

Womanspirit

NEWSLETTER OF THE FLORIDA DISTRICT UU WOMEN & RELIGION COMMITTEE

VOLUME 4, NUMBER 3

SPECIAL EDITION: UUWF BIENNIAL AND GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Florida Women Take Active Parts in UUWF Biennial

by Barbara Child, Member,
Biennial Planning Committee

Florida is preparing to welcome the continental UU Women's Federation to its Biennial Meeting at the Bahia Mar in Ft. Lauderdale on June 17-19. The Biennial Planning Committee is grateful to the many Florida women who are working to help make the Biennial a success.

Special thanks go to Phyllis McKenzie, our "Ft. Lauderdale connection," who is serving as chief on-site scout, trouble shooter, volunteer coordinator, and asker of all the right questions!

Thanks to Dee Graham, Susan Stephenson, and Carolyn Taylor, who will be leading workshops at the Biennial; to Amy Jo Smith, who will be welcoming participants at the Ingathering on behalf of Florida W & R; and again to Susan and Carolyn, who are designing rituals for the Ingathering and worship service on June 17.

Finally, thanks to the others who have speaking parts in the Ingathering and worship service: Joyce King, Pam Leavy, Harriet Little, Sandra Schulman, Jean Siegfried, Cathy Stanton, Carol Vogel, and Nancy Young.



Florida W & R To Be Represented on Panel at G.A.

Marilyn Genile, Chair of the Continental Women and Religion Committee, has asked Barbara Child, Co-chair of the Florida District Women and Religion Committee, to join her in speaking on a panel at General Assembly in June. The other panelists will be Kay Aler-Maida, the new President of the UU Women's Federation, and Denny Davidoff. The subject of the panel is how women can change the UU denomination. This panel will take place on Monday, June 24 at 2:30. It will be part of Monday afternoon's Gender Issues Track.

Update on Biennial Worship Service

The UU Women's Federation Biennial Planning Committee invited the Florida District W & R Committee to put on the Ingathering and worship service for the first evening of the Biennial meeting, June 17, at the Bahia Mar in Ft. Lauderdale.

Those who were planning to attend the Biennial met during the Spring Conference in Tampa to begin designing the service. Since then Susan Stephenson and Carolyn Taylor have been designing rituals for the service, including a Ritual of Banishment and Reclamation and a Ritual for the Radical Quest, in keeping with the theme of the Biennial.

All of the people who have volunteered for the speaking parts in the service will be receiving a full script in the mail shortly.

We need more Florida women to take part too. If you have a drum, please come and bring it. Also, we need women with rattles and other noise makers for the banishment ritual. And we need women to participate in the chanting. In short, we need you! Please come. If you want to take part:

1. Come to rehearsal at 3:30 p.m., June 17. Check at the Biennial information desk to learn where.

2. Bring white clothes to wear for the service Mon. evening, June 17.

Questions? Write or call Barbara Child, 4240 NW 77 Terr, Gainesville, FL 32606, 904-377-8945.

Scholarships for UUWF Biennial

----Apply Now----

Please send completed form to Amy Jo Smith, 2427 NW 104 Ct., Gainesville, FL 32606.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Day Phone: _____

Evening Phone: _____

UU Society: _____

\$_____ received as scholarship from Florida District Women & Religion since 7-1-90

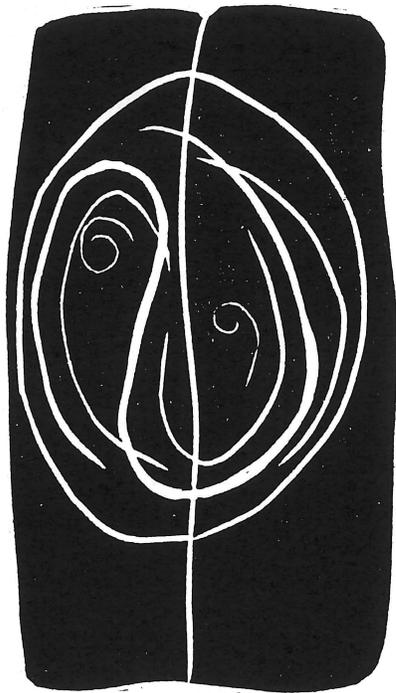
Have you applied to the UUWF for a scholarship for the Biennial? _____

Please attach additional sheets as needed to answer these questions:

1. Please describe your financial situation. Include information such as monthly income and expenses, how many people (including you) are supported by that income, and any special circumstances that contribute to your need for financial assistance.

2. How much can you pay for your Biennial expenses? How much can you raise from other sources such as your church or women's group? How much are you asking from W & R?

