

waterwheel

A Quarterly Newsletter of the Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics and Ritual

Editorial

It's a new day all right. Every once in a while the paradigm shifts right before our very eyes. It does not happen often, just enough so that we still recognize the telltale signs when they appear. But this time it is unmistakable with a new generation in the White House and a Cabinet that looks more (though not yet fully) like a normal neighborhood gathering than the waiting room of an upscale urologist.

Change is real; transition happens. People we know or who know people we know will be making decisions that make a real difference. Mild panic sets in. Like the sense on election night when change was coming and no one wanted to believe it for fear that it might evaporate... Like the candlelight vigil in London when the Anglicans voted, albeit squeakily, for women priests... Like the sense of accomplishment mixed with "Now what?" that accompanied the fatal bleed of the Catholic Bishops' pastoral letter on women. Moral of story: we need to practice making change when the tide is, finally, perhaps fleetingly, in our favor.

How do we act graciously in victory as we have gotten so good at it in defeat? How do we cooperate with newly friendly structures—certain periodicals, church officials and institutions for whom we are suddenly in vogue—without being coopted? Is this wariness practiced cynicism or political prudence? Do we really see **all women** as part of our constituency even when some write nasty diatribes against us from their own patriarchally poisoned pens?

And then Audre Lorde died, a beacon bigger than the sun, leaving a vacuum bigger than the moon. Her wisdom, her silences, her journals, her cancer struggle, her candor, her woman-ness so thorough and confirming of our own. She calls us forth and reminds us that a new day follows long nights over and over again.



On the Index

by Mary E. Hunt

Words wrenched from their contexts, a la Mary Daly, make being on **WATERwheel's** index a matter of importance. Thanks to the patient skill of intern Susan O'Brien, we now have a usable record of the first five years of publishing a compact but, from all reports, well read resource. Use the index as you will—to review what has happened, to find a favorite article or liturgy, to monitor our programs, or to see how we cited a favorite author. It's a good gauge of where we've been and a reliable prognosticator of things to come.

During **WATER's** first five years there was no newsletter, just sporadic and personal communications. As the organization grew, and as keeping track of each other took more energy, we decided to experiment with a regular vehicle to deepen our connections. We feared at first

ad for how to order back issues, and be prepared that we recycle ones the post office returns to us.

Critics will complain that we have been short on children's offerings, that Euro-American perspectives still dominate, that once in a while we're late, and that our graphics are sometimes run without attribution. We are our own loudest critics, and we will do our best to correct these problems in the five years to come.

Readers wait for each issue, some citing the lead article as inspiring, challenging, all those words that keep my fingers on the home keys. Others call for extra copies or permission to duplicate the liturgies because they are simply so simply well done. Still others, especially the professorial set, eagerly await the Resources section, finding it a short cut to the best books

We write it because you read it.

that trees would fall in vain, that we would duplicate efforts of other organizations. Your responses indicate that such is hardly the case.

We write it because you read it. In fact, I would guess that an unusually high percentage of **WATERwheel** readers actually go through our eight pages, clip, copy and/or pass them on. The mailing list has grown from our address books to well over 4,000 subscribers. We usually print 10,000 copies and use the rest for outreach, mailing list exchanges, classes, conferences and other ways of getting the word out. And out it goes to 37 countries around the world, as well as to all 50 states and the District of Columbia; to donors with deep pockets and to equally faithful readers who cannot pay but who add their encouragement just the same; to thousands of women, a goodly number of men, and above all, to you.

Historians will note that we began and ended this five year cycle with lead articles on AIDS, and that liturgies grew from prayers of directions to telling love's stories. In between, we have covered the **WATERfront** including food, war, peace, partners, ecumenism, fun, farewells, justice and changing seasons... see Susan O'Brien's comprehensive list for details, especially for pieces you may have missed. Note the

in the field at the moment. I confess that it is my delicious task to read everything (well, almost everything) that comes in from publishers who know that our readers buy and share books. Each issue I beg for more room to note just one more wonderful read, but Carol Scinto runs a tight ship and she wisely cautions that people read this publication for many reasons.

Still other folks rely on the newsletter to keep them up to date on **WATER's** local programs, on the endless adventures that Diann Neu and I are privileged to have as staff to this constantly growing network. They get ideas for local programs, for issues and themes to consider, for how to pray together. Somehow it keeps the **'wheel** turning and **WATER** fresh.

