



The Religious Leader

NEWS FROM THE MINISTRY AND PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP STAFF GROUP • EARLY SPRING 2005

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Trying to See Where We Are Going

We've all probably had enough leadership or management training to know that one of the first things a good leader tries to do is to find some way of stepping back far enough from the current whirl of activity to get a sense of the direction in which the organization or people he or she serves is moving. Some writers about leadership advise "getting on the balcony." We here in MPL often suggest to colleagues that they establish enough distance from a situation or experience to see what can be learned from it before moving on. We offer that kind of advice to you along with an inward prayer that we, too, might be able to do the same thing. Those I have known here at the UUA and many of my colleagues in the field have always had that strong desire to get enough good data and distance to understand what UU ministers and professionals will need to be creative and effective leaders in a constantly changing environment. I think that the hard work that the MFC, the UUMA, the UUA Board, and MPL have been doing relating to ministerial categories is not really about putting people in the right professional boxes, but about anticipating and providing the right kind of support for changing and growing ministries. I know that the RE credentialing effort is not about the titles given, but is really about gaining enough perspective to anticipate the challenges and opportunities that face religious education. I understand that the work that the AUUA and UUMN have been doing about certification is really about providing guidelines and support to UU musicians and administrators in the face

of changing needs and expectations. Over the past several years, the efforts by UU community ministers to build a better understanding of their ministry and their role in our movement is similarly forward-looking and optimistic. I know that those of us in MPL are fitting more and more into opportunities to step back so we can see ahead. We are looking at the data we already have on hand to better understand the development paths of our ministers and religious leaders. We are looking back at reports, some written thirty years ago, which have very smart and prescient insights into what the educational needs of ministers and religious educators were going to be. We want to build on that wisdom. With the help of generous volunteer colleagues, we are in the process of gathering new data from you about your professional situations, your experiences, and your hopes. I write all this mainly so that you know that we haven't forgotten the critical importance of looking both ways before crossing the street . . . and of what can happen when one doesn't take the time to look.

Speaking Together

Did you hear the one about the minister, religious educator, musician, and administrator who went to the golf course? They actually had fun together! By the time you read this, key leaders of the UUMA, LREDA, AUUA, and UUMN will have met together in Boston on February 10 to, among other things, talk about credentialing and certification efforts in each group, discuss how each

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group does mentoring, consider ways in which the professional groups might find it productive to work together or do shared trainings, and also to be comfortable about the value of the groups maintaining their distinct and valuable identities. I've mentioned here before that representatives from the UU professional groups have met for breakfast at the last two GAs. This meeting is the natural outcome of those productive but rushed early morning gatherings. I'm looking forward to the gathering.

And as Always

Please carefully read the reports that follow from my colleagues and from several of the UU organizations with whom MPL works. They are varied enough in style to keep you interested and rich enough in what they report to truly be valuable to you. ●

Regards and Thanks,
David P. Hubner,
Director of Ministry and
Professional Leadership

Ministerial Credentialing/Internship Clearinghouse—

David Pettee, Christine May, Griffith Bell, Kim Wilson

From the Ministerial Credentialing Office

Whereas the end of the year means the holiday rush for most colleagues, for me December brings follow-up work generated by the Ministerial Fellowship Committee meeting in Berkeley and the BCM (aka the "Big Complex Meeting") when UUA field staff make their annual trip to Boston. There were two items that came out of the MFC meeting and one from the BCM that I'd like to mention. Back in February 2000, when the RSCC system was formally instituted, any person already in candidate status (under what we now refer to as the "old rules") was *not* required to interview with an RSCC before seeing the MFC. Today, five years later, there are still a fair number of candidates preparing to see the MFC who were "grandparented" in under this arrangement, who have chosen not to interview with an RSCC. The MFC has voted to sunset this current arrangement.

Effective December 31, 2006, any person granted candidacy status through the "old rules" will become *required* to successfully interview with an RSCC before being able to schedule their MFC interview. Here's why. It has become apparent that those who have been in the cre-

denialing process for more than five years, and who haven't been interviewed by an RSCC, simply don't fare as well with the MFC when compared to those who have RSCC interview experience.

Although it is not possible to outline every reason why an MFC interview doesn't go well, I see two factors that seem to be at least partially responsible. The experience of preparing for and interviewing with an RSCC provides a trove of useful information when it comes time to interview with the MFC. There is a consistent interview ritual. Reflecting back upon their RSCC interview, many new ministers have told me that they found it unexpectedly useful to be in a room of six to ten Unitarian Universalists who were deeply committed to the health and well being of the our ministry. Some imagined that meeting with the RSCC would be just like meeting with their seminary faculty, and they discovered that this was not the case at all. The aims of theological education and the ministerial credentialing process often intersect in the long run, but they tend to run more parallel in the short run.

