



# WOMEN & RELIGION NEWSLETTER

Winter 2007

Barbara Vaughn, Editor

Facilitator's Circle: Nuala Carpenter, Randa Todd, Lois Morigan, Chris Higgins, Anne Slater, Alix Berenzy, Barbara Vaughn, Kay Woods, Heather Gehron-Rice

**Mission Statement:** Our mission, as women in community, is to explore our authentic selves, and to work to promote gender equity in our lives, our congregations, and in society

Kay Cox has been honored by admittance to the Clara Barton Sisterhood, created in 1979 by the UU Women's Federation to honor octogenarians and to recognize their contributions to the life of our religious association and women's organizations.



Kay Cox was chosen to be honored by the Women and Religion Committee of the Joseph Priestley District for her many contributions to the Unitarian Universalist community, including active membership in the First Unitarian Church of Philadelphia and its Women's alliance, which she served as president, and a role in founding the Unitarian Universalist Church of Delaware County, PA. Kay's service on the Joseph Priestley District Board of Directors and as a

chair and long time active member of the Women and Religion Committee has been greatly appreciated. The promotion of the curricula "Rise Up and Call Her Name" and "Cakes for the Queen of Heaven" has touched and continues to influence the lives of many women. Kay was involve with the reintroduction of these curricula to the women of the Unitarian Church of Harrisburg where she is now a Life Member as a result a new group – "Queen Spirit" was formed.

## Drumming workshop

Drumming workshop coming March 3<sup>rd</sup> at UU of Delaware County – 10:00 A.M. – 3:00 P.M. \$15.00 if you get your money in by Feb 21 or \$20.00 at the door. Bring your daughters for a great outing. Full details in enclosed flyer.

## JPD Spring Conference

W&R is planning a workshop entitled "30 Years of JPD W&R" at Spring conference which will be held at the Harrisburg Hilton, April 27-30. Please plan on joining us for good times.

Dear friends,

2007 brings the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Women and Religion Resolution. Passed unanimously at General Assembly in 1977, the resolution has created a Revolution among Unitarian Universalists – many More women ministers, a hymnal and a principles document both free of sexist language, new ways to worship, new theologies to ponder.

For General Assembly 2007 we plan to

- Offer a worship service to celebrate the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Women & Religion Resolution;
- Introduce a new revised and updated *Cakes for the Queen of Heaven* curriculum;
- Co-sponsor with UU Buddhists a Presentation by the Buddhist feminist, Rita Gross, “What Buddha Really Said About Gender”;
- Co-sponsor with UU Women’s Heritage Society the dramatic piece *Cady Stanton and The Women’s Bible*; and
- Hold an evening ritual to celebrate the past and envision the future for women.

In addition we are working on three major projects:

- International gathering of Unitarian Universalist women in 2009
- Women & Religion Herstory Project – Gathering resource to document the complete story of the impact of the Women & Religion Resolution on Unitarian Universalism
- Developing our organization capacity in order to better serve as a strong network of individual UU women and district organizations.

All of these events and projects require commitment Dedication and significant amounts of money! Please help us finance these important events and Projects! Tax deductible donations may be sent to: UU Women and Religion c/o Patti Clark, 3224 Timmons Lane #165, Houston, TX 77027

### Introducing Alex Berenzy

Alex Berenzy has been a member of the facilitator’s circle for 2 ½ years. She enjoys the company and creative working style of the circle.

She lives in Mt Airy, Philadelphia and is the author/illustrator of several children’s books. Her latest, *Sammy, the Classroom Guinea Pig*, was published in 2006. She practices kundalini yoga with her teacher Chandrase Kharanard Saraswati of India. Her other interests are women’s issues and the health of our planet.

### BEAUTY

Beauty is not a process  
Something to remain distant from  
Something foreign and fearful.

Beauty is not perfection  
Though it makes us gasp in awe  
It is not comparative.

