

Summer 2010 Newsletter

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST

womenspirit



Summer Solstice is Monday, June 21

Editor's Note: This information about the Summer Solstice is from UUWS sister Lisa Michael's website <http://naturalrhythms.org>, which offers information, education, and inspiration on other celestial and natural phenomena and how we can better work with them. Thank you, Lisa!



Solstice means “Sun Standstill,” and summer solstice, in the northern hemisphere, brings us the longest day of the year. Find time to bask in the bright abundant light summer brings and enjoy the harvest as things begin to ripen around you. This is a wonderful day to consciously witness the sunrise and appreciate the blessings the solar light and fuel bring into your life.

Also called midsummer, this point creates the fullest point of the summer season. It begins the subtle turn point when the light slowly begins to shift. During this time, honor the abundance of the Earth Mother and the gift of warmth the sun brings forth.

If you create a ceremony plan to celebrate fulfillment, passion, abundance, and manifestation. Honor the elemental forces and all they do to provide for you on this planet. Especially honor Water, sending loving healing energy to the ocean.

As I was preparing for the “Soul Tools for Transformative Times” talk I will be giving at EvolverFest, on Sunday, in Atlanta, I received an interesting message about how we can support Water. I got that we all need to say a forgiveness prayer for harming Water. If you have ever unconsciously washed your clothes or your dishes in a petroleum based soap, thrown out a plastic water bottle without emptying it, or harmed water in any way this prayer is helpful.

I received this message last week as I started crafting my talk, then today an email was going around which stated it was from Dr. Emoto, the Water vibration specialist, basically saying the same thing. Bringing additional confirmation that this is an important prayer.

Prayers said in ceremonial space on powerful days such as the solstice have addition impact. I urge you to say this prayer sometime between June 20-22:



Healing Planetary Water Forgiveness prayer: “Dear Waters of the planet, please forgive any me for any unconscious actions I have taken that have harmed or polluted you. I honor, respect, and appreciate you.”

Sending you many solstice blessings, Lisa

Interested in checking out other dates of celestial events? Try <http://www.erh.noaa.gov/box/equinox.html>

New Newsletter... and a Naming Contest!

Our UUWS newsletter will be going out quarterly at the cross-quarter holidays. It's juicy with information about our community, our Selves, and the world within and around us. So it seems fitting that we honor it with a title that reflects this.

The CoCo has agreed to sponsor a **Name that Newsletter** friendly competition. *The woman submitting the winning name will receive a free year's membership to UUWS.*

So come on, put on your estrogen-filled creativity cap, and send your submissions to editor@uuwomenspirit.org **no later than July 9.**

News from our Coordinating Council (CoCo)

by Alice Carnes

The Coordinating Council is committed to the future of Womenspirit. Just as a reminder, we are responsible for

- › modifying long-range goals,
- › establishing policy,
- › maintaining financial viability,
- › providing guidance to Planning Committees,
- › holding membership meetings and
- › acting as Registrar for events.

The CoCo meets monthly on SKYPE. During our hour to 1½ hour meetings we cover the bylaw changes, any current situations/challenges within Womenspirit that require attention, continued need for volunteers, and monitoring of the current events and finances of Womenspirit. Our next scheduled weekend meeting starts on July 23 at Judy Padgett's home.

Each member serves a three-year term with two women rotating off each year and two new women rotating on. Your current CoCo had some resignations in the past, so this August 2010 (the start of our fiscal year) we are currently welcoming one new member, Toni Stephenson, and also welcoming one continuing member, Judy Padgett. Judy actually took over the PRL position over a year ago and then the CoCo persuaded her to continue in this role. Toni and Judy will begin their three-year terms August 1, 2010. As of July 31 our beloved and dynamic Registrar Claire Crutchley will step down.

Here is your current CoCo the behind the scenes women who keep Womenspirit running:

Toni Stephenson has been in full swing with the CoCo since her confirmation at the May membership meeting. Among her many accolades Toni has been a member of WS since the early 1990's. She has served our organization as Event Coordinator (twice), lead worship, been PRL on the CoCo, and has presented numerous workshops on different subjects. Her greatest LOVE however, is dancing at WS events! She lives in Clinton, TN, with hubby Bob. Between them, they have 6 boys, 8 grandchildren (6 boys and 2 girls), and one step great-grand-daughter. Interestingly, their 3 biological grandchildren are boys. Toni believes that the Goddess has blessed her with all these males so she can assist HER in creating Goddess loving men! And she is doing her best to fulfill that.