Another important learning from an RSCC interview is more

internal. Are you a person who looks forward to a spirited conversation and likes the give-and-take of an interview? Or, are you someone who dislikes this kind of pressure and format, who hates feeling evaluated, and wonders why this whole thing is necessary in the first place? If you are like many candidates who resonate with the latter experience, developing successful coping strategies to deal with your own inner experience/reaction will come in handy. And lest you think that the only group who evaluates you is the MFC . . . just wait until you start looking for work as a minister, no matter where you end up serving!

The other dynamic is more subjective. I've come to the opinion that theological education and Unitarian Universalism tend to leave a deep and lasting impression based on *when* a person prepares for ministry and what is going on at that time in the world. For example, those candidates who were barely into their first week of an internship or were students starting seminary when September 11 occurred have watched their understanding of ministry radically evolve. Twenty years ago when I started seminary, the three hot issues included liberation theology, a ministerial response to AIDS, and the outrageous treatment of Matthew Fox by the Vatican! The UUA was actively taking stands on apartheid, nuclear free zones, and the sanctuary movement. When I eventually saw the MFC in 1993, eight years removed from beginning seminary, I needed to make a very significant commitment to be particularly aware of the current issues. A lot had changed in eight years. When people come to the MFC years removed from seminary, it often shows—they feel somehow behind the times. The RSCC interview can be an effective antidote to bring a person up to speed.

The other MFC matter I want to mention, effective beginning with the March 2005 MFC meeting, is the inclusion of a candidate file review. For several years now, John Weston has been sending a file sum-

mary in confidence to the appropriate search committee(s) where a minister has been selected as a pre-candidate. It makes good sense for candidates to be accountable to this same professional practice, given that when an aspirant is granted candidacy status, they become bound to the *MFC Rules & Policies* and the *UUMA Code of Professional Practice*. I will be writing this candidate file review with the goal and expectation of gaining mutual agreement of the language with each candidate. However, in the unlikely event that we are not able to reach agreement on the review, I will still forward my review to the MFC with notice of that fact.

Finally, it's been over a year now since an interview with a UUA field staff person, or their designee, was reinstated as part of gaining aspirant status. It was not all that much of a surprise to learn that field staff who are geographically nearest to the seminaries are overly busy with these requests. Whenever possible, I'd like to encourage those seeking aspirant status to contact field staff where they live to get this important interview completed. Chances are that the field staff near an aspirant's home church should have had a longer relationship with a person preparing for the ministry. Thus, the interview is likely to be that much more valuable for all involved. ●

In the Faith,
David Pettee,
Ministerial Credentialing Director

From the Internship Clearinghouse

I recently read the column of my predecessor, Ken Oliff, from a year ago, written just before he left and shortly before I came on. In it he remarked on how much the Clearinghouse had changed in the three-and-a-half years he was there. I do most of my work with teaching sites and potential interns on the computer, and I now I realize how much I've taken this modern technol-

ogy for granted! When Ken started, he had a stack of papers on his desk. Each one listed a congregation that was interested in having an intern. Potential interns had to call Ken to find out what opportunities were available.

Ken made a lot of headway in getting the Clearinghouse into the twenty-first century, and he deserves a lot of credit for making the Internship Clearinghouse a smoothly functioning and better-known service of the UUA, both for congregations and potential interns. As many of you know, we now have the capability for potential interns, as well as congregations and other teaching sites, to list themselves on the UUA's website, making it much easier for them to "find" each other. Until recently, though, I was still printing out lists of potential intern profiles and mailing these profiles to supervisors or intern committees who requested them. But, in working with our Information Technology Department (my thanks and appreciation to the folks there!) the process is now much easier: supervisors and

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Meadville/Lombard Theological School—Summer Intensives 2005

Registration for these classes will be available on-line at www.meadville.edu beginning March 15, 2005. One-half of the tuition balance is due by May 1, 2005; tuition due in full by June 2, 2005. Questions can be forwarded to the Office of the Registrar, registrar@meadville.edu.

July 4–8, 2005 at Ferry Beach

H349INT Unitarian Universalist Polity; *Rev. James Hobart—Adjunct Faculty*; Contact Matt McKay at 207-282-4489 or e-mail: fbmatt@maine.rr.com to make rooming reservation.

July 11–15, 2005

TS 540INT Queer Theory and Religious Thought; *Laurel C. Schneider, Ph.D.—Adjunct Faculty*

July 18–22, 2005

M530INT Systemic Thinking and Therapy; *Rev. W. David Arksey—Adjunct Faculty*

July 26–August 6, 2005

M442/552INT Religions and Social Struggle in Mexico; *Dr. Susi Pangerl—Faculty*; Time will be split between Mexico City and Chiapas. In addition to regular tuition students will pay a program fee. Students will be responsible for their own transportation to and from Mexico City.

intern committee chairs can request a password to access the profiles of all the potential interns who list themselves. Although potential interns frequently will initiate contact with congregations, the reverse is also true, and this new system makes it much easier for congregations to get in touch with people whom they might be interested in interviewing.

