

THE AMHERST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST NEWSLETTER

121 North Pleasant Street, P.O. Box 502, Amherst Massachusetts 01004

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November 2024

Thanks to Bobbi Chaney for this image

Important Information

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[link to board minutes](#)

Co-Presidents:

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Treasurer:

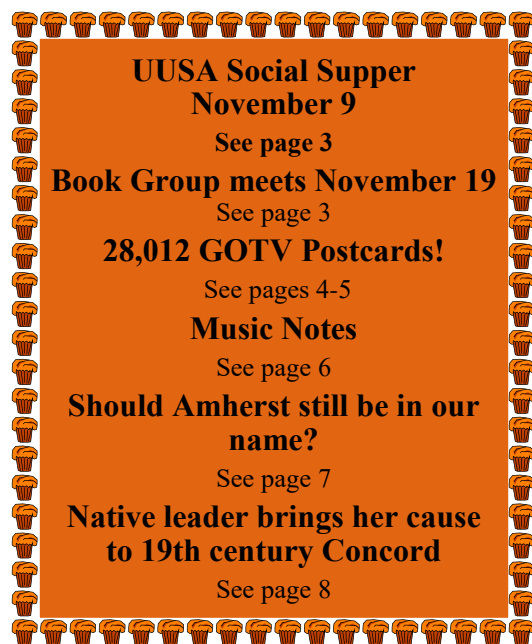
Eric Murphy

Members At Large:

Kate Dahlstedt

Sue Kelly

Nancy Hunter



NEWSLETTER

Deadline for submissions: 20th of each month. Email them to Copy Editor Janis Gray (contact Lea in the office if you need her email address).

Please understand we cannot cut and paste PDF files into the newsletter, so submissions should either be Word documents, rich text files or written in the body of the email. Submissions may be edited to save space or to maintain a consistent style.

Thank you!

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Schedule of Services

We encourage you to attend our services in person. You may also attend online. To join on Zoom, click here: <https://bit.ly/3TNcblI> [Meeting ID: 939 7607 7727 | Passcode: 091159]

Or call in +1 646 876 9923 and enter Meeting ID: 998 5370 0822.

Sunday, November 3, 10:30 A.M. — *And When I Rise*

Sunday, November 10, 10:30 A.M. — *This is My Song*
The Rev. Rachael Hayes

Sunday, November 17, 10:30 A.M. — *The Work Ahead*
The Rev. DL Heifer

As I write this, the election is ahead of us and outcomes are unclear. What is clear is that we, as Unitarian Universalists are part of the work ahead. The work of healing, of exploring complicated truths, and returning, always returning, to side with love.

Sunday, November 24, 10:30 A.M. — *This Precious Day*

The Rev. Rachael Hayes



Dedicated Offerings

From September to June, our Society donates each month to a Dedicated Offering recipient and splits every Sunday's offering plate 50/50 with the recipient organization. Our September offerings for Embrace Race came to \$1,200. Our October offerings for **Foyer Angelique Orphanage** in Haiti totalled \$1,200.

Our **November Dedicated Offering** will be for the **Unitarian Universalist Church of Lawton, OK**. Located 87 miles southwest of Oklahoma City, 4 miles from historic Fort Sill, and 53 miles from the Texas border, Lawton is close to the center of the continental United States. With a diverse population of well over 91,000, it reflects the intersection of many cultures, indigenous among them. Lawton's economy is bolstered by its proximity to Fort Sill, home of the U.S. Army's Field Artillery School. In short, Lawton is a multi-faceted, dynamic community reflecting many historical and cultural perspectives. The Unitarian Universalist Church of Lawton is one of 130 religious organizations in the greater metropolitan area. Organized in 1996, it is a small but steadfast congregation, dedicated to promoting UU values. However, during the last year or two, it has faced challenges to its very existence, as shown in this news broadcast from last January:

<https://www.kswo.com/2024/01/16/uucl-pushes-forward-help-those-need-despite-losing-blessing-box-fire/>

In addition to this fire, there has been vandalism to the back of their property, where the congregation built a lighted refreshment station for homeless people to wash up and obtain necessities. Now the congregation is considering selling their modest building and moving to a rented space that may be safer. Their goal is to continue having two Sunday services—one traditional and one pagan, both lay-led because they cannot afford a minister. Beyond services, they want to open their space regularly as a social venue where all are welcome. They strongly believe in the power of caring community to change the world for the better.

