

# South of the Garden

The Newsletter for the Resource Center for Women and Ministry in the South

Volume 33, Number 3

September 2012

## 35 Years

by Jeanette Stokes

While studying at Duke Divinity School in the mid-1970s, I served a year as the director of the divinity school's Women's Center. There I learned that some women students were having a hard time in their ministerial internships. Some were belittled, some harassed, and some were simply lonely. I also noticed that there wasn't much support available for women in ministry and those entering ministry.

The summer after I graduated from seminary, I set out to discover what my female colleagues needed. I had a vague notion of creating some sort of women's center, of saying, "I'm interested in feminism and religion; is anyone else?" My women friends who were serving local parishes said they wanted someone to care that they were out there, to create ways for them to get together with other women in ministry, and to provide resources to support and encourage them.

With only a vague sense of what we might do to meet these needs, I hired a lawyer and set up the Resource Center for Women and Ministry in the South. That was 1977. Thirty-five years later, we've done all kinds of things. We've hosted conferences and workshops on feminist theology, economic justice, women and violence, and creativity and spirituality. We've offered retreats on writing, meditation, aging, and caring for ourselves. We've sponsored art exhibitions and published newsletters, books, music CDs, and DVDs.

In the last ten years our work has focused on creativity, spirituality, and social justice.

### CREATIVITY & WRITING

In 2002, Nancy Peeler Keppel approached RCWMS with an offer. She said she would send some money our way if we would do some programming on faith and the arts. She was particularly interested in writing. She and her family foundation provided substantial support for our writing program for several years, which gave it time to take root and grow strong. The program now offers resources to writers that range from workshops for those new to writing, to weeklong retreats at the beach, to the publication of books. We have also offered workshops, classes, and ongoing writing groups, an annual essay contest, grants to several writers, and advice and encouragement to many more.

We have been involved in publishing several books. We helped with the production of *God Speaks, Women Respond*, a collection of essays by United Church of Christ women in ministry. RCWMS published *Enough Room*, a book of poetry by Sue Versényi; two collections of my essays entitled *25 Years in the Garden* and *35 Years on the Path*; and *Good Busy: Productivity, Procrastination, and the Endless Pursuit of Balance*, by Julia Scatliff O'Grady.

### CREATIVITY & ART

In 2006, the Resource Center designed and produced "Art & the Feminine Divine," an exhibition of more than 175 works of art by 100 North Carolina artists. The art filled five venues in Durham, NC, and was accompanied by a yearlong series of workshops and concerts focused

(Continued inside.)

## We're Busy

by Erin Lane

It is with a dash of irony that whilst planning a flurry of activities to celebrate its 35th year, the Resource Center for Women and Ministry in the South is also publishing a book titled *Good Busy*. Those close to RCWMS might very well use those two words to describe the current ethos of the organization as it commemorates and celebrates its journey into middle-age with a community birthday party that took place in August, an elegant fundraising gala to be hosted in November, and the publication of a new collection of essays from founder and Executive Director, Jeannette Stokes.

With treats from Daisy Cakes and Locopops in hand, we celebrated our 35th birthday with a small open house at the RCWMS offices on August 19. We look forward to continuing the festivities on November 16–17 at our 35th Anniversary Fundraising Gala at Durham's King's Daughters Inn where we will enjoy an evening of respite and retreat with old and new friends alike. This spirited slumber party includes tea, dinner, storytelling, breakfast, and yoga—as well as support for RCWMS—in the cost of registration. Contact Amy Kellum ([ak@meinradproject.org](mailto:ak@meinradproject.org)) to get a complete schedule for the event, to inquire about room availability, or to attend only tea or dinner. Requests for specific rooms will be met on a first-come, first-serve basis, so please don't hesitate to act and miss out on this one-of-a-kind event.