In addition to offering information and guidance through what sometimes seems like a maze of MFC requirements and guidelines to those unfamiliar with the process, the Clearinghouse is really about relationships and helping people find one another. With that aim in mind, I developed a list of non-UU theological schools at which we have (or often have) students, and made contact with the field education staff person at each school. I invited them to visit the Internship Clearinghouse web pages, to look at the *Internship Manual* (available for download),

and/or to contact me. Many of them responded and expressed their thanks for the information and the connection. Most were not familiar with the UUA's requirements for ministerial preparation, including the internship requirements, and they will now be able to help their UU students be more "in the loop."

The other result of this project is that we now have posted on the Clearinghouse web page a link to a fairly comprehensive directory of these non-UU theological schools, including field education contact information.

Another way I have tried to develop relationships is by reaching out to those current interns who identify as people of color, as visible minorities, or as coming from traditionally marginalized communities. Taking my cue from David Pettee, I said up front that we intentionally have no "plan" or "program" in place, but that we were aware of various issues that had come up in the past

for some interns. So what we wanted to specifically let them know is that we're here for their support, should they need it, in whatever form that might be. We'd also like to hear about any "success" stories or other positive events that may occur during their internships. The feedback I received from the offer of support was very positive; in listening to these interns, I also came away having heard some pain and some joy.

From these initial conversations came the idea of doing a workshop at Professional Days 2005: "Conversations on Ministerial Internships and Diversity — Stories We Need to Tell, Stories We Need to Hear." The panel will include two intern-supervisor "pairs," David Pettee, myself, and others with experience in diversity issues. We hope this will be an opportunity for all of us to listen and learn.

During GA, I'll be representing the Internship Clearinghouse in

Starr King School for the Ministry—Summer Session

The GTU Summer Session collaborative is finalizing courses to be offered during the summer of 2005. Confirmed are "Exploring Our Spiritual Selves through Dream Work" with Rev. Jeremy Taylor (August 8–12, 2005) and "The Beat Face of God: The Beat Generation of Writers as Spirit Guides," with Rev. Stephen D. Edington. Both will be sponsored by Starr King School. To learn more about the GTU Summer Session, or to register for courses, visit www.gtuss.org/.

another workshop, "Becoming a Teaching Congregation." Nan Hobart and Patti Lawrence (the field education directors for Meadville/Lombard and Starr King, respectively), an intern, a supervisor, and I will each share some "nuggets" about internships and what it means to be an internship site, also allowing plenty of time for feedback and questions.

As the Internship Clearinghouse has become more widely known, more interns and more congregations have been using it. This year, because of contact by either the congregation or the intern, I have a list (on computer, of course!) of nearly 80 sites and their interns. Earlier this fall, we also had a record number of applicants for the Intern Stipend Grants Program. Unfortunately, as is always

the case, we did not have the funds to provide grants to each congregation applying, but we were able to make preliminary grants to six congregations, pending the hiring of interns. Another increase I have seen over the past year is the number of people who want to do community and "hybrid" (combined community and parish) internships, including several very creative proposals, which were approved by the MFC.

Like many things, the internship process has its own rhythm, with the unusual beat here and there. Although many would-be interns and congregations alike had hoped to match up before the end of December, most are still in the "looking" stage. I anticipate that over the next few months, many matches

between teaching site and intern will be made. If you are an intern or an intern supervisor, I would be most appreciative if you would let me know for my records where you have been hired (if an intern) or whom you have hired (if a supervisor). And, as always, please feel free to contact me via e-mail, through the Internship Clearinghouse site, or by phone for information, guidance, or a pastoral chat. ●

Yours in Faith,
Kim Wilson, Internship
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2005–2006 Financial Aid Application Forms Now Available

Get them at www.uua.org/programs/ministry/credentialing/preparation/financialaid05-06.pdf. You may also contact your RSCC administrator or the Ministerial Credentialing Office administrator, Chris May, at cmay@uua.org or 617-948-6403. The deadline for application is April 15, 2005.

Religious Education Credentialing & Renaissance Program—Beth Williams

Note from Beth

I t may not be obvious why the Religious Education Credentialing program would be appropriate for any one but a new religious educator. Gaia Brown addresses this issue in "Credentialing—What's in it for Me?" Gaia received Credentialed Religious Educator—Masters Level status in February 2004, and served as Credentialed Observer to the Religious Education Credentialing Committee in October 2004. She has been a professional religious educator since 1975, serving congregations in New Jersey and Illinois. Since 2001 she has been a religious education author, trainer, and consultant.

Credentialing—What's in it for Me?