Judy Padgett will also serve as PRL-Program Resource Liaison - position from August 1, 2010 to July 31, 2013. Judy lives in the foothills region of North Carolina, where she works as a custom framer, gallery owner, and jewelry maker. She is married and has two daughters, Iris and Holly. Judy has been attending Womenspirit events for seven years and feels that "my involvement in Womenspirit has helped define who I am as a woman and mother and vastly expanded my spirituality in a world bereft of satisfying spiritual experiences."

Alice Carnes, Marketing and Church Liaison, is a long-time Womenspirit member. You may remember her as Alice Hugi. She has been a worship co-chair for two events and a workshop leader. Newly married, Alice is enjoying life with husband Lee in Charlotte, NC. She is coordinating with the web goddess Elizabeth Thomas, newsletter editor and goddess Kate Stockman, and Facebook goddess Edra VanValkenburgh. Contact me with your marketing ideas! alice.carnes@cpcc.edu

Beth Flanagan, Treasurer, is finally retired and work will not keep her from Womenspirit ever again! She lives in Cary, NC, with her husband and neurotic cat. She enjoys traveling, photography, scrapbooking, and a good Scrabble game with friends. bflanagan@nc.rr.com

Margaret Schmidt, Registrar, actually attended the first Womenspirit event! “It was an incredible event, but so ‘weird’ that I didn’t return for 4 years. It didn’t take long to make friends and become an addict. This is my second time to serve on the CoCo. I’ve also been on 3 PCs, and the brochure editor for several others. I’m usually an active UU, but I’m moving to TN in July (probably), so will have to build a new support community there.” msmargaretanne@charter.net

Jean E Hansgen, Volunteer Coordinator and UUWS member since 2001, is a hospice nurse. She sells goods as Harmonious Balance, has offered workshops, frequently acts as Mountain Host, and has led Worship. She is also the Search Committee Liaison. She is on a quest for Event Coordinators, Track and Workshop proposals, and volunteers in general. Contact her if you would like to volunteer! Volunteers@uuwomenspirit.org or Jean@harmoniousbalance.com

Claire Crutchley, former Registrar most recently our Scribe, has been coming to UUWS since 1995. She worked on worship for her first event and participated on a PC twice. Claire is a Professor of Finance at Auburn University, is married, and has a son and daughter. She is also very involved in the Auburn UU church and enjoys working with UU youth in the MidSouth District. She’s the glue that has held the CoCo together. Claire has diligently updated the Sacred Text and tweaked the membership databases. Claire rotates off the CoCo on July 30th. claire.crutchley@gmail.com

A Cause for Community Concern

All of us on the CoCo are concerned about the future of UUWS and you need to be concerned too. If Womenspirit is near and dear to your heart, then the best way to help this organization to thrive is to **volunteer**. Please contact Jean Hansgen at: Volunteers@uuwomenspirit.org or Jean@harmoniousbalance.com to volunteer for events or to lead a workshop or institute track. Contact Alice Carnes at alice.carnes@cpcc.edu to volunteer to promote Womenspirit in your community or your UU church.

This is **our** community! **Nothing** can stop us if we all work (and play) together to keep our community vital and growing.



How Can I Help?

Don’t want to offer a teaching proposal but would like to help UUWomenspirit? There are many other opportunities available. Some volunteer activities also earn credits. Go to www.uuwomenspirit.org and download the Volunteer Opportunities form.

We need and want your participation to help UUWomenspirit be a rich and nurturing experience! You may email me at Volunteers@uuwomenspirit.org

Jean E Hansgen
Volunteer Coordinator

A Few of the Faces of Spring UUWS

Photos taken by Ellen Shelton



Rocking Chair Donation

It's a gorgeous day at The Mountain. What better time to sit and rock on one of the many decks. At the Fall 2009, Womenspirit donated a eucalyptus rocking chair to The Mountain. This chair has a plaque that reads, "UU Womenspirit". Look for the Womenspirit rocking chair on the deck of the Commons area.