3. If you receive a scholarship, how will you commit yourself to share the Biennial experience back home?



Is There Life After "Cakes"?

by Cathy Stanton

There definitely is! This G.A. Workshop of the Women and Religion Committee will be chaired by Cathy Stanton, Committee Representative from Melbourne, Cocoa and Vero Beach.

Following the "Cakes for the Queen of Heaven" curriculum, many UU women bonded into groups that wished to further explore this new/ancient spiritual quest. The results were many, and exciting in several ways.

This workshop will be a sharing of experiences into this "new" territory, plus some very special opening and closing ceremonies.

Men are also invited to share this special workshop. Many of you are also on a quest for spiritual growth, and the women welcome you.

Florida W & R Display at UUWF Biennial

The Florida District Women and Religion Committee will have a display at the UUWF Biennial in Ft. Lauderdale in June. Carolyn Taylor and a group from the St. Pete Area are working on a W and R Banner to travel on its maiden voyage to the Biennial for this display. Also on display will be the new Florida Women and Religion Committee brochures, a display copy of our Area Representatives' Handbook, and copies of *A Guide for Retreat Facilitators*, written by Barbara Child, which will be on sale at cost (\$5). This guide is free to anyone who leads a Florida W & R retreat or conference. It has also been given free of charge to the Florida District Religious Education Committee on behalf of the W & R Committee.

Pictures, Please!

Did you go to the Spring conference in Tampa? Yes? Lucky you. Did you take pictures? Yes? Then, lucky everyone if you would be willing to donate some to the Women and Religion scrapbook. We would especially like pictures of Kay Aler-Maida, of Carol Graywing, and of groups of women. Thanks for sharing. Please send pictures to Barbara Child, 4240 NW 77th Terrace, Gainesville, FL 32606.

The Thirteen Commandments

Thou shalt not love men before Women.

**Thou shalt not make an idol of any man,
nor bow down to him, nor serve him.**

**Thou shalt not take any Female word in
vain, but respect the Name of Woman in
all its forms.**

**Remember the cycles of the Moon and of
the Seasons, they are the holy rhythms of
Death and Life.**

**Honor thy Mothers and thy Sisters, that
the strength of their love make long thy
days upon the Earth.**

Thou shalt not instigate violence.

Thou shalt not make of thyself a victim.

**Thou shalt not seek profit by causing any
Woman's loss.**

**Thou shalt not bind thyself for life to any
person without love and mutual benefit.**

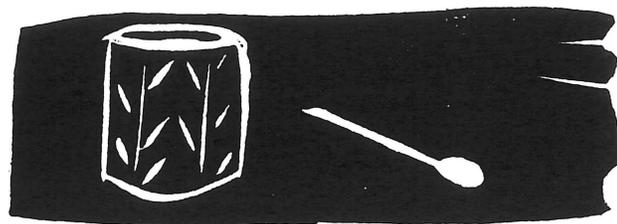
**Thou shalt not bear the false witness of
Women's inferiority against thy Sisters.**

**Thou shalt not covet the rewards given by
men for Women's weakness.**

**Thou shalt love the Earth and thy Body
with all thy Heart, Mind, Soul, and
Strength.**

Thou shalt not suffer patriarchy to live.

--Lydia Alexander



Celebrating the Spirit of Man and Woman

led by Carolyn Taylor

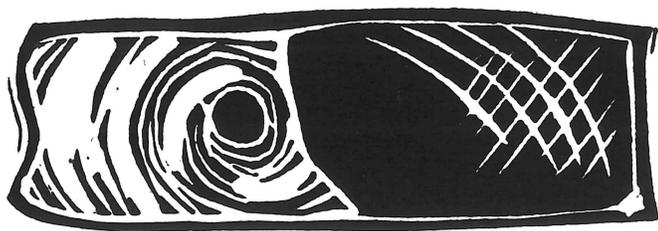
Thirty participants gathered with drumming and chanting to open the workshop for Women and Religion at the Florida District meeting in Tallahassee, April 18. The circle was cast as the talking stick was passed to each person for opportunity to share something significant about themselves with the group.

The call to the South was for fire and passion as we emerge from the goddess, to the West for water and individuality as we go within ourselves for learning, to the North for Earth and community as we come together for common good, and to the East for air as we celebrate freedom of creativity and life.

Coyotes, skunks, hawks, and deer were among the animal medicine cards chosen by the women and men to symbolize their visions of personal power and connectedness to the Earth.

Persephone, Artemis, Athena, Hermes, Apollo, and Hades were some of the archetypes of goddesses and gods that each person used to describe themselves to the group.

A joyous and rousing dance with drumming and chanting closed this workshop. All of us felt a closeness as we celebrated the coming together of men and women in a spiritual circle. Suggestions were made for future gatherings of women and men celebrating the spirit of life.