I'm talking to people like me, DREs who are well into middle age and who have spent most of that time as professional religious educators. Haven't we already shown that we have what it takes? Do we gain anything from becoming credentialed? Having completed the credentialing process at the masters level, here are some things I've learned.

I didn't know as much as I thought I did. Here are some examples. I had a good idea of how congregational polity worked, but I didn't know its foundations, and I didn't know how to make it work for me. I'd come to UUism in the early 70s, when the UUA's racial rift of the 60s was still part of the environment; but I'd never heard the story, and didn't understand the pain. Nor could I tell you much about Channing and Ballou (just for starters). Once I started fulfilling the requirements of the credentialing program, I realized there were things I should have learned about years ago. Yes, I'd managed without my new knowledge, but I would have been more competent with it. It's hard to know (be aware of) things you don't know.

This is for the profession. I began my career as a religious educator back when there was no career path, little support, and even less respect. My gratitude to LREDA and the UUA for making credentialing a reality can't be put into words. Not only have I been recognized, but the value of every DRE who has spent years in the trenches, even those not in the program, has been affirmed. *We are important enough that this program was created.* Participating in the credentialing program was one way for

me to say “thank you” and to help support the concept of religious education leadership as a viable career.

This is for me. At Fall Conference a long-time DRE talked to me about putting her portfolio together. “I had no idea I’d accomplished so much,” she said. “It really makes me feel great to see it all laid out. I’m having fun doing this.” I had similar feelings. Look what I have wrought over the years: programs developed, concepts mastered, teachers trained, lives transformed. In addition, even though I am no longer serving a congregation (so in fact, I’m no longer a DRE), I’m still recognized as a religious educator. Because my profession has been such an important part of my personal identity for so long, that means a lot to me. If were I still serving a congregation, it would also benefit from my increased (even after 20 years!) professionalism.

What’s New in the Religious Education Credentialing Program

Many congratulations to the following religious educators who were awarded Credentialed Religious Educator status by the Religious Education Credentialing Committee at its October 2004 meeting:

Pat Kahn	Layne Richard-Hammock
Alice Springer	Kathy Walker

We welcome the following religious educators who have been accepted into the Religious Education Credentialing Program and are working toward various levels of achievement. Their commitment to excellence in religious education and professional development are recognized through these efforts:

Sparrow Alden	Jennifer McAdoo
Diane Melvin	Lynne Webber

New RE Credentialing Policies and Procedures—Highlights

The Religious Education Credentialing Committee made the following policies at its October 2004 meeting:

Competency areas of the Religious Education Credentialing Portfolio must follow the format developed by the RECC, which is available on the Religious Education Credentialing resources web page. This requirement goes into effect for the February 2006 RECC meeting.

Proposals and fulfillment documentation for Graduate Course Academic Equivalencies must follow the format and policies developed by the RECC, which are available on the Religious Education Credentialing resources web page.

The Letter of Endorsement must now include an indication of applicant areas for professional growth that might be developed while a participant in the program. This information must be shared with the applicant.

The Letter of Recommendation must now be sent directly to the RECC from the evaluator to encourage a candid assessment of the candidate.

The requirement for a minimum length of a mentor relationship has been eliminated: Those people that apply to the RE Credentialing program in order to complete the program in less than a year are asked to have a mentor, with the ideal frequency of contact being approximately one hour a month for how many months it takes for the candidate to complete the program.

A “hold status” (no more than one year, no re-entry requirements, limited program benefits) and an “inactive participant status” (indefinite length, no program benefits, must petition for re-entry, re-entry at discretion of RECC) have been instituted for program participants.

Religious Education Credentialing Committee

The members of the RECC take seriously the balance needed between the desire to keep the operations of our Association as transparent as possible and the confidentiality needed to maintain the personal information we have about the individuals who are candidates for credentialing. As a new committee, we are working to discover where the appropriate balance needs to be. We know that all discussions of candidates and their interviews are confidential. We have also discovered that as we develop our guidelines we often need to refer back to particular candidate’s materials as examples in creating clearer guidelines for future candidates.

The RECC has begun several procedures that will make the work we do more transparent and accessible.

From the beginning, the Religious Education Credentialing Office and the RECC have made all of its documents and processes available on the UUA website. As the committee adds or changes material, those changes will appear on the website as soon as possible. The committee is also posting a précis of its minutes on the site as well.

Beginning with the October 2004 RECC meeting, there is now an official observer of our meetings. The observer is a Credentialed Religious Educator who will participate fully in Committee meeting but not have a vote. At the end of the meeting, the observer will make a report on the committee’s process that will be posted on the website.

The committee held a Time for Comment at the end of its October 2004 meeting to allow anyone with comments to personally present them.

At our February 2005 meeting, the committee will make a part of one of our meeting days open for public observers. The public will be able to observe but not participate in that section of the committee’s work.