Call for Track/Workshop Proposals

Have an idea for a program you'd like to present? Did you know presenting helps pay some of the fees? That's right. It's our way of thanking you for contributing to our all-volunteer organization. I want to encourage you to send a proposal for consideration at a future event. Maybe you'd be willing to present in Spring 2011, Fall 2011 or Spring 2012? It is never too early to submit a **Track or Workshop Proposal**, and submitting a proposal does *not* mean you are committed. Proposals are kept on file so that Planning Committees (PC) have some idea of what topics and presenters might be available.

Each PC chooses a mix of programs from the proposals on file. What's the mix? Well, each PC tries to have something artistic/crafty, something with movement, and something suitable for all levels of mobility. The PC might ask you if your topic could be lengthened or shortened. When your proposal is accepted, you can tailor the description to the theme of the event. So don't wait. Submit today. This kind of submission is a good thing!

Did you submit a proposal in the past and nothing happened?
Please consider resubmitting. It might have gotten lost.

Ever wonder why an event brochure was late? It may be because the PC had difficulty setting the tracks/workshops. Keeping current contact information and a wealth of proposals are important. Please update your contact information when it changes and submit!

Have an idea? Sometimes women have great ideas but don't know the best way to convey their idea on the proposal form. Sometimes what is provided on the form doesn't convey what you really have in mind. Let's talk about it.

Know someone who isn't currently in UUWS who has a great topic? Refer them to us. Tell them how to find us. Tell them dues are only \$20 per year! Give them a proposal form or an event brochure or refer them to the website at www.uuwomenspirit.org.

Know someone who doesn't receive the newsletter by email? Print the newsletter and a proposal form for them.

Go to www.uuwomenspirit.org to download a proposal form. Do it today!

We need and want your participation to help UUWomenspirit be a rich and nurturing experience! Please email me at Volunteers@uuwomenspirit.org if you have any questions. Thanks!

*Jean E Hansgen
Volunteer Coordinator*

Help Spread the Word to your Friends

from Alice Carnes, Marketing Coordinator

Do you have a little bit of time to volunteer for Womenspirit? Are you a member of a UU church? Well I have the job for you! Womenspirit needs your energies to personally market UU Womenspirit.

**Introducing the fall 2010 Event
Embracing Gaia: Reclaiming Our Heritage of Peace
September 15-19**

You will encourage potential "newbie/virgin" women (or women who haven't been back in a while) in our church communities to come join us at The Mountain. It's so easy; all you do is place a short blurb in your church newsletter or order of service. And one more thing: just make sure the fall UU Womenspirit brochure is displayed in a prominent place on your church bulletin board.

Please contact me by phone 704-453-4175 or email alice.carnes@cpcc.edu if you need a short infomercial/blurb about this fall's fabulous event. Please consider how your energies can create a thriving Womenspirit!

Women And Spirituality: The Goddess Trilogy DVD Rental

Donna Read's classic trilogy, "Women and Spirituality" explores the power of the sacred feminine in mythological, historical and cultural contexts. It is a stunning and poetic work comprised of three one-hour films and is the definitive series on feminine spirituality. (166 minutes on 3 DVDs)

It is now available for rental from UUWomenspirit. For \$30 deposit you will get the DVD set with a return postage paid envelope. When you return it, we will refund \$15 of your deposit. So why not have a mini-UUWS event and have a viewing. Contact our Treasurer Beth Flanagan at bflanagan@nc.rr.com

Want to purchase the DVD set? It is \$34.98 from www.harmoniousbalance.com.



Our Healing Circle of Support

Please keep these members of our sisterhood in your thoughts and prayers:

Helen Rogers is going through treatment for breast cancer. You can keep up with her progress at <http://www.caringbridge.org/visit/helenrogers>. She really enjoys jokes and kind words of support from people. So all those jokes you want to forward to somebody? Helen's waiting patiently for them!

Katrina Ray asks that we keep her grand-neice **Averie Grayce Palm** in our prayers. She is just 1 yr-old and has been at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia since Dec of 2009.