What Women Want

by Joan O'Hara

WE WANT -- Peace. Work. Love. Community. Health. Hope. Fairplay. Harmony. Understanding. Adequate and affordable housing. Money. Acceptance. Play. Strength. Sex. Opportunity. Joy. Children. Power. Nurturing. Jobs. Generosity of Spirit. Good relationships. Clean water and air. Wholesome food. Protection of Earth. WE WANT IT ALL!

So said the 55 women from 25 communities who met at the Tampa church on March 22-24 at the Annual Florida District Women's Conference. Ranging in age from teens through eighties, we gathered for the weekend planned and carried out by Nancy Young and co-workers who created a nourishing and harmonious atmosphere.

Through circles, ritual and chants led by Carol Graywing, we had an opportunity on Friday evening to begin to respond to the theme of the conference both in private and in shared times. We created a unique opportunity to honor women -- those among us who have gone before us. Carol encouraged us to connect, to empower, to heal, and to transform throughout our time together. Carol, who is the Vice-President elect of the UU Women's Federation, had joined us from Oakland, California. She shared with us her strong and joyous spirit.

Kay Aler-Maida is the President-elect of the UU Women's Federation and joined us from Brooklyn, New York. In her theme presentation, on Saturday morning she opened by stressing our need to recover and remember our history.

She urged us, as we work to transform our own lives and institutions, to consider sexism. "Sexism is power plus misogyny. Sexism is an issue that MEN must address. Women are the victims of sexism, not the cause."

Women do not want the old theology of hierarchy and scarcity, she stated. "We want a theology of mutuality and plenty. The issue is to change the world!"

Workshops proved opportunities to explore areas such as writing as a living tool, safe sex, the feminization of poverty, using feminine principles in leadership, the power of movement and dance in self-healing, using our creativity in setting our individual goals, clearing our congregations of gender exclusivity, the issue of the "glass ceiling" in the world of professional work, and the use of pottery as an ancient art form to connect us with our creative selves.

Saturday afternoon a trip to Eureka Springs Park provided us with an opportunity to do a silent "walk about." Later we shared our experiences with one another through dancing within our circle. Our spirits were lifted by Pat McGiverin's wonderful flute music and drumming by Diana Fraser, Susan Stephenson Hefte, and Carolyn Taylor.

Sunday morning at the regular church service the sermon titled "Not For Women Only" was given by Kay Aler-Maida. Following the service we circled, singing Carolyn McDade's "Spirit of Life" as we began to take home with us the nourishment of the weekend together.

A Busy Spring for Women and Religion

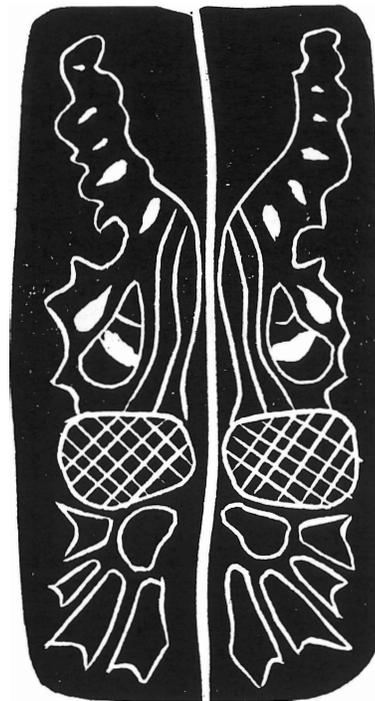
by Carolyn Taylor
St. Pete Area Representative

Seven beautiful young women were honored in a "coming of age" ceremony during the Sunday service at the Clearwater Church on April 28. The Wise Women" of the Church have served as teachers and mentors for this group of pre-teens for the past six weeks in preparation for this celebration.

As each girl's name was called she ascended, barefoot, wearing a beautiful costume that she had created, and carrying a rose. The chant "We All Come From the Goddess" was played in the background during the ceremony. A statement was made by each participant naming the goddess that she represented and the attributes that applied to her life as an individual. Coordinators for the classes and ceremony were Connie Goodbread, Mary Poole, and Wynn Wargo.

The UUWF and RE Committees of the UU Church of Sarasota sponsored an all-day workshop on April 13, with the theme "Women Together." Carolyn Taylor facilitated the workshop and Joan O'Hara was the local coordinator.

Through shared stories, ritual, mask-making, and drumming, the women and children celebrated Community. All ages were represented with our youngest drummer being one year old. A picnic lunch was shared at noon and the day was closed with a ritual parade of masks and music making.