What next for **WATER** and for this publication? Dreams abound. You will read more about these and other hot ideas in forthcoming issues. But first let us read your comments, questions, likes and dislikes, above all your suggestions for how this publication can meet your needs and you its. If you're full of care, you may find yourself on the index in 1997.

Mary E. Hunt is co-director of **WATER**.

Five Years of WATERwheel: An Index

Compiled by Susan O'Brien

This index covers **WATERwheel** from the first issue, Vol. 1, No. 1 Spring 1988 to this issue, Vol. 5, No. 4 Fall 1992. The first volume has three issues, all others have four.

Headings and subheadings are indicated in **bold type** with modifiers or scope notes where necessary.

e.g. Abuse

Programs (at WATER or with WATER participation)

See references guide you from a term not used as a heading to a term that is used, e.g. Abortion. See Reproductive rights. See also references refer to related headings where additional material of interest may be found.

Because each newsletter deals with issues of feminist theology, justice and aspects of feminist spirituality, these have not been included as subject headings. Each newsletter is centered around a lead article by Mary E. Hunt and a liturgy by Diann L. Neu, both of which are listed separately at the end of the index; thus, if you know the title of the liturgy or article needed, you need not try to decide under what subject it has been indexed.

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Women In Politics: Make A Difference

by Diann L. Neu

This Inauguration Day, January 20, let us bless the women who engage in public service for the good of the nation. They begin the work we all want done if the Year of the Woman is to give way to the Century of Justice.

[Gather friends or sit quietly yourself to proclaim this litany. As you name the women, light a candle, beat a drum, pour water into a bowl, or place an evergreen branch into a basket.]

Litany of Women in Politics

Hillary Rodham Clinton, you transform the role of First Lady to one of First Partner. Your time is now. *Response: You make a difference.*

Tipper Gore, with Hillary, you model concern for the cultural, physical and spiritual well-being of all children. Your time is now. *Response: You make a difference.*

Women in the Cabinet and key administrative positions--Zoe Bard, Attorney General; Laura D'Andrea Tyson, chief economist; Donna E. Shalala, Secretary of Health and Human Services; Carol M. Browner, head of Environmental Protection Agency; Madeleine K. Albright, Ambassador to the United Nations--you provide a breath of fresh air combined with

professional, activist, philosophical and technical leadership skills. Your time is now. *Response: You make a difference.*

Women in the Senate--Barbara Mikulski, Dianne Feinstein, Barbara Boxer, Patty Murray, Nancy Kassebaum, Carol Moseley Braun--you bring feminist values, experiences and insights to structures of justice. Your time is now. *Response: You make a difference.*

Women in the House of Representatives--Pat Schroeder, Connie Morella, (name women from your area)--you represent the values, needs, hopes of all people in your districts. Your time is now. *Response: You make a difference.*

Women in state and local government--(name those from your area)--you attend to the needs and expectations of neighborhoods and communities at the grassroots. Your time is now. *Response: You make a difference.*

Women in politics earlier this century and before--(name your favorites)--you paved the way for the Year of the Woman in Politics. Your time is now. *Response: You make a difference.*

Women in training for future political office, you are hope for humankind. Your time is now. *Response: You make a difference.*

Girl children born today who will be political leaders tomorrow, to you is given the challenge of a world bursting with possibilities. Remember the stories of your foremothers as you make your mark on the global community. Your time is soon. *Response: You make a difference.*

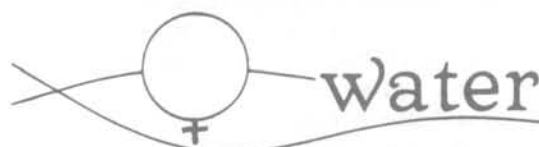
Circle of Political Women

Like these women, we participate in politics by voting, campaigning, writing and calling our political leaders, attending public hearings, acting on our convictions, and running for public office ourselves.

Let us make a difference here today by speaking our names out loud, offering our hands to the persons next to us, and saying: I am (name). I am a political woman. I make a difference.

Let us raise our hands in solidarity and close by saying: We are political women. Our time is now. We make a difference.

Diann L. Neu is co-director of WATER.



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