And, of course, we are all holding our beloved **Mother Earth** in our hearts and thoughts as She struggles against the harm being done to her by carelessness and apathy. Blessed be All Our Relations.

This photo was submitted by RC Edwards with her sentiment: *Our beautiful beaches in Pensacola, Florida. May we survive ourselves.*

Our Web of Community



Don't Forget, We have a Facebook group!

Do you have a Facebook account? Did you know that Womenspirit has its own Facebook group? It's a private group only for UUWS members, and can be found by doing a search for U. U. Womenspirit. It's a great way to keep up with your sisters in between events, and also to get information about an upcoming event. If you haven't already joined the group and would like to, please click on "join", which will send a message to the group and then Womenspirit can approve you for access to the group.

If you don't have a Facebook account... it's quick and easy to set up one. If you're concerned about privacy/security, you can provide as much (or as little) personal information as you'd like. However, you should be warned that Facebook is highly addictive and a lot of fun! There are lots of games and activities, you can post pictures, chat with your friends, and more. If you're not familiar with Facebook and would like to know more, feel free to e-mail me at piglett1969@aol.com.

Love and hugs to all,
Edra VanValkenburgh

By-Law Changes

At the Spring membership meeting, members affirmed a change in the Sacred Text ByLaws. This change will enable more participation by the membership.

The change reduces the total number of members on the Search Committee to four (4) and increases the number of members at large on the committee to two (2). Instead of one (1) member being a past member of Coordinating Council (CoCo) *and* one (1) member being a past Event Coordinator (EC), the Search Committee will include one (1) member who is *either* a past member of CoCo *or* a past EC. The ByLaws change now reads:

ARTICLE XI.

The Search Committee

- A. The Search Committee shall be comprised of not less than four (4) current members of Unitarian Universalist Womenspirit. One member shall be a former Coordinating Council member OR a former Event Coordinator. One member shall be a current member of the Coordinating Council. The third and fourth members of the Committee shall be from the membership at large.

Search committee members serve a term from August 1, 2010 - July 31, 2011.

Past Searchettes: Edie White, Elizabeth Adams, Melissa Christopher, Jean Hansgen as CoCo Liaison; term ends on July 31, 2010.

New Searchettes: Elizabeth Adams, Gloria Hausser, Melissa Christopher, Jean Hansgen as CoCo Liaison; term ends on July 31, 2011.

*Submitted by Alice Carnes with a **lot** of help from Jean Hansgen, UUWomenspirit Volunteer Coordinator and Searchette Extraordinaire.*

Our Fall Event is September 15-19 at The Mountain



The theme is “*Embracing Gaia: Reclaiming Our Heritage of Peace*”! Be sure to mark your calendars!

Gaia, the ancient Greek mother goddess, is one of the oldest known representatives of the Divine Feminine. Gaia symbolizes our connection to the Earth and serves as a

modern representation of the peaceful interrelation between the Earth and all her creatures. During the Fall 2010 event, we will explore the myth of Gaia, and other ancient goddesses, to draw upon and enhance our own experience with the Divine Feminine.

During the Institute portion of the event, we will study volume one of the recently-revised *Cakes For the Queen of Heaven* curriculum, facilitated by long-time Womenspirit member Barbara Green. This program seeks to raise awareness of the stories and symbols of the ancient world where females were respected and celebrated. Through worship services and the Gathering workshops, we will continue our exploration of Gaia and other goddesses, whose myths of strength, perseverance and peace continue to empower us today. We hope you will join us. Look for more information at www.uuwomenspirit.org.

Virtual Council of the 13 Indigenous Grandmothers June 19



The Center for Sacred Studies and the Grandmothers Council are truly delighted to invite you to the first-ever **Virtual Council of the 13 Indigenous Grandmothers**. It's a free teleseminar event in honor of Summer Solstice focused on prayer, healing and wisdom for the world at this time.

[Find Out More](#)

The work of the 13 Indigenous Grandmothers is vitally important. The coming together of this group represents the **fulfillment of many prophecies** and they have been tirelessly traveling the world to hold ceremony and prayer to heal ancient wounds and restore a sacred relationship with Mother Earth. They each represent prayer lineages that offer essential medicine for our times.