Beauty is not a riddle.  
Unfathomable,  
A paradox to get lost in.

Beauty is refreshment:  
A pause, a relaxation,  
An acceptance of wonder.

Beauty is a challenge  
To open our eyes  
To see details and the whole  
To let it be.

By Barbara Vaughn

## **Drum out the doldrums! Beat away the blahs!**

The Facilitators' Circle of the  
Joseph Priestley District Women and Religion



invites the women of your congregation to

## **A Drumming Circle for Women**

*On Saturday, March 3, 2007*

Join Marcy Francis, Minister of Healing through Music, Movement and Touch at The Christian Association at Penn, as she and her professional team lead a drumming circle from **10 am to 2 pm on Saturday, March 3, 2007, at the UU Church of Delaware County (Media, PA: easy access from Route I 95 or I 476).**

Bring your sister, daughter or granddaughter over 10 years, a friend or neighbor to join you in learning the rhythms and sounds of the African traditions of drumming and whole-body involvement as a way to shake out unhappiness and suck in the unbridled joy of celebrating life!

**Pack a brown bag lunch** (drinks will be provided), wear loose clothes and comfortable shoes and bring your own hand-held rhythm or percussion instrument. If you don't own one, **Marcy will provide instruments** for you to use. Enjoy hours of drumming, dancing, and movement designed to imbue you with a happy, healthy spirit.

**Advance registration and payment (mail by February 21<sup>st</sup>)**

**\$15 per person, \$10 for your guest under 16 years;**

At the door, \$20 for adults, \$15 for 16 and under

Space limits us to 50 participants: sign up and pay now to be sure of your place!

**Send your check made out to The JPD of the UUA to Anne Slater, 2753 Morris Road, Ardmore, PA 19003**

Questions? call Anne at 610-896-6468

## *Directions from the North*

Take I-476 S to Exit #5 (old exit #3) Springfield, Lima, and Route 1. Make a right at the light onto Route 1 South. Go to the Route 252 exit. (second exit) Turn right at the top of the ramp onto Route 252. Immediately get into the left lane. Turn left at the first traffic light. This is Rose Tree Road. The Church is on the right hand side, slightly more than one block.

## *Directions from South*

Take I-476 N to Exit #5 (old exit #3) Springfield, Lima, and Route 1. As you come down the ramp, stay to the left. At the second traffic light, make a left onto Route 1 South.

Go to the Route 252 exit. (second exit) Turn right at the top of the ramp onto Route 252. Immediately get into the left lane. Turn left at the first traffic light. This is Rose Tree Road. The Church is on the right hand side, slightly more than one block

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## **CRONING CEREMONY**

Autumn, it's said, is the time for cleaning out and ridding ourselves of things that don't serve us anymore. That's exactly what happened on a cool October weekend at Murray Grove. Seven women from the Unitarian Church of Harrisburg's women's spirituality group, QueenSpirit, were croned. As the ritual part of the weekend began, these Seven Sisters entered the big living room letting purple and red strips of fabric attached to the doorway gently smooth off the old that no longer served them and entered a new phase.. Planners Mary Ann Rhoads, Julianna Sillett, Randa Todd and Merryrose Kelsey put together a sacred event that included the attendance of other witnesses who added their love to the weekend. Friday evening, they performed a body ritual that ended in singing a lullaby for the Sisters. In the outdoors on Saturday, the women spoke of and moved to the rhythm of the decades of their lives. That evening was the croning ritual, and the crones-to-be dressed sassy. The ritual began outside with each woman walking to each of three crones -- Kay Cox, Mary Ann Rhoads and Merryrose Kelsy -- to receive their blessing. Perched on her Kaymobile, Kay took each woman's face between her beautiful, wise, arthritic hands and spoke loving words. When the group moved inside, they gathered in circle and told their stories, Then Mary Ann crowned each new crone with a hat she had decorated earlier in the fall. A little mischief followed the solemn ceremony when two new crones showed just how sassy they are by flashing the rest of the group before the circle opened and the dancing -- to "Little Old Lady from Pasadena and other oldies -- began. Hold these new crones in your heart as they design their unique cronehoods: Cordell Affeldt, Joan Hellmann, Steph Kew, Sherry Reinecker, Julianna Sillett, Randa Todd and Sandy Eckert.