Though small in number, they are seeking ways to promote U U values and grow, as expressed in these excerpts from an email we received from the UUCL board.

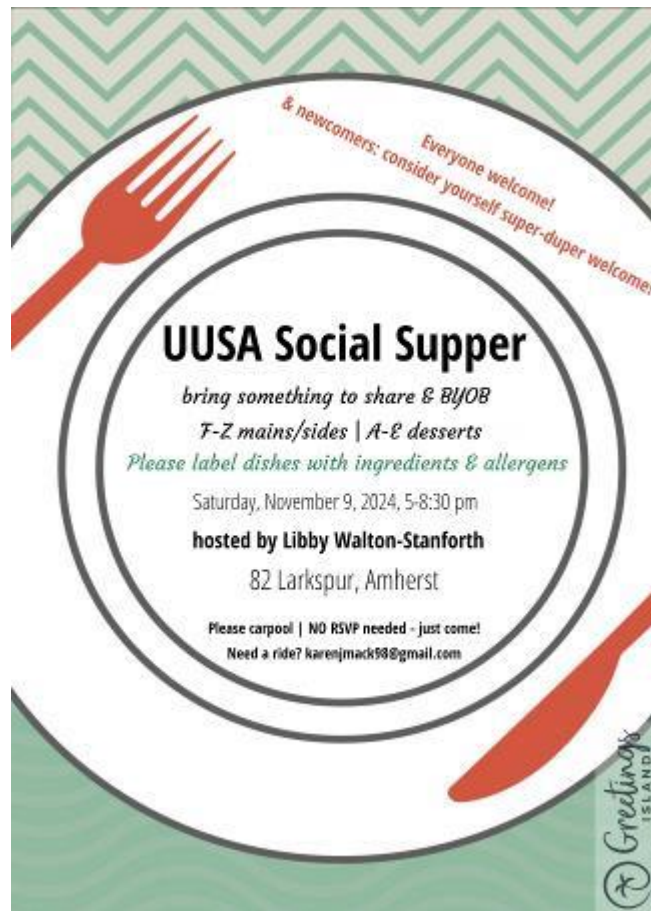
“Thank you for extending this kindness our way! We are humbled by your well wishes, condolences, and by

Our board had the opportunity to discuss your magnanimity, and we hope that this forms into a long-lasting friendship between our churches. We have always hoped to work with another church who shares our same mission.

“The vandalism has been a challenge, especially because of the timing of it all, but it has made us stronger as a congregation. However, the continued support we have received has made it that much easier to overcome. We want to continue being a safe space for people who are othered, oppressed, or rejected by society. There are so few places like ours in the Lawton area. This act of kindness you have bestowed upon us will help more than our church alone, but the people we service as well. We can't thank you enough!”

The Dedicated Offering Committee selects non-profit organizations that our Society will support with donations from our Sunday collections. We solicit UUSA’s members for names of organizations through a form which is available in the office and on-line here. A representative of the chosen organization is asked to speak about it, usually on the first Sunday of the month. We welcome new members. If you are interested in learning more or joining DOC, please contact **Anne Perkins, Mary Beth Seminario, Linda Callahan, Carolyn Holstein, or Kat Nowicki.**

Social Events



Men’s Breakfast at 7 A.M. each Wednesday, at Stables Restaurant, Hadley. This is an informal group - no need to “RSVP” - just show up (?s: contact **Pete Rogers**)

Women’s Circle at Noon on 2nd Thursday of each month in person in conference room, and at Noon (except this November!) on 4th Thursday on Zoom. To subscribe to this group and receive reminders, email: uusa-women+subscribe@uusocietyamherst.org

Community Breakfast Wednesday mornings from 8 - 10 A.M. Breakfast co-sponsored with Craig’s Doors in

our Social Hall. *Volunteers welcome (?s: contact **Sophie Rogers**) or just come to eat and chat.*

Book Club Tuesday, November 19. All are invited to a discussion of the book *The God of the Woods* by Liz Moore. We'll meet in the conference room downstairs at UUSA at noon. Feel free to bring a lunch and any suggestions for a future read. Please email **Nancy Hunter** with any questions: nancyhunter.314@gmail.com

Social Hour Builds Community . . . thanks to Melanie Holmberg

Our UUSA community is held together in many ways...through book groups, social actions, covenant groups, committees and ministries; *and* through SOCIAL HOUR. Every Sunday, after the service, we gather to connect with people we know, and people we don't know *yet*. Coffee, tea, juice and some tasty edibles are there to nibble on. The kids come up from RE, and we are all together!