This teleseminar will be an opportunity to not only listen to members of this group in a sacred council format and **get their latest guidance and insights**, but also to add your prayers and intention to the blessing of this event. You'll also be invited to form miniature councils with other participants after the Grandmothers have completed. By joining together live, we can create a **powerful wave of love and prayer** to spread across the world.

The Virtual Council Call will be on Saturday, June 19th. However, even if you cannot participate live, you can sign up and get free access to the recording afterward.

[Sign up now](#)

Please do share this invitation with friends and allies - all are warmly welcomed to participate. The more people who participate in this free event, the greater the blessings that ripple outward from it.

Blessings to you and yours,
The Center for Sacred Studies
www.sacredstudies.org
<http://www.theshiftcouncil.com>

The Resource Center for Women and Ministry in the South sends out a calendar of events on a monthly basis of what is going on in the area. If you are interested in receiving this information, contact rcwmsnc@aol.com. The organization is located in Durham, but promotes events throughout the South.

Crones Rock!

from Betty Brown

Thanks go to the Women of Womenspirit who attended the 2009 Crones Counsel gathering in Atlanta last fall. It was a wonderful event for 158 Crones and made all the more marvelous by the attendance and participation of Crones Donna Melcher, Evonne Pennington, Toni Stephenson, Bobbie Kelsten, Susan Baylies, Heather Cramer (and her temple), Lisa Michaels, Rebecca Reeves, Alice Rose, Melody Le Baron, Margery Macey, Jeanna Styron, and Kathy Frost. We had a writer come from England and our eldest Crone was Ann Emerson, 95 who came from the state of Washington. For more info on this dynamic group, check www.cronescounsel.org.

Atlanta Area Women, Can You Help Clean Up the Local Environment?

from Melody LeBaron

Save-the-date to join Melody LeBaron and Joyce Dillon on June 27 as they create a task force of women in the Atlanta area to activate the message of the **13 Indigenous Grandmothers**. They will be meeting to create ways we can clean up our local environment.

Melody also recommends viewing this free 1.5 hour movie about our planet:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jqxENMKaeCU>

For the Next 7 Generations

Mark your calendars for September 17, 2010, 7 to 9 p.m. for a screening of *For the Next 7 Generations* at the Atlanta botanical Gardens in Atlanta. Tickets must be purchased (\$20) before the screening; limited seating available. This is a fundraiser to support world peace and indigenous healing around the globe. For more information, call 404-881-1322 or email jjdillon@mindspring.com.



The film documents the momentous journey of 13 Indigenous Grandmothers as they travel around the globe to promote peace and share their indigenous ways of healing. Originating from all four corners, these 13 wise women elders, shamans and medicine women, first came together in 2004 at a historic gathering in Upstate New York. Motivated by their concern for our planet, they decided to form an alliance: The International Council of 13 Indigenous Grandmothers. The film begins at their first gathering follows them to the Amazon rainforest, the mountains of Mexico, throughout North America, and to Dharamsala, India, for a private meeting with the Dalai Lama.

For the Next 7 Generations is being shown around the nation to promote and support the work of the 13 Indigenous Grandmothers (who *else* could do it?!?). For information on the movie and viewings, check <http://www.forthenext7generations.com/>.

Voices of Our Community

More Sacred Work... through Song

Celebrating Women Through Song: The Goddess Suite



An Evening of Celebrating Women, including a performance of [The Goddess Suite](#), an original choral work by singer-songwriter and environmental educator Cynthia Rylander Crossen. Cynthia Crossen and Hope Wilder (Cynthia's daughter-in-law) have assembled instrumentalists and a chorus of women 50-strong, to perform the Goddess Suite, with singer-songwriter and musical educator Sheila Fleming as conductor. Other acts in the program will include music, poetry, and dance. We have come together to experience and share the joy of celebrating womanhood through song, spoken word, and dance. To honor each of the seven goddesses of whom we sing, 100% of the

proceeds from our performances will go to support local, regional, and global charities that embody attributes of the Greek goddesses Artemis, Hera, Demeter, Persephone, Hestia, Aphrodite, and Athena.

Suggested donation of \$7 (children under 12 free) to benefit local, regional, and global charities.