The 35th Anniversary Fundraising Gala will also be the occasion for launching Jeanette Stokes' new collection of essays, *35 Years on the Path* (RCWMS, November 2012, \$15). Using essays that first appeared in this newsletter, she captures the last ten years of her inspiring and tireless writing about faith-filled feminism. What started with a simple question from Stokes—"I'm interested in feminism and religion; is anyone else?"—grew into an organization that answered that call by nurturing communities of women in spirituality and creativity. Rachael Wooton writes in the foreword, "The words that fill the essays in this volume, replete with insight, humor, wisdom, and compassion, awaken us to the possibilities of our own lives. Jeanette teaches us the glory of slowing down and paying attention to the beautiful details of the world around us and the worlds within us." Copies will be available for purchase at the fundraising gala and at the RCWMS office. Contact [rcwmsnc@aol.com](mailto:rcwmsnc@aol.com) or 919-683-1236 to order.

Finally, we are thrilled to be publishing another book this fall called *Good Busy: Productivity, Procrastination, and the Endless Pursuit of Balance*, by Julia Scatliff O'Grady (RCWMS, September 2012, \$20). O'Grady set out on a journey to discover how to develop a better relationship with time. Drawing on the stories of ten people in a variety of professions, circumstances, and locations, she discovered ten unique approaches to time that are all versions of "good busy." With practical pointers such as "Live by a metaphor" or "Discover the source of your business," readers will be inspired to identify their own approach to time and find the courage to live by it. Contact [rcwmsnc@aol.com](mailto:rcwmsnc@aol.com) or 919-683-1236 to order.

Although you will surely be busy in the coming months, we hope you will find time to connect with us through one or all of these enriching resources or events.

# Calendar

\* = RCWMS events. For registration form and more information: [www.rcwms.org](http://www.rcwms.org).

\*September 8, 2012, Saturday, 9:30 am–3:30 pm  
HARVESTING OUR STORIES: Collecting Our Wisdom  
Durham, NC

The autumn of our lives is a time to harvest the wisdom of our lives, to unearth and gather up our life stories, to share them with others, to reflect on what we have learned by experience, and to discern how we might pass on our wisdom. For women 55 and older.

Leaders: Anita McLeod and Liz Dowling-Sendor

Cost: \$85, some scholarships

Contact: RCWMS, 919-683-1236, [rcwmsnc@aol.com](mailto:rcwmsnc@aol.com)

\*September 13–October 24, 2012

GOOD BUSY BOOK EVENTS

We say we want to better manage our time, but what do we mean? In *Good Busy: Productivity, Procrastination, and the Endless Pursuit of Balance*, Julia Scatliff O'Grady profiles 10 uniquely busy people and helps us figure out what it means to be "good busy."

**Sept. 13**, Thurs. 7 pm, Duke Center for Documentary Studies, Durham. With Duncan Murrell and Tom Rankin.

**Sept. 15**, Sat., 2 pm, McIntyre's, Fearington Village, NC

**Oct. 4**, Thurs., 7 pm, Flyleaf, Chapel Hill, NC

**Oct. 24**, Wed., 7 pm, Regulator, Durham, NC

Cost: Events are free and open to the public

Contact: RCWMS, 919-683-1236, [rcwmsnc@aol.com](mailto:rcwmsnc@aol.com)

\*September 22, 2012, Saturday, 9:30 am–3:30 pm

WHEN GRANDMOTHERS SPEAK, THE EARTH WILL HEAL

Timberlake Earth Sanctuary, Whitsett, NC (near Greensboro) [www.timberlakeearthsanctuary.com](http://www.timberlakeearthsanctuary.com)

In today's technological world, grandmothers have a special role to fulfill in sharing their love of the natural world with succeeding generations. Come and enjoy a quiet day spent at nature's pace surrounded by beauty and learn some special ways of sharing a love of the earth with grandchildren and all children.

Leaders: Carolyn Toben and Anita McLeod

Cost: \$85. Register early, space is limited. Scholarships.

Contact: RCWMS, 919-683-1236, [rcwmsnc@aol.com](mailto:rcwmsnc@aol.com)

\*September 23–30, 2012

WEEK OF QUIET & WRITING FOR WOMEN

Trinity Center, near Morehead City, NC

Unstructured week of writing for women.

Cost: \$750 includes lodging & meals.