The Committee plans to alternate the Time for Comment and the Open meeting sessions at our two annual committee meetings.

If you are curious or need to know more about our committee and how it works, I hope that you will take

advantage of these ways of finding out more. On the Credentialing Program website, you will also find an e-mail link that will put you in touch with whoever is the current chair of the committee. While specific credentialing process questions are best answered by the Religious Education Credentialing Director, Beth Williams, the committee is happy and available to hear from you. ●

Liz Jones,
Chair, RECC

Renaissance Program News

The following are Renaissance program modules scheduled for the coming year:

- Mar. 3–5, Curriculum, Paradise Valley, AZ, Tera Little, teralittle@worldnet.att.net
- Mar. 4–6, Curriculum, Nashville, TN, Jennifer Morley, jamorleyuufa@yahoo.com
- Mar. 11–13, Multicultural RE, St. Louis, MO, Dori Davenport, doriduure@aol.com
- Apr. 22–24, Teacher Training, Austin, TX, Jennifer Nichols-Payne, jnichols-payne@msn.com
- Apr. 29–May 1, Curriculum, Alamo, CA, Kate Throop, katethroop@comcast.net
- May 19–20, UU Identity, Hamilton, ON, Sylvia Bass West, sylvia@cuc.ca

- Jun. 10–11, Teacher Training, Duxbury, MA, Betsy Stevens, revebs@aol.com
- Jul. 16–22, Philosophy of RE & UU History, Ferry Beach, ME, Wendy von Zirpolo, wendyvon@aol.com
- Jul. 16–24, UU Identity, Star Island, NH, Merry Stockwell, merry@stockwell.mv.com

Renaissance Recognition Policy: O.W.L. Trainings taken after December 31, 2004 will no longer be considered applicable toward achieving Renaissance Recognition. Other, non-Renaissance trainings will be evaluated by the Renaissance Program Advisory Committee (Judith Frediani, Beth Williams, Phil Lund, Cindy Spring, Jessica York) at its next meeting.

Scholarship: A reminder that the Barbara Marshman & Ann Fields Memorial Scholarship is awarded annually to a religious educator who is engaged in a program of graduate study and is serving a Unitarian Universalist congregation. This \$500 prize is given through the generous contributions of those who wish to memorialize and honor the work of these two great religious educators, and through the ongoing support of the UUA. Application deadline is May 1, 2005. Please contact the RE Credentialing Assistant at recassistant@uua.org for application information. ●

Beth Williams,
Religious Education Credentialing Director

Settlement—John Weston

For Interim Ministry Hopefuls

If you wish to serve a congregation “in the interim,” please plan to update your Ministerial Record and submit an application for interim ministry by April 1. Have your interim minister’s packet ready to send out by April 15. For additional important information see “In the Interim,” on-line at www.uua.org/programs/ministry/publications/interim/.

Ministers new to the interim ministry program should be aware that unlike the Ministerial Settlement System, which resembles the NASDAQ in affording a high degree of individual election and transparency, the interim selection process is more like the Soviet economy pre-Gorbachev: central planning and a final scramble.

In the application, ministers’ preferences are requested as to the Districts and type of ministry in which they are willing to serve. Beyond that, it is up to the Settlement Director to provide each congregation with a list of the three ministers best qualified to serve it in light of the needs of all other congregations. Only Accredited Interim Ministers (AIMs) and AIMs-in-Training (AIMITs) are asked for their specific congregational preferences. Even their elections may not be always honored.

Given the press of circumstance and the confusion in which many congregations find themselves after a ministerial departure, the interim selection process in the best of times is “nasty, brutal, and short.” These are not, however, the best of times. The last two years have found the number of interim opportunities at a low ebb. This year may provide some improvement, but not enough to be called relief.

The UUA’s interim ministry program looks first to the placement of AIMs and AIMITs, i.e., those who take the extended training, attend the seminars, serve in interim ministry positions year after year, and relocate every year or two. The rationale: AIMs and AIMITs can only be there for the congregations if the congregations are there for them. Given the sharpened sensibilities AIMs and AIMITs bring to their work, this is at it should be.

Nevertheless, I take no pleasure in the prediction that no more than thirty interim positions are likely to be available to other ministers.

For Interim Ministers-to-Be

For ministers who are expecting to enter upon their first interim ministry, or first in five years or more, please

enroll for Orientation to Interim Ministry, to take place in Fort Worth from 8:30 a.m. on Monday June 20 to 5:00 p.m. the next day. Travelers should plan to arrive Sunday night.

The cost of the orientation is 1.5 percent of your Salary plus Housing for the year to come. (Pledges are accepted—due Nov. 1, 2005). In return, the UUA provides your food (three meals Monday and Tuesday's breakfast and lunch), course materials, and program, and reimburses you for your room cost for Sunday and Monday nights (up to \$70 per night per person) and for half of your transportation costs to Fort Worth and back.