DEEP THANKS TO MELANIE HOLMBERG, who has recently taken on the important work of managing this important activity. Melanie coordinates volunteers to set up snacks, and beverages every Sunday. She makes sure that supplies are on hand so it's easy for volunteers to put out the food and drink, and make the coffee. Many thanks to all of you who have already stepped up to host social hour! If you are interested in volunteering in this way to support our shared community, call or text Melanie (617.794.9193). She will sign you up and support you.

Co-President's Letter

November is a busy month!

The board held an Appreciative Inquiry discussion at our October meeting. **Reverend Rachael** led us in a session in which we could think about what's working really well, what are we curious about, and what are our dreams for the future.

In short, we are all encouraged about the signs of activity across the congregation. From seeing lots of new people coming in for services to the 29 young ones signed up for RE to the wealth of activity on the calendar: whether it's social, spiritual or social justice oriented. Lots of going on.

We are curious about many things. Is there too much on the calendar for everyone to take it in? Will our pledging and fundraising be able to support us going forward? Who are our new leaders in the congregation that can help us keep it up? Lots of questions.

We were all dreaming about how the congregation can play a larger role in supporting the greater community. And, for being a beacon of hope in an ever-changing world. Lots to dream about.

The board will continue to drill into our hopes and challenges at our upcoming "retreat" in November. I put retreat in quotes, because we'll only be retreating to one of our conference rooms. Fortunately, the regional UUA team has provided us with a facilitator to guide us on our journey of both dreaming and setting tangible goals for this year.

We encourage you to help us on this inquiry, by doing three things:

- Participate in the activities that mean the most to you this fall. In other words, vote with your feet.
- Provide input on developing our Mission Statement by participating in one of the seven [cottage meetings](#) this month. It will help us and all our leaders focus on what's most important going forward.
- Provide any thoughts and feedback you have by emailing board@uusocietyamherst.org.

Thank you for participating in this wonderful community!

Jeff Clark

Social Action



Hi Postcarders,

As we write, we are less than two weeks away from election day and have been reflecting on all our group has done to battle voter suppression. We pulled up our data on the number of postcards we have written, and it is mighty impressive. Our effort began in May of 2021, with members of the UUSA and folks in the Leverett

Community Chorus. Individuals spread the word to their families and communities and because of people's deep commitment to democracy, our cadre of writers grew and grew. In the four years that we have been doing this, **we have written and sent out 28,012 postcards.** 14,698 of those cards were done this year. We have written to folks in Georgia, Texas, Florida, North Carolina, Virginia and Arizona.

The playwright, statesman and dissident, Vaclav Havel, spoke eloquently about maintaining hope when there is despair. He said,

“The kind of hope I often think about (especially in situations that are particularly hopeless, such as prison) I understand above all as a state of mind, not a state of the world...it's not essentially dependent on some particular observation of the world or estimate of the situation. Hope is not prognostication. It is an orientation of the spirit, an orientation of the heart; it transcends the world that is immediately experienced, and is anchored somewhere beyond its horizons. Hope, in this deep and powerful sense, is not the same as joy that things are going well, or willingness to invest in enterprises that are obviously headed for early success, but, rather, an ability to work for something because it is good, not just because it stands a chance to succeed.”

Thank you for creating this community out of our shared sense of hope in the midst of despair. Working together we give one another hope. Some members of our group are heading to Chester County, Pennsylvania next week, to knock on doors. The work goes on. Whatever happens in this election, we will continue to work for democracy because it is the right thing to do.

In gratitude,

Anne Louise and Susan

Transgender Inclusion in Congregations program begins Nov. 16

Join **Robin Livingston**, **Yael Fuerst**, and **Kat Nowicki** for the Transgender Inclusion in Congregations program by the Transforming Hearts Collective (including Zr. Alex Kapitan who did a [service](#) with us in June). This course is designed for congregations and faith communities looking to deepen the practice of welcome. Going beyond “Transgender 101” terminology and concepts, it dives deep into topics such as practices for building Beloved Community, exploring gender diversity and trans spirituality, and how to transform culture and expand the circle of inclusion within a congregation.

