it completely to the
"professionals".

Some of us who are older have lived through the most fantastic
expansion of conveniences, travel, and standard of living in the
history of the world, When women had the right to vote, women
thought that the problems of the country and the world would be
solved. Alas, the human condition seems to create two more
problems for every one solved. Are the Unitarian Universalist
women the people to stay on the tip of the spear, to solve the
new problems or have we been there long enough?

Yours is the decision. Please let us hear from you!

Sincerely,

Ruth Davis

New High in Per Capita Sales
(Report on Silent Auction)

An enthusiastic crowd of thirty-six eager women hovered over the Silent Auction table during the three day conference at Allerton in June. True to the adage "one persons 'junk' is another persons treasure" - there was a great variety of both.

What delights could be found at the Silent Auction - a real tradition in Allerton's Program? Why, just a little bit of everything - books, puzzles, stationery, car seat covers, coasters, handmade items, ornaments, colognes - as you can see a variety of wonderful goodies.

Everyone involved is to be commended. Many thanks to those who brought the treasures. Even more thanks to those who helped with the mechanics of the auction and accolades to those wonderful persons who bid on the items.

The end result? An impressive \$204.55 was taken in to add to the CMD-UUWF coffers. Thanks again to everyone. It's a reasonably painless way to bring in some extra money.

It's never too early to line these items up for next June's auction. Mark a shopping bag and fill it as the year goes on. See you at Allerton next June!

Rossann Baker-Priestley

CONGRATULATIONS!

Gloria B. Grimm was presented with the first W. W. Ross Award during a church service last June at the St. Louis Church's service. This award recognizes individuals who have given exemplary institutional service to the church. This award was established last year in honor of one of their members Bill Ross who served the St. Louis church as Treasurer for 31 years.

CMD-UUWF 1991 Spring Retreat at Lake Geneva

We enjoyed our contributors and getting together in spiritual growth at the CMD-UUWF 1991 Spring Retreat.

It is important that CMD Women & Religion Task force be visible in the district. Please acknowledge contributions of their members:

Janet Nortrum - opening
Peg Carlson - storytelling
Marilla Missbach and Judy Holman - Ritual and How to design our own.

To our readers,

If you have questions in certain areas please contact the following Board members:
Marilla - Cooperating Organizations
Melinda - Continental UUWF
Mina - Local UUWF Units (How can we help?)
Lorraine - C.M.D. Budget & Finance
See addresses on back.

Also, please bare with me, this is my first time ever collecting and editing the V.O.W. newsletter. (I have typed it before when Marion Baker was the editor.) I am also learning how to create a newsletter using WordPerfect 5.1. Your editor, Susan.

Meadville/Lombard Theological School News

A luncheon reception was held for two outstanding UU women who received a honorary degree from Meadville/Lombard Theological School. Natalie Gulbrandsen and Jewel Graham were the guests of honor. Both women have been major contributors to the UU movement. Conversation followed the luncheon with the two women which provided an opportunity to meet Natalie and Jewel and to hear their reflections-- as women, as laywomen, and as Unitarian Universalist laywomen.

Among the many accomplishments of these two special women; Jewel is trained as both a social worker and as an attorney and is presently the Director of the Institute of Human Development at Antioch College. She is a former member of the Meadville/Lombard board of Trustees and currently a member of the UUA's Social Concerns Grants Panel. Natalie is our UUA Moderator and has served as the President of the UU Women's Federation and as an Officer of the International Association for Religious Freedom.

NEEDED - YOUR INPUT!!!

The three 1992 Allerton co-chairs tallied your responses to our questionnaire sent out in September. We attained a 40% return. Thanks.

We have a few leaderless workshop ideas: friendships, leading a more balanced life, getting in touch with a higher spirituality, medical ethics, strung looms, my grandmother's bracelets, past life regressions, and geneology. Call or write to any of us with your suggestions!

Fall Retreat 1991 - the bad news....

Despite what you may have heard, the CMD-UUWF is sorry to say that we are not offering a retreat this fall. Why, you ask? The reason is that we offered a spring retreat this year instead as some of you will fondly remember.

Fall Retreat 1992 - the good news....

The good news is that we will offer a fall retreat in 1992 PROVIDED that we can get a committee or chairperson to volunteer to plan and execute the fall retreat.

For those of you who are unfamiliar with our fall retreats they are held annually during late October or early November at Lake Geneva in Williams Bay, Wisconsin.

If you are interested in planning the retreat please contact Sandy Drenth at 708-479-2679 in Mokena, IL as soon as possible.

Allerton 1992

...more good news...

Three co-chairs, Rossann Baker-Priestley, Betty Jachim, and Susan Karcher enthusiastically invite women of the CMD-UUWF to attend the annual meeting and conference at the beautiful Allerton Park in Monticello, IL.

The dates are June 16, 17, and 18, 1992. The title of this years conference is Choices: Allerton 1992.

Why should you go, you ask? Some reasons are: for fun, support, enrichment, camaraderie, spirituality, and a whole lot more. Watch for the details in this Spring's V.O.W.

!!!NEXT V.O.W. DEADLINE IS APRIL 1, 1992 FOR THE SPRING/SUMMER ISSUE!!!!!!

1991 - 1992
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