Ministers who wish to attend the orientation in the hopes of landing an interim later in the summer are welcome to attend. The cost will be \$200 in advance for food, course materials, and program. These ministers cover their own travel and hotel costs.

Thought for the Month

Judith Walker-Riggs passes this along, from *Why CEOs Fail* by David Dotlich and Peter Cairo. I confess that I could identify at least a jot of every one of these in myself.

Arrogance: you're right and everybody else is wrong

Melodrama: you want to be the center of attention

Volatility: your mood swings create business swings

Excessive caution: the next decision may be your last

Habitual distrust: you focus on the negative

Aloofness: you disengage and disconnect

Mischievousness: rules are made to be broken

Eccentricity: it's fun to be different just for the sake of it

Passive resistance: your silence is misinterpreted as agreement
Perfectionism: get the little things right even if the big things go wrong

Eagerness to please: being popular matters most

A Chapter Closes

Nancy Hezlitt, UUA Settlement Assistant for 32 years, will retire effective June 17. Because of her need for knee surgery, however, Nancy's last day at the UUA will be Friday March 4.

When Nancy started, in 1973, it was all carbon paper, mimeo machines, and snail mail. Then it was Xerox machines . . . and more snail mail. But for the last six years, Nancy has operated the on-line Ministerial Settlement System, proficiently whisking information around the continent in milliseconds.

Although the technology has changed and Nancy's skills with it, one thing has been constant: the attitude she brings to all she does. Working within earshot of her as I do, I can testify that no one who calls Nancy is ever treated with indifference. Always there is kindness, thoughtfulness, and a commitment to problem-solving. Always.

There is scarcely a minister now serving whose career has not benefited from Nancy's service. Please join me in thanking her for her excellent work! The best way to reach Nancy with your cards: 20 Stevens St., Quincy, MA 02169. ●

John Weston,
Settlement Director

Professional Development—Michelle Bentley, Jean Hartman

Ministerial Fellowship Committee

At the December Berkeley meeting, ministerial candidates presented in their packet to the MFC an *essay on how they incorporate anti-racism, oppression, and multiculturalism into their theology, worldview, and praxis*. The inclusion of this essay is a historic move to more fully prepare our ministers and congregations for leadership in a multicultural world.

Mentor Training: Along with MFC chair Phyllis Daniel, and Board liaison to the MFC Sue Stuckey, I attended the LREDA sponsored Mentor Training. The four credentialing bodies met together for the first time and worked to better understand how to mentor our constituencies. The Ministerial Fellowship Committee, Religious Education Credentialing Committee, the UU Administrators, and the UU Musicians Network worked on-line and then came together for a day with training facilitator Helen Bishop. The MFC plans to move for-

ward in planning formal training for ministerial mentors and mentees.

Successful Ministries for Newly Settled Ministers of Color Latinos/as Seminar

This seminar will be held April 14–17, 2005 at Gallaudet University, Washington, DC. This is a first-time leadership development conference designed for newly settled ministers and lay leaders in congregations who have called ministers of color and/or Latina/o ministers. The conference will focus on the development of the knowledge, skills and multicultural competencies necessary to create more inclusive, multicultural, and welcoming UU congregations. *Thirteen newly settled ministers of color and Latino/as have been invited.* The conference and retreat is

co-sponsored by the Offices of Professional Development and Settlement, Congregational Services, Identity-Based-Ministry, and the Joseph Priestley District.

Borden Sermon Award 2005

It is different this year!

In an effort to promote preaching that excites, inspires, and calls congregations to deeper reflection and action, the third year of Richard Borden Sermon Awards will focus on three timeless UU themes:

Peace, peacemaking, and the costs of war
Women's rights, lives, and liberties
The mysteries of life and the scientific approach to religion

All UU ministers in fellowship and in good standing are invited to participate and submit a sermon on one of

these topics. The top two submissions from ministers will be awarded \$10,000 each. One honorable mention prize of \$2,500 will also be awarded. UUA employees are not eligible.

In addition, ministerial candidates from Meadville Lombard Theological School and Starr King School for the Ministry are invited to submit one sermon. One top \$10,000 prize and one honorable mention prize of \$2,500 will be awarded. Selected top winning sermons will be preached at GA. For detailed information see www.uua.org/programs/ministry/development/borden.html. ●

First-Year Ministers' On-line Seminar May 9–20, 2005

Mark your calendars now. A formal notice is coming soon.

Continuing Education Opportunities

Practical suggestions for continued learning, sabbatical planning, life and skill enhancement may be found in the listing posted on the Ministry web page (see www.uua.org/ministry/). There you will find the basic information of workshops, conferences, and seminars.

Some offerings by our colleagues include:

Professional Chaplains, contact: Timothy Madison at 618-549-0721, ext. 65243 or tim.madison@sih.net.