Contact: RCWMS, 919-683-1236, [rcwmsnc@aol.com](mailto:rcwmsnc@aol.com)

October 4–5, 2012

HOME GROWN: A North Carolina Women's Cooperative Preaching Festival

Trinity Avenue Presbyterian Church, Durham, NC

We'll bring together women in ministry to encourage and inspire, share and learn, hone our craft, and lift up the voices of clergywomen. We'll hear wonderful preaching and have conversations on the art of proclamation in all its forms. We'll come together and invite each participant to share her gifts. Some will preach, others may dance or sing, and still others will listen and respond. Some will offer their homes to out-of-town guests and others will staff the reception desk. We believe that there are great gifts among the "ordinary" yet extraordinary NC clergywomen.

Organizers: Carla Gregg, Kori Jones, Elizabeth Michael, and Lori Pistor

Contact: [ncwomenpreaching@gmail.com](mailto:ncwomenpreaching@gmail.com)

\*October 17, 2012, 7:00 pm

WHO, ME? A RISK TAKER?

RCWMS Office, 1202 Watts St., Durham, NC

In *Had Eve Come First and Jonah Been a Woman*, the heroic roles of prophet, leader, and the faithful are filled not by Abraham, but Abrama, not by Noah but by Nochat.



At this gathering we will celebrate both heroes from the past and real women who risk safety and/or reputation as they venture into the unfamiliar. We'll listen to stories and engage in dialogue. What enables some people to take bold risks that benefit others? What prevents the rest of us from doing the same? What current needs call out for courage to act?

Leader: Nancy Werking Poling has been an educator, editor, and freelance writer. See: [www.nancypoling.com](http://www.nancypoling.com).

Cost: Free, but please let us know you are coming.

Contact: RCWMS, 919-683-1236, [rcwmsnc@aol.com](mailto:rcwmsnc@aol.com)

\*October 19–21, 2012

WRITE TO SOUL IN THE DESERT: A Weekend Retreat  
Focusing on Writing as a Spiritual Discipline

The Norbertine Community of NM, Albuquerque, NM  
A weekend of contemplation, writing, and sharing. With the nonfiction essay as our tool, participants will have the opportunity to be creative and reflective.

Leader: Lynne Hinton, author and United Church of Christ minister

Cost: \$500 includes airport transport, single room, meals, and program. Registration deadline is early September.

Questions: Lynne Hinton, [lynnehintonnm@aol.com](mailto:lynnehintonnm@aol.com)

Contact: RCWMS, 919-683-1236, [rcwmsnc@aol.com](mailto:rcwmsnc@aol.com)

\*October 27, 2012, Saturday, 9:30 am–4:30 pm

GIVING THANKS TO THE EARTH

New Hope Camp & Conference Center, Chapel Hill, NC

We are living in a perilous time: our water, soil, air and all living beings on earth are in jeopardy. Many people are trapped in despair and inaction, but despair is not the only option. Join with others who want to find another way. Tap into your creative imagination and experience an introduction to Joanna Macy's vision of "Active Hope" in a beautiful natural setting. We'll enliven our connection to the natural world, express our gratitude to mother earth, resonate with her suffering, and consider how we can support her. We'll engage in personal writing, conversation, simple drawing, and basic movement to live music. Together we will create a community of creative expression that will inspire us to help heal and protect the earth. No previous experience or skill needed.

Leader: Ann Simon Koppelman, PsyD, psychologist

Cost: \$85

Contact: RCWMS, 919-683-1236, [rcwmsnc@aol.com](mailto:rcwmsnc@aol.com)

\*November 16–17, 2012, 4:00 pm

RCWMS 35th ANNIVERSARY: Celebration & Fundraiser  
King's Daughters Inn, Durham, NC

A fun and soul-nourishing retreat with other women.

Includes tea, dinner, bedtime stories, morning yoga, conversation, singing and connecting with friends.

Cost: Varies according to rooms and activities.

Contact: Amy Kellum, [ak@meinradproject.org](mailto:ak@meinradproject.org), 919-418-4000, or contact the RCWMS office

\*January 4–11, 2013

WEEK OF QUIET & WRITING FOR WOMEN

Trinity Center, near Morehead City, NC

Unstructured week of writing for women.

Cost: \$750 includes lodging & meals.