Please help us spread the word by forwarding this info! See our video, listen to Goddess Suite pieces, and download a [flyer](#) at [The Goddess Suite](#). Hear us on WUNC's 91.5 FM *The State of Things* on Wed. June 16 at 12:40 pm and 9:40 pm. Performances are scheduled in central N.C. on June 19, 20, 26, and 27. [Get Goddess Suite Performance details.](#)

The Healing Circle

Written with deep gratitude by Kate Stockman after the Healing Circle held at our Spring 2010 event



We gathered together,
those needing to receive healing
and those needing to give.

I sat in the center
With five other sisters,
open and receptive,
supported by
sisters, silk, and sacred water.

Energy channelers
formed a powerful ring around us –
one for each of the central six,
flowing among us.

The protective ones
created the outer circle,
holding energy
standing firm
creating a shield.

Priestess in the center,
guiding, calling in
Mother Mary, Roses, the Healing Hathors,
Isis, Quan Yin, Tara, others.
Encouraging everyone
to open and receive,
to let go of grief with sound from
our deepest depths.
Ageless wailing,
Distressing and evocative.



I was nourished,
opened then emptied,
rocked like a baby
and filled up again:
by gratitude
by the vision of
candlelit women
~~ maidens, mothers, crones ~~
who showed up.

Who sat or stood
with strength, grace, and beauty
Healers
Priestesses



Holy women
Giving the selfless gifts
of their time and energy and essence
in support of their sisters.

And the greatest gift of all
(this is the way Spirit works)
is that in blessing us six
they, too, received blessings.

We were all lifted up
By a wondrous web
of connection and sharing.

Editor's Note: The power and sacredness of this Healing Circle is what inspired the regular column of "Our Healing Circle of Support" for our newsletter. Please be sure to submit names that you would like to include in this column.

We will also be including columns "In Memory Of" and "Accolades and Affirmations" in our newsletters. Please let us know who you would like to include in each of these columns.

The Goddess Conference in Glastonbury, England

by Toni Stephenson

In late July of 2001, I was privileged to be able to attend the annual International Goddess Conference in Glastonbury, England. What a wonderful experience it was. Sort of like a big Womenspirit event except that men are also welcome and a few did attend. The conference lasts for a week in this wonderful magical town with incredible energy.

Glastonbury is the home of The Tor, a natural hill which rises out of the mists and on which has been found an ancient labyrinth walk. I can easily imagine the ancient priestesses processing up this path to the top. Also found in Glastonbury is the magical, mysterious healing Chalice Well. It is one of two springs located here and is the “red” spring due to the iron oxide dissolved in the water. The other is the “white” spring.

In ancient times, Glastonbury was called “Avalon” (apple isle) because of the abundance of apples which grew there and because before the land was drained for farm land and sheep grazing, it was in a swampy area which held water at high tide and appeared to be an island. If you have read the book *The Mists of Avalon* by Marion Zimmer Bradley, you are very familiar with this area. There are Britons who believe that the Goddess will not return to England until the land is once again flooded with water.



Our week at the conference was filled with workshops, rituals, speeches, entertainment and a “masked ball”. The meeting space is incredibly decorated with Goddesses. Each year there is a different theme usually involving the Maiden, Mother or Crone. On the final day of the conference a parade through the town is held. Participants carry banners, (many of them made by Lydia Rulye which have flown at our own WS), beat drums, and generally have a wild and

wonderful time. The parade stops at the Chalice Well where some “anoint” themselves with the healing water and then progresses to the top of the Tor where a feast is held.

During the week, my traveling friend, Cindy, and I took our drums one late afternoon to the top of the Tor where we drummed as the sun went down. Others were also drumming with us. This was an incredible experience and fulfilled a long time dream of mine.

The conference is coming up again July 28 through August 1. I will not be able to attend this time but hope to in the future. If you have an opportunity to attend one of these events, I really urge you to do so. They are incredible. www.goddessconference.com

Toni Stephenson's youngest grandchild, Matthew Johnson, who just LOVES to come to Nanny's and Pa's house so he can use Nanny's drums!

A future Mickey Hart?