Lifelong Learning @ Oates. Org, published by the Wayne E. Oates Institute, contact: info@oates.org or call 501-459-2370.

Alban In Progress on the Web, contact: albaninprogress@alban.org.

Alban Institute Seminars, for more information call the Education Dept. at 1-800-486-1318, ext. 247 or e-mail education@alban.org.

Exploring the Large Church: Developing a Community of Inquiry & Support, March 1–2, 2005 in Herson (Washington, DC), VA.

Finishing Strong/Ending Well: Faithfully Completing a Ministry Career, April 4–6, 2005 in Richmond, VA.

Tested & Transformed: The Healing of Congregations in Conflict, April 11–13, 2005 in Norcross (Atlanta), GA.

Shaping Holy Conversations: Pathways & Processes for Planning, April 19–21, 2005 in Jacksonville, FL.

Pastor as Spiritual Leader, May 2–4, 2005 in Richmond, VA.

Sustaining Urban Pastoral Excellence—Cycle 5. A program of compensated leave, study, and spiritual formation for urban pastors. The six month program begins April 1, 2005 and ends September 30, 2005. Deadline for receipt of applications is December 15, 2004. For more information or to request an application call Ms. Nikita McCalister, Assistant Coordinator, at 617-358-3383 or 617-358-0909 or by e-mail at supe@bu.edu. You can also review this information on-line at www.bu.edu/ccrd/supe.

Church Staff Finances—Ralph Mero, Joyce Stewart, Tracy Withy-Browne

Social Security Changes: Reform or Rubbish?

By the time you read this, the Bush proposal to partially privatize the Social Security system will probably be dead. The financial provisions are so preposterous that even loyal GOP Congressional lead-

ers blanch at borrowing up to \$2 trillion to finance a scheme in which the most likely beneficiaries will be Wall Street stockbrokers.

If by chance the issue is still alive, you can find the contact information for your Member of Congress and two U.S. Senators at www.house.gov and www.senate.gov. Gutting the most significant social insurance program in the history of the nation must be understood as both a

moral issue and a threat to the financial well being of millions of elderly and disabled persons.

When Social Security was passed in 1935, ordained clergy were not permitted to participate; our admission came on January 1, 1955. I have copies of letters written to the AUA asking how ministers could be enrolled. Elderly clergy across the country pleaded for two year's of preaching opportunities through which they could gain credit for eight quarters of employment, and thus be eligible to receive Social Security checks of \$75 per month; \$112 if they had a wife.

The New York Times Magazine issue of January 16, 2005 has a comprehensive article on "The Conservative New Deal" covering the background and financial implications of the Bush proposal. A wealth of information is available by a Google search on "social security reform." UU ministers have a responsibility to research and speak out on this issue. I would appreciate copies of any sermons or newsletter columns you may generate.

Wasn't it Eleanor Roosevelt who wrote, "Freedom of speech is of no use to a man who has nothing to say?"

A UUA Health Insurance Plan

As of mid January, the study testing the feasibility of a UUA plan is moving along, but we are several months from being able to conclude that an Association-funded plan is financially viable. The data collected in our September 2004 survey suggests the likelihood of a "critical mass" of congregations and staff sufficient to make such a program work.

Ahead lie months devoted to designing benefits and establishing rates, contracting with provider networks, selecting a reinsurance firm, and preparing the necessary documents. We hope to have sufficient information for the UUA Trustees to vote on the issue at their meeting in October 2005.

If all continues smoothly, the months between January and May 2006 would be used to inform congregations sufficiently for them to decide to participate. Enrollment would likely be effective July 1, 2006, but this is only a forecast and not a certainty. If it turns out that a

denominational plan is not feasible, we will let you know immediately.

In the meantime, we continue to receive one horror story after another from congregations unable to find affordable coverage for their staff. So far as we can determine, all parish-based clergy have some degree of insurance protection, as minimal and shaky as it may be. Many ministers and non-ordained staff are covered through spousal employment, and, of the latter, some are totally exposed to the devastating cost of an illness. Community-based ministers have to rely on health plans of the agencies or institutions for which they work.

UUA guidelines call for congregations paying 80 percent of the premium cost of health insurance for staff working halftime or more, and also for their dependents, with staff picking up the remaining 20 percent on a salary reduction basis. This means any mid-year premium increases would be shared on an 80/20 split.

2006 Salary Range Recommendations

The Compensation, Benefits, and Pension Committee has developed new ranges that will take effect January 1, 2006 after approval by the UUA Trustees later this year. As soon as these are finalized, they will be posted on the UUA website and announced through all of our communications outlets, including the UUMA, LREDA, AUUA, and UUMN channels. The district compensation consultants will have this information, and the roster is at www.uua.org/programs/ministry/finances/comproster.html.