This program consists of 6 online video lecture sessions each with supplementary material. Participants will view the lectures and supplementary material independently, and we will meet 3 times in person as a group to discuss the lectures in pairs on Nov. 16 10A.M-12 P.M., Jan. 29 6-8 P.M. and Mar. 19 6-8 PM. Learn more on [the website](#) or in the [“All About the Course”](#) video. Participation in all 3 discussion sections is highly encouraged.

A donation is encouraged, but not required, for participants. Donations will go to the UUSA's Richard Stevens Leadership Fund to offset the cost of the program for our congregation. You do not need to purchase the course as an individual as we have a coupon code for our congregation.

Reach out to **Robin Livingston** for more information, to RSVP, and get our congregation's coupon code for the platform. Contact info is in the directory, or ask Lea.

Finance Committee

The **Finance Committee** will meet on **Monday, November 11, at 7:15 P.M. on Zoom.**

Music Notes



As the leaves drift and blow, the choir has been gearing up for a fairly busy season.

We are always looking for willing and able voices to join us bright (?) and early on Sunday mornings at 8:45 A.M. for our **REGULAR WEEKLY REHEARSALS**. Any Sunday we will NOT be rehearsing will be announced more than a week ahead of time, and if there's any doubt, please feel free to email me at music@uusocietyamherst.edu



COMING UP:

NOVEMBER We will be presenting music on November 3, November 10, and November 24 (For the Beauty of the Earth by John Rutter — see video at link below) during the Sunday service. **If you would like to sing, particularly on the 24th** of November, please plan to attend rehearsals as regularly as possible between now and then!!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PTOfSKXkRa0>

THINKING AHEAD:

CHRISTMAS CAROLERS!!! -- Please contact me, **Brenda Miller** (email above), if you are interested in joining a group of UUs (not necessary to be in the “regular choir”) for a jaunt out for some good old-fashioned Christmas caroling.

DATE and TIME TBA. Let me know your preferences please. It's not too early to plan ahead!! Some ideas are:

- Assisted Living residences
- nursing homes
- homes of members of UUSA who find it hard to get out.

I continue to enjoy bringing you and sharing with you all of the music at the UUSA.

Yours in harmony,

Brenda Miller

Director of Music UUSA



Save the Date: UUSA Leaders Meeting - 11/18th on Zoom

This semiannual meeting was formerly called Circle of Chairs, Departments Meeting, and probably some other names in the past. Please make sure 1 or 2 people from your committee or circle attend this meeting, whether they are a chair, leader, or delegate. Topics:

- Provide feedback on UUSA Mission themes from your committee/circle's perspective.
- Experience the sociocracy process of rounds for providing input

The Committee of Shared Ministries has done a great job receiving input on our congregation's mission statement. Now, it's time to see if the themes of their exploration resonate with your work in your committee/circle.

Jeff Clark

RREJC November Report

The UUSA **Racial, Religious, and Ethnic Justice Circle (RREJC)** emerged from the Social Justice Jambooree held in the social hall last October. We have been meeting by zoom to discuss social justice issues and propose potential action items for the congregation. Last spring we focused on the questions; “how do we fit our response to the conflict in Israel/Palestine within a UU framework? How do we honor our UU values/principles?” We published a statement regarding the conflict and shared this with the congregation in the newsletter and on our [RREJC web page](#).

Following the UUSA Common Read book groups over the past two years, *An Indigenous People’s History of the U.S.* and *On Repentance and Repair*, we [proposed a process to the Board of Trustees](#) to “investigate and propose an appropriate means to disassociate the name of the congregation from the harms promulgated by Field Marshal Jeffery Amherst.” The Board accepted our proposal and is in the process of convening a circle to begin this exploratory process. If you would like to be part of this process, please contact **Kate Dahlstedt**, a member of the Board of Trustees.

This autumn, we are sponsoring a series of six Embodied Anti-racist Practice sessions to study and practice the methods taught by Resmaa Menakem, for healing the racialized trauma we all carry in our bodies based on his best-selling book, *My Grandmother's Hands: Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending our Hearts and Bodies*.

The circle is preparing to ask the congregation to support the federal legislation to establish a [Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding Schools](#). The Indigenous Awareness Circle, a sub-circle of the RREJC, is in the process of reviewing this recommendation.