Construction/Deconstruction

By Cheryl Dent

My contractor installed trim work on closet door, baseboards, bumped the cabinet over refrigerator up just a tad so the refrigerator would fit underneath and a few other minor details, finishing around 8-8:30 last night. Inspecting his handiwork, I began to think that this chaos might possibly be over soon. My world looked a little brighter.

Around 9:30 I began preparations for bed and realize it will be really nice being able to take a shower and do my after-bath ministrations in the same place. After our baby boy left home, I moved all my feminine needs into the bigger bath for the room it provided. Feeling pretty good about this development, I reached down to open the large drawer at the bottom of the newly installed vanity and the drawer would not open. SHIT. This drawer has a small tray going across it where I had put all my stuff that would be transferred to the medicine cabinet when it is installed. My deodorant, my face moisturizer, my body lotion, my toothpaste... I HAD to get in this drawer. WTF!

I have a few tools in the house, small hammers to put picture hangers, small tacks, etc., few small screwdrivers; nothing major. It's dark, I'm in my gown, have no idea where any "manly" tools might be outside among Ray's stuff so I get a small hammer, flat screwdriver to see if I can rip the baseboard strip (about a foot long) from the wall.

My wonderful contractor has machine-installed some industrial strength staples that are as long as my fingers at the junction with the wall trim and – for extra insurance – a a railroad-spike nail in the middle of said baseboard. These staples have claws on the end that are digging into the sheetrock, studs, and anything else in the vicinity. So I beat and growl and beat and growl and finally the board comes out a bit (which gets the adrenalin pumping) so I beat some more which caused the board to fall over face down with Satan's Staples from Hell still gripping with their steely claws. The board is still freaking attached but now it has managed to wedge itself between the trim going up the wall and the new vanity bottom drawer. ARRRRGGGGHHHH!!

About this time, the small hammer gives way, breaking the handle at the head. So I sit back, cuss a few minutes, re-group, go back to tool supply, get another hammer (bigger handle), search for something to pry, and find a sturdy paint scraper/chisel type tool, and go back to attempting to dismantle the board from the wall.

Working softly, slowly, carefully, I managed to get the board away from the cabinet without causing any damage but Satan's Staples from Hell are digging in, refusing to give way, and I can't get enough leverage to force them the rest of the way out. Frustration settles in: I will NOT let this defeat me and I NEED my soothing lotions and potions. As I sat and fumed, my inner Lilith erupts and I began to beat the living shit out of the baseboard until it finally gave way and splinters a bit (which gives me another adrenalin rush) and I beat it until it breaks off a chunk and frees my drawer!

The cabinet was spared any damage, however, the offending baseboard met its demise. But, Satan's Staples from Hell are still holding on!



Dreaming the Dark to Light

by Katrina G. Ray

For the last three days I have had three incredibly scary, heart-wrenching, but informative dreams. These dreams told me things, things about the little girl in me, about how I feel misunderstood, especially by the opposite sex, about how the abuse in my past intimate relationships have affected me, even to this very day.

Most importantly these dreams tell me I need to change. I need to change

how I perceive myself. About how I need to continue alone in my life, for no man will ever truly “get” me, and so having a man sharing intimately in my life will only cause me unhappiness. And about how I need to nurture and love that little girl in myself.

Can change come from our dreams? Yes, if we listen to what they are telling us, they most surely can be a beginning of change for us. Yes, if we are willing to do the “work” that comes with investigating ourselves without judgment, but with compassion, acceptance, and love.

Midlife Chrysalis: Moving from Crisis to Creation

by Lisa Michaels

The natural life cycle brings some powerful physical transformation points that also function as initiations into a new phase of consciousness. Coming of age, stepping into adulthood, childbirth, and menopause are all doorways into another aspect of the self. These can seem like purely physical changes, but the physiological transformation that accompanies them are just as vital to the next phase of life.

Unlike our ancestors that lived in a closer relationship to the natural world, modern life gives us few clues as to how to navigate these life-altering passages. Unless someone around you could explain what happens in a transformational initiation, you probably entered and made your way through without much guidance or support.