Contact: RCWMS, 919-683-1236, [rcwmsnc@aol.com](mailto:rcwmsnc@aol.com)

\*February 8–10, 2013, Fri., 2:00 pm to Sun., 2:00 pm

FINDING YOUR MEDIUM: Art with Sue Sneddon  
Emerald Isle, NC

A weekend of exploration into various media for painting and drawing. No experience needed.

Leader: Sue Sneddon, artist

Cost: Workshop, \$300. Rooms, \$125 double, \$225 single.

Contact: RCWMS, 919-683-1236, [rcwmsnc@aol.com](mailto:rcwmsnc@aol.com)

\*February 14–18, 2013

MAKING YOUR ART: Advanced Workshop with Sue  
Emerald Isle, NC

For those who have taken "Finding Your Medium" and want more comfort with media they have explored.

Leader: Sue Sneddon, artist

Cost: Workshop, \$325. Room, \$125 double or \$225 single.

Contact: RCWMS, 919-683-1236, [rcwmsnc@aol.com](mailto:rcwmsnc@aol.com)

# 35 Years...

on feminine images of the divine. Hundreds of people attended the exhibition and events, making it the single largest effort the organization had ever undertaken.

We have also sponsored smaller exhibitions. Two of these were one-woman shows by Carole Baker. "Mary: The Paper Doll Project" was a 2009 exhibition of life-size, interactive images of Mary, the mother of Jesus, painted by the artist. The freestanding images, each from a different branch of Christianity, had clothes that visitors could switch among the various "dolls." "The Confessional," a large-scale installation, opened during Lent 2010. Viewers entered a constructed environment where they could reflect on themes of brokenness, healing, and the radical practice of forgiveness.

RCWMS has produced two documentary films. (Both are available on DVD from RCWMS.) *Meinrad Craighead: Praying with Images* (2009) traces the life and work of a visionary artist and former nun who lives in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Executive producer Amy Kellum spent four years raising money, traveling with Meinrad, and making this first-rate hour-long film. Before she was done, Amy had raised more than \$100,000 from foundations and more than 500 individuals. Openings were held in Durham and in Albuquerque. As of this writing, 1,500 DVDs of the documentary are in circulation. To learn more, visit [www.meinradproject.com](http://www.meinradproject.com).

The second documentary, *Blackbirds, Bottle Caps, and Broken Records: Environmental Artist Bryant Holsenbeck at Work* (2010) shares the story of a remarkably creative woman whose work encourages people to notice all the trash we create and throw away and inspires them to protect the natural world. Margaret Morales did a wonderful job making the film, which premiered on Bryant's birthday in August 2010. When Bryant shows it to school groups, the children think she is a movie star. She is. More at [www.bryantholsenbeck.com](http://www.bryantholsenbeck.com).

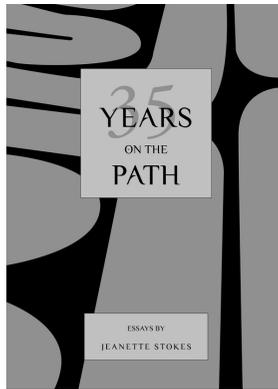
## SPIRITUALITY

RCWMS has been encouraging women and men in their spiritual development for more than three decades. In the last decade, we have hosted winter interfaith celebrations, and have offered workshops on yoga and meditation and retreats on creativity and spirituality. At present, we pay special attention to feminist spiritual direction, to spirituality for elder women, and to Tara, the beloved female buddha of Tibet.

Rachael Wooten, a Jungian analyst in Raleigh, NC, served on the RCWMS Board for six years (2003–2008), and during that time she taught us about Tara. RCWMS began to sponsor programs on Tara, which included a workshop and three weekend retreats at the beach, all led by Rachael.

I didn't know there was a female buddha until I met Rachael Wooten. Did you? Tara is often depicted sitting atop a lotus blossom with her left leg folded in the meditation position and her right foot extended, a position that indicates she is ready to come to our aid. In fact, it is said that when we call, she is already here. I wish I had grown up believing there was a female incarnation of the divine who was just waiting to come to my aid. (Thank goodness I did learn that some of my female friends would lend assistance.)