We are also exploring several other actions including: 1) inviting a speaker to the UUSA to help us think together about the current conflict in Israel and Palestine, 2) supporting the [2025 Odenong Pow Wow](#) which has been held for the last 4 years at the Amherst-Pelham Regional High School in May, and 3) partnering with other local congregations on social justice work. We also share resources, readings, and announcements of local social justice events with each other. If you would like to learn more or come to our next meeting to get to know the circle and our work, please contact any of us.

Members of the RREJC

Sarah Puckett - Convener/Leader
Rob Fuderich - Delegate
Rodger Matlage - Facilitator
John Gerber - Notetaker
Mary Beth Seminario

Caring Team

Let UUSA Caring Team leaders **Fran Plumer** or **Catharine Porter** know if you or someone you know would like a phone call or visit, perhaps a ride or a meal. Our mission is to see that no one goes unnoticed and everyone in our community gets the help they need. Other team members are **Charlie Atwood, Pete Rogers, Carol Johnson, Rob Fuderich, Jeanne Ballantine, Carolyn Cave, Mary Latham, Linda Callahan, Sophie Hermann, Lynn Sussman, Kate Dahlstedt, Gordon Wyse, Lauren Croce, Karen Mack**.

ION Corner

The Interfaith Opportunities Network (ION) had a very interesting October meeting at the South Hadley Congregational Church, where our guest speaker **Rebecca Fricke**, who’s also a UU member, told us about the public sculpture at Wildwood Cemetery. As Manager of Wildwood, Rebecca is very excited about the In Memoriam Sculpture Project which continues the tradition of inviting the public to come and reflect on those who have passed. The research she's been working on reflects a rich diversity of people buried there. She said Wildwood imagines 6 sculptures to represent the following themes and people:

- 1) Belonging (sculptures paid for and in process);
- 2) People buried in the unmarked graves in the Southeast section;
- 3) BIPOC community members;
- 4) Scholars, many of whom weren't recognized in their time;
- 5) Agricultural workers who worked the land on which the cemetery is built and the surrounding areas which were turned over for development; and
- 6) Indigenous peoples who lived and traveled through on this land.

Rebecca said Wildwood would like to set an example for how cemeteries can expand their identity to not only be a burial ground, but also a place with public art representing the story of that area's community.

Mary Beth Seminario, UUSA representative to ION

Just in time for reflection as we near a National Day of Mourning

UUSA Member and author **Polly Peterson** recently wrote a piece for *Discover Concord* magazine called "The Cause of the Paiute Indians Comes to Concord." During Indigenous Peoples Month, we felt it would be fitting to share word of Polly's story of Native American Sarah Winnemucca, who wrote *Life Among the Piutes, Their Wrongs and Claims*. Sarah won the support of a number of reform-minded Concord-area residents, including prominent Unitarians. (The name of her people was written in English without the "a" at that time.)

You can find a larger (and more legible!) facsimile of the magazine at <https://www.discoverconcordma.com/articles/246-the-cause-of-the-paiute-indians-comes-to-concord> Go to pages 34-35.

The Cause of the Paiute Indians Comes to Concord

BY POLLY PETERSON

In 1850, Lizzie Emerson, widow of Ralph Waldo Emerson, hosted a gathering in her Concord home for Sarah Winnemucca, a Native American woman whose book *Life Among the Piutes, Their Wrongs and Claims* had recently been published. Mrs. Emerson and her friends were staunch campaigners for human rights, and Sarah was on a mission to win justice for her people. This was just the kind of gathering that might help Sarah's cause.

Throughout much of 1850, Sarah had been living in Boston at the home of Elizabeth Peabody and Mary Peabody Mann. Her homeland, though, was near Pyramid Lake in the northwestern part of Nevada. Sarah's grandfather, Truckee, and her father, Winnemucca, were well-known leaders of the Northern Paiutes.¹ Sarah's Paiute name was Tokocchony ("Shell Flower"), but to white people she was Sarah Winnemucca—or sometimes "Princess Sarah."

Sarah had come East on a lecture tour seeking supporters. The U.S. government had brutally relocated her people, and she was determined to help them regain the right to live on at least some portion of their own land. Her performances on stage

were riveting and heart-rending, but it was impossible in a single lecture to fully explain the wrongs her people had suffered. She wanted to write a book that would tell her story more fully, and the elderly Peabody sisters encouraged her to do so.