## HARRISBURG VOLUNTEERS

A small group of volunteers from the Unitarian Church of Harrisburg is planning holiday events at The Silence of Mary House, The Bethesda Mission for Women and Children, and The United Methodist Shelter. The idea is an outgrowth of a charitable activity that has been managed by Barbara Greenwood. Barbara collects hundreds of small gifts throughout the year and brings them to many low income agencies throughout the Harrisburg area. With a staff of volunteers she lays out the gifts on tables and allows the children in these agencies to choose items, not for themselves, but for the members of their families; these gifts will be given by the children to their family members on Christmas day.

What struck me most when I assisted at these events last year was how these gift, seemed to have enormous value to the kids selecting them. You sensed that they were really excited to have the chance to offer their family members something on Christmas day. These events ended with the children wrapping their gifts and making small crafts for others, less fortunate than they were. Barbara was in charge of distributing these as well. Her brilliance at recognizing a need and fulfilling it astounded me and continues to astound me.

Three facilities did not respond very well to these events. A likely reason is that the people at these facilities might not have many people to share the holidays with. Our group devised parties for these people. We planned 2 hour events at each of these places in the middle of December. We had food, crafts, games, and singing. We gave each of the residents a little gift.

It was a very rewarding interacting with these groups of disadvantaged women and children in our area. They were so pleased with the attention. There was a lot of laughing, and sharing and learning about each other.

We are planning on doing this each year and even expanding the number of venues.

## Breaking-Through by Joyce Dowling

As an active member of my church since the early '80's, I've had a break-through experience that I'd like to share with you. I came for the religious education program for my children and children were my main interest in my career and social activism. In spite of the fact that I was awarded the church's social justice award "for the children" with a promise of a "life time commitment" when I was not 1/2-way through my expected lifespan, I have since changed my focus.

The church number declined along with the religious education program. The children of the families who were coming didn't want to come because there were so few kids in the class. We can't help the children if we cease to exist or if we don't have enough resources to provide a proper program. Our neighborhood was experiencing white flight. In the DC area, it's a transient area, especially for young families, who were choosing other locations to live. We considered the possibility of moving to the next county.

We needed a concerted effort to grow our congregation. I started a web site and Public Relations Committee. We had small growth in the '90's, but figuring out how to grow in diversity was the biggest hurdle. Fortunately, but not necessarily coincidentally, a ministerial candidate joined our church, an African American man who had a lot of enthusiasm for this new religion he had discovered. He wanted to start his own African American church. A lot has happened since he came in .2001. He, Rev. John Crestwell, has embraced the concept of a multicultural congregation and we may be the most diverse UU congregation in the association with over 30% people of color.

Though our situation was unique, we learned a lot that can be useful to all of our congregations. If we believe we can do it and know that we have an important message to share, we can do great things. As a UUA Breakthrough Congregation, we will be sharing what we learned at the JPD Spring Conference, Fril, April 27, and at General Assembly in Portland, OR. You can also read about it in Rev. John's book "Charge of the Chalice" which will be available this spring.

## **TEA IS**

Tea is...

A time to slow down

To digest the day

To share a light snack

A shift occurs...

To see and be seen

To play dress up

To laugh with a friend

To stop striving, and

Become child-like again

By Barbara Jean Vaughn

## **WHAT IS FACILITATOR'S CIRCLE?**

It is the group of women who meet several times a year to plan activities for Women and Religion and to promote women's issues. Spaces are open for new members.

If you would like to be considered for a position, please contact Nuala Carpenter at (618) 688-6454.

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