Women from the United Fellowship celebrated their final session of "Cakes" by honoring each other at a gourmet dinner party. We wore hats, feather boas, party dresses, and lace stockings. Each woman's photograph was taken in front of Joyce King's antique organ.

Susan Stephenson and Diana Fraser, leaders of the group, led a closing ceremony inviting each participant to describe their future by imagining that they were being honored fifteen years from now at an awards dinner.

The group will continue meeting regularly in members' homes with women in the group sharing the leadership.

"Goddesses, Cowgirls and Wild Women" was the topic for a sermon given for Women's Sunday at the St. Petersburg Church, April 14. Carolyn Taylor was the guest speaker and artist of the month exhibiting original art in the form of goddess masks and liturgical weavings. Members of the Women's Group led by Emily Williams read personal statements describing their experience with the goddess. Life masks made by the women were also part of the art exhibit.

Prophetic Sisterhood **Study Group in** **Gainesville**

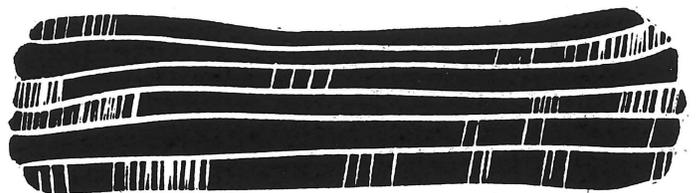
Cynthia Grant Tucker's book, *Prophetic Sisterhood*, was the subject of a 6-week study group in Gainesville, facilitated by Barbara Child. The book tells the story of 21 women who were Unitarian and Universalist ministers in the Plains states at the end of the last century. They nurtured their sometimes very large congregations as families. Some of them were married; others ministered with their female partners. Their stories are amazing tales of brave struggle and grand but short-lived success.

The book raises provocative questions about the relationship between patriarchy and liberal religion; about how ministering relates to teaching, mothering and social reform; and about how the personal is always political.

The Gainesville study group had in it 18 women and 2 men, including Jack Donovan, the minister of the UU Fellowship of Gainesville. After spending 4 weekly meetings discussing the book, the group spent 2 more meetings planning a worship service to share the fruits of their reading and discussion with the congregation. During the service, on March 3, several of the women in the group played the roles of some of the ministers. They were "interviewed" by a modern-day reporter. The service was taped, and the tape was sent to Cynthia Tucker.

Tucker has produced a study guide for her book. It is free to anyone who writes to her at the Department of English, Memphis State University, 463 Patterson Building, Memphis, TN 38152. This book is a "natural" for Women and Religion study groups. It is available from Beacon Press and the UUA Bookstore.

Please let Barbara Child know if you are interested to have a study group on the book. She will be glad to make available the study materials and group activity notes she produced for the Gainesville group. You can write to Barbara at 4240 NW 77th Terrace, Gainesville, FL 32606, or call 904-377-8945.



Messages from **WomanSpirit**

--The wonderful graphics in our newsletter are linoleum cuts by Mary Goolsby of Gainesville.

--If you have articles, poetry, comments, or anything else that you would like to have published in the newsletter, please send them to Amy Jo Smith, 2427 NW 104 Ct., Gainesville, FL 32606.

--The next issue will be coming out in the fall. The deadline for Amy Jo to receive material for that issue is October 6.

--The Florida District Women and Religion Committee has a new brochure describing our purpose and programs. If you haven't seen it, ask your Area Representative for a copy!

"Explorations and Discovery" To Be Theme of Fall Retreat

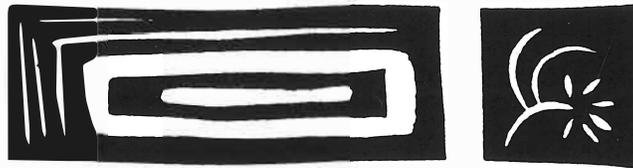
Focusing on what you want and how to get it.

The Women and Religion Florida District Fall Retreat will be held at UU in the Pines, September 27-29, 1991

Workshop Leader: Susan Stephenson has been facilitating experiential workshops, professionally and in UU settings, for many years. It is one of her great joys in life -- especially with Circles of Women. She brings an attitude of empowerment and spirituality to her work that she trusts will deepen and spread through the experience she offers.

Workshop Description: The Spring W & R Conference focused on "What Women Want" -- this retreat will give you a variety of ways to discover "How to Get It." We will use meditation, writing, movement, music, art and nature, paired and group activities, and plenty of opportunities to take time for yourself alone or with others to support your explorations.

Bring your journals, musical instruments, drums, comfortable shoes and clothes, bathing suit, linens, and openness in your heart. There will be an opportunity to sell your arts and crafts. Plan on a weekend designed for your pleasure.



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