Both Elizabeth and Mary had extensive experience in editing, writing, and publishing, and their expertise would be essential to this project. Sarah had learned English while young, but, as an Indian, she had been denied formal schooling. Her extraordinary speaking was impressive.

But editing was, as Mary put it, "an unenviable quantity to her." Sarah wrote down the stories she had been telling from the lecture stage, while Mary corrected the orthography.

Now that the book was in print, Peabody and Mann were making every effort to bring Sarah's compelling story to their reform-minded friends and to circulate a petition urging the U.S. government to rectify some of the wrongs done to the Paiutes. The sisters knew that Sarah's cause would find a sympathetic audience in Concord.



An far back in 1838, more than 200 Concord women had signed a petition protesting the forced removal of the Cherokee from their traditional homelands.

Peabody and Mann had deep connections to Concord themselves. The two of them had made a home there together, along with Mary's sons, after the 1850 death of Mary's husband Hiram Mann. Their sister Sophia also lived in Concord during the 1840s with her husband Nathaniel Howland and their children. Elizabeth's connection to the town went back even earlier. Her friendship with Ralph Waldo Emerson began when they studied Greek together in their teens and continued through his move to Concord and his return to Boston.

At the time of the Emerson marriage, Elizabeth was working as a teacher in Dr. James Alcott's Temple School in Boston. Her 1826 book *Record of a School*, which documented Alcott's teaching methods,

not only made Alcott famous, but became an opening salvo of the movement known as Transcendentalism. Elizabeth Peabody remained a central figure in that movement, best known for providing other people's teachers. She had an extraordinary talent for bringing up ideas.

Peabody and Mann were both dedicated to educational reform. A book they co-authored in 1852 highlighted the importance of play and of time outdoors in nature. During her time with them, Sarah became almost the another sister. Like Elizabeth, Sarah was a gifted linguist. She spoke English and Spanish in addition to three indigenous languages, and she firmly believed in the power of education to bring intercultural understanding. Her descriptions of how Paiute children were raised bore a remarkable similarity to the educational ideas promoted by Peabody and Mann. Convinced that the two cultures had much to learn from each other, Mary wrote "When something like a human communication is established between the Indians and whites, it may prove a fair exchange, and the knowledge of nature which has accumulated... may enrich our early education as much as reading and writing will enrich theirs."

This was a radical idea at the time, and one that was heavily rejected by American policymakers.

After the publication of her book, Sarah Winnemucca continued lecturing to large audiences. She traveled to Washington, D.C. where her petitions with hundreds of signatures were delivered to Congress, and she testified movingly before the House Subcommittee on Indian Affairs. At last, when it seemed she had done all she could, she headed back to Nevada to realize her dream of establishing a school for Paiute children. Despite immense obstacles, she managed to open a bilingual school, which she called the Peabody Institute. Even though the children at her school were clearly thriving under her tutelage, opposition to the school was centering Government policies of the 1850s were committed to establishing boarding schools far from the children's families, where Indian children would be "Americanized" by losing all contact with their own language and culture.

Elizabeth Peabody stood in fierce opposition to such policies. After Mary's death in 1857 Elizabeth's devotion to Sarah's elementary school continued unabated. She met with government officials, wrote newspaper articles, and sent what aid she could—but while opposition, financial difficulties, and Sarah's failing health brought the school to an end in 1868.

Sarah Winnemucca's Indian school in Nevada was doomed to failure by the prejudices of her time, yet Elizabeth Peabody never regarded devoting the final years of her life to Sarah's cause. Recalling to her aunt, Ellen Hawthorne Wicks, "The last time I saw her was on the threshold of a little hut in Concord; she stood in her wrapper, her self gray hair flowing down her back, her face anguished with holy purpose. But I turned off the gate, she threw up her right arm and called out, 'I am the champion of the Indians! She said it half laughingly, for she was never deficient in the sense of humor; but she meant it!"



Mary Peabody Mann



Elizabeth Peabody



RIGHT: Statue of Sarah Winnemucca at the Capitol Visitors' Center, Washington, D.C.

1. Sarah's name was Tokocchony.

*Scale is the spring used now rather than Hubs as in Sarah's book.

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