Rachael began studying the practices devoted to the Twenty-one Taras while she was training at the Jung Institute in Switzerland in the 1990s. A few years later she helped her Tibetan teacher, Lodro Tulku Rinpoche, translate the practices into English. Once back in the States, she organized women's meditation groups to use the practices. With the inspiration and help of Beth



Hardin, a member of one of the groups, she developed a set of devotional cards, *The Tara Cards*, and is now writing a book to accompany them.

## FEMINIST SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

RCWMS has long been interested in feminism and spirituality, and for the last few years we have been exploring feminist spiritual direction. Spiritual direction is a covenant relationship between fellow travelers on a journey of faith, mindfully and humbly conducted in the presence of the Spirit. Feminist spiritual direction gives special attention to the character of being "woman" in our culture and seeks to empower women—lesbian, bisexual, and straight—in their unique spiritual journeys, and thus in the rest of their lives. In its emphasis on women's wholeness, feminist spiritual direction implicitly seeks justice and wholeness for all of God's people and creation.

Kaudie McLean, PhD, has recently joined RCWMS as our spiritual director. A writer, editor, artist, and certified spiritual director, she is leading our feminist spiritual direction program. To explore spiritual direction with her, contact: [kaudiemc@earthlink.net](mailto:kaudiemc@earthlink.net).

## ELDER WOMEN

Anita McLeod has developed the Elder Women project out of her desire to encourage elder women to be a force for peace and justice in the world. A semi-retired health educator and former Chair of the Board of RCWMS, Anita started leading menopause workshops more than twenty years ago. She has partnered with RCWMS in the last decade to lead "Wise Choices," retreats for women over sixty, and is now developing a wide variety of programs for elder women.

Anita likes to quote a Hopi prophecy: "When the grandmothers speak, the earth will heal." She wants to help elder women claim their wisdom, lead with their hearts, and repair their sacred connection with the earth. She points out that more women are entering their sixties, seventies, and eighties with better health, higher levels of education, greater work experience, and more resources than ever before in history. These women have time and choices their mothers and grandmothers never dreamed of. The question now is how to "give back."

RCWMS received a \$20,000 grant from the Kalliopeia Foundation in May 2012 for the Elder Women project. Funds will be used to expand our programs that encourage the spiritual and creative development of elder women.

## PAULI MURRAY

In November 2010, people in Durham, NC, celebrated the centennial of the birth of Rev. Dr. Pauli Murray, a tireless advocate for civil rights, workers' rights, and women's rights. She was a lawyer, scholar, author, poet, university professor, a founder of the National Organization for Women (NOW), and eventually the first African American woman to be ordained as an Episcopal priest. Born in Baltimore, MD, Murray grew up in Durham. In the 1950s, she published *Proud Shoes: The Story of an American Family*, a remarkable book about her childhood in Durham and her interracial ancestry.

Murray wrote, "It has taken me almost a lifetime to discover that true emancipation lies in the acceptance of the whole past." As part of the centennial celebration, RCWMS organized an exhibition of quilts and other textile art at St. Philip's Episcopal Church in Durham. We called it "Strength from All My Roots." The Mary Duke Biddle Foundation provided funding, and the exhibition was cosponsored by the St. Philip's Art Guild and the Pauli Murray Project at Duke University. For more information about Pauli Murray, visit [www.paulimurrayproject.org](http://www.paulimurrayproject.org).

(Continued on back.)

# 35 Years...

## THE FUTURE

In the last decade we have produced large public events, hosted small workshops and retreats, and published books and films, all focused on creativity, spirituality, justice, and equality. When I add it all up, it has been nothing less than remarkable. Those of us around RCWMS sometimes look at one another and ask, "How did we pull that off?" But then I've been wondering that since the beginning of the organization.

I am amazed that thirty-five years after it began, RCWMS is still here, and that I still love being involved in it. Part of what makes it such interesting work is that RCWMS operates by looking around to see what is needed and we invent things we wish were there. We draw on the gifts and inspiration of the people who participate in our programs or serve on our board of trustees. They, and you, will help to create our future. I can't wait to see what will come next.

# Elders

by Anita McLeod

People ask me if the Elder Women's project is about providing care and services for elderly women. This puzzled me until I realized there is not a clear distinction between *elderly* and *elder*. *Elderly* implies fragility or impairment requiring assistance. *Elder* refers to a person of age who is still growing, learning, and engaged in action. It is a term of respect, implying wisdom gained from lived experiences.