If you lived in a time or community that consciously engaged these life initiations, you would understand that these soul passages melt your former self down for you to emerge into an entirely new way of being. While knowing this might not make the passage any easier, at least you would know you weren't crazy and the people around you could support your journey in a way that was actually effective.

Instead of just being the rebelling teenager, the hormonal pregnant woman, or the unstable hot flashing menopausal manic, there could be support for the depth of inner physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual changes occurring. Knowing that all aspects of your former self will dissolve into a glob before you re-form into the you that will emerge from the chrysalis, helps in some strange way.

Consciously participating in the transformational process moves you from engaging it as a crisis to intentionally crafting the next version of yourself. At midlife an additional and powerful aspect of integration happens along this journey. Each individual thread of learning and knowing you've gathered in your life gets evaluated, sorted, and spun into a new creation during your time in the chrysalis. You begin to weave the threads of your life together into a tapestry of inner wisdom.

At midlife, threads that seemed like separate streams of life are woven together into a deeper matrix of wholeness. This weaving gives you a more stable awareness of your inner truth and the unique wisdom that is yours to carry. While the threads are the same as the previous individual strands, when woven together they create an entirely new fabric of expression for the next phase of life.

It would be empowering for young women to know that they won't simply be growing older with each passing year, but truly wiser. There will come a time when all of their experiences will merge into an awareness of life that has the capacity to significantly bring wisdom and creative expression into the world.

With this awareness, the passage of time and the portal of menopause and midlife take on a deeper meaning. Grey hair and laugh lines symbolize a vibrant wise woman with a zest for life. The wisdom gained during the passage is a reason to mentor and assist others by being a supportive guide through their transformational journey.

Collectively we need the wisdom of the midlife woman. And, we need the women who've woven their tapestries to join together and to sew the individual patches of wisdom into an enormous quilt. And, create one large enough to wrap the world in the warm embrace of the wise woman.

Wrapped in this embrace of wisdom there is...

- support for creative pursuits.
- a place for feminine and masculine values.
- a world wide circle of wise women to go to for guidance.
- honor for your personal journey.
- a way to support those in need.
- a heart centered awareness for life.
- respect for nature and her guiding wisdom.
- value of the natural rhythms of life.

To take part in the global honoring of the wisdom of midlife women...

- find time to listen to those around you who carry this wisdom.
- ask what they have learned that could be of value to you.
- seek out women of various cultural backgrounds from which to learn.
- connect to the wise woman within and help bring her clarity out into the world.
- honor women when they are willing to share their teachings.
- appreciate the natural aging process while continuing to increase vibrancy.
- form circles of women so that women of all ages can learn from one another.
- find a midlife or older mentor to support your next passage.

To assist your own midlife journey and the development of your inner wisdom...

- be in silence some portion of your week to strengthen your inner guidance.
- spend ample time in nature to access the forces of creation.
- pay attention to the rhythms of nature to develop a deeper awareness of right timing.
- spend some time in the company of other women.
- allow space in your life to weave your inner threads into your wisdom tapestry.

And finally take the time to enjoy the wisdom of midlife.

The Song Remains the Same

And finally, here's a song that kept running through Alice Carne's mind as she prepared the voluminous Coco information for this newsletter. Seems like a good note to end our Summer Solstice newsletter with. Blessed Be!

It's in every one of us
To be wise
Find your heart
Open up both your eyes
We can all know everything
Without ever knowing why

It's in every one of us
By and by

It's in every one of us
To be wise
Find your heart
Open up both your eyes



We can all know everything
Without ever knowing why

It's in every one of us
By and by
By and by

The Unitarian Universalist Womenspirit Newsletter is issued quarterly and is a publication of the UUWS community, edited by Kate Stockman. All UUWS members are encouraged to submit information, events, and creative submissions to be included in an upcoming newsletter by sending it to editor@uuwomenspirit.org.

The mission of UUWS is to create, conduct, and support activities that encourage and empower women to explore their religious and spiritual origins, experiences, and beliefs. Pursuing, nurturing, and affirming creativity and diversity are major emphases. There is a strong commitment to developing the use of consensus as the model for decision-making.

Volunteers do all the work of Unitarian Universalist Womenspirit. There are no paid positions. Learn more about our community by going to www.uuwomenspirit.org.