We live in a culture that worships youthfulness and fears aging. We need to bring the wise elder woman (or *crone*) back into our culture, because she can translate wisdom from her own life into a legacy for future generations. Our society needs grandmothers who know the earth is alive and sacred and who love the children of all beings.

The Elder Women project offers workshops that nurture and strengthen elder women. Join us for one of our programs this fall. **Harvesting Our Stories: Collecting Our Wisdom**, a writing workshop, will help us cull through our lived experiences to find pearls of wisdom we can translate into a legacy for future generations. **When the Grandmothers Speak, the Earth will Heal** will help us remember our childhood bond with nature, recover a sense of wonder, and imagine ways to share our love of the earth with the children in our lives. **Giving Thanks to the Earth** will deepen our connection to the natural world through basic movement, writing, music, simple drawing, and time outdoors. See the Calendar for more details. Scholarships will be available for these Elder Women workshops.



Cupcakes from Daisy Cakes,  
Durham, NC

# Essay Contest

RCWMS is committed to supporting women as they find their voices and make them heard. Our 2013 Essay Contest is now open for submissions. Women eighteen years of age and older may submit previously unpublished nonfiction essays of 1400 words or less.

Essays this year should focus on the theme of "home." Writers may choose to write about a physical home, a spiritual home, the desire to feel at home, or other topics connected to home.

Prizes will be \$300 for first place, \$200 for second place, and \$100 for third place. The winning essay will be published in the RCWMS newsletter, *South of the Garden*, in March 2013. Winners will be notified by mail.

The limit is two essays per person. Submit four double-spaced copies of each essay. Previous first-place winners and RCWMS Board members are not eligible. No sermons, please. No e-mail submissions. Manuscripts will not be returned. Do not put your name on your essay(s). Attach a cover letter with essay's title, your name, address, phone number, and e-mail. Submissions must be postmarked by January 15, 2013. Mail submissions: RCWMS Essay Contest, 1202 Watts St., Durham, NC 27701.

# RCWMS

RCWMS is a thirty-four-year-old nonprofit dedicated to weaving feminism and spirituality into a vision of justice for the world. RCWMS sponsors workshops, conferences, and retreats on women, religion, creativity, spirituality, and social justice. The organization mentors and encourages young women, religious leaders, writers, and activists.

RCWMS appreciates contributions of time, energy, money, and stock. To make a financial contribution or to volunteer, contact RCWMS or visit [www.rcwms.org](http://www.rcwms.org).

We are grateful for support from the Kalliopeia Foundation, the Triangle Community Foundation, The Community Foundation of Western North Carolina, the Foundation for the Carolinas, and Emerald Isle Realty.

RCWMS Trustees: Meghan Florian, Jenny Graves, Roxane Gwyn, Amy Kellum, Marcy Litle, Marya McNeish, Bonny Moellenbrock, Lori Pistor, Candice Provey, Courtney Reid-Eaton, and Sarah Walls

Jeanette Stokes, Executive Director  
Jennifer McGovern, Administrative Director  
Meghan Florian, Communications Coordinator  
Kaudie McLean, Spiritual Director in Residence  
Anita McLeod, Elder Women Project Director



SUBSCRIPTIONS to *South of the Garden* cost \$20 and run for 12 months from the time placed. Foreign or First Class is \$25. A subscription is free to anyone for whom the subscription fee is a burden. Tax-deductible contributions over and above the subscription fee are appreciated. Send checks to RCWMS, 1202 Watts Street, Durham, NC 27701, or go to [www.rcwms.org](http://www.rcwms.org).

YOUR MAILING LABEL shows the year and month your subscription will expire. 1403 = 2014 March.

ISSN 0890-7676  
[www.rcwms.org](http://www.rcwms.org) [rcwmsnc@aol.com](mailto:rcwmsnc@aol.com) 919.683.1236

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Durham, N.C.  
Permit # 1054

The Resource Center for Women  
and Ministry in the South  
1202 Watts Street, Durham, NC 27701  
919-683-1236  
Return Service Requested.