Mileage Rate Increase

In case you haven't heard, the IRS-approved mileage rate for business auto use is now 40.5 cents per mile. This is the rate to use for reimbursement from professional expense allowances effective January 1, 2005. ●

—Ralph Mero,
Church Staff Finances Director

Resources & Possibilities

Diversity of Ministry Team Report

The Diversity of Ministry Team (DOMT) met September 9 and December 9 this past fall, and will gather again on March 7 and June 9, 2005, meeting on a quarterly basis this year. Current members include:

David Pettee, MPL, convener; Michelle Bentley, MPL; John Weston, MPL; Bill Sinkford, UUA; Jose Ballester, UUA; Keith Kron, IDBM; Danielle DiBona, DRUUMM; and David Carl Olson, UUMA appointee.

The DOMT continues to be attentive to how well we have been fulfilling our mission and practice.

The DOMT will continue to collaborate with the Identity-Based Ministries Staff Group, DRUUMM, and ministerial students and ministers not represented by DRUUMM, in welcoming, recruiting, and advising seminarians and ministers from historically marginalized communities; in identifying and working to remove institutional barriers that

prevent their fullest participation in the ministerial credentialing process and the achievement of successful ministerial settlements or professional ministerial employment; and in maintaining their access to ongoing professional development.

We will seek to maintain direct and regular contact with every student and minister of color, Latina/o, Asian and Pacific Islander, Native American, and member of a historically marginalized community until the award of final fellowship, or longer if desired by the minister, for the purpose of identifying institutional barriers and obstacles. Where the DOMT learns of an institutional barrier and obstacle, a DOMT staff member or other DOMT member will discuss options of response with the affected student or minister, and only with advance permission, discuss the issue with the DOMT, including the option to confer with other UUA staff and other designated contact persons as appropriate.

The DOMT staff members welcome feedback and recommendations from other DOMT members to assist the DOMT staff members in performing their work more effectively, such as recommending scholarship opportunities, CPE sites, and particular internship congregations to candidates and continuing education opportunities and congregations to ministers for settlement. When a candidate is beginning an internship, or a minister a ministry, the DOMT may recommend to field staff a start-up seminar tailored to the situation. Upon notice of a change in the candidate or minister's status, the DOMT, with the individual's advance permission only, may wish to discuss this change within the DOMT meetings.

Noteworthy and reportable agenda items from the first two DOMT meetings have included an ongoing conversation regarding the movement of the role of the DOMT convener outside Ministry and Professional Leadership. There was a report given regarding the work of the Transformation Committee on Wholeness and Justice who have been engaged in an anti-racism, anti-

oppression, and multiculturalism audit of materials relating to the ministerial credentialing process. Their report has been passed forward to the Ministerial Fellowship Committee for review and further implementation.

The Internship Clearinghouse Coordinator has noted that nearly twenty percent of all interns this year self-identify as a person of color or from a historically marginalized group. All these interns, and their respective supervisors, if parish-based, have been contacted with an offer of support from the Ministerial Credentialing Office.

Should anyone have a concern that they would like to bring to the DOMT, please feel free to contact me, or any other member of the DOMT, who will arrange to get the item on our agenda. ●

Respectfully Submitted,
David Pettee,
DOMT convener

AUUA Certification for Administrators

Are you the primary professional in the church office? Do you know that there is an organization for you? The Association of Unitarian Universalist Administrators invites you to join your organization. The best thing about being a member of the AUUA is professional support. This support is achieved through our chapter meetings, our listserv, and our Professional Day in June each year.

What we've focused on the last couple of years is the start up of a Certification Program. On Martin Luther King Weekend, eighteen administrators met to work on the launch of this Program for Administrators. Through certification, administrators will be able to develop professional standards of Unitarian Universalist office professionals and a system of continuing education that provides training and assesses knowledge and skills that can be certified. We are looking to launch in Fort Worth this June, with

applications for a pilot class to be accepted in September.

We encourage all administrators, no matter the size of your church, to join the AUUA. For more information on the AUUA, visit our website at www.auua.org. ●

Ministerial Fellowship Committee Report

The Committee and its Settlement Working Group have been working through issues concerning a common ministry for some time, indeed years, and have benefited from discussions with ministers and laypersons at General Assembly, on-line, and in person. At the December 2004 meeting, the decision was made that, starting in September 2005, the MFC will grant preliminary fellowship in UU ministry, not in a category of ministry. This decision will allow the category in which the minister submits three preliminary fellowship renewals to determine the category of ministry in which the minister receives final fellowship. Ministers will continue to receive final fellowship in a category of ministry.

Ministers now in fellowship, preliminary, or final, will not be affected by this change. It applies to ministers who are granted preliminary fellowship in September 2005, and beyond. Discussion continues about further changes in the fellowship process. See www.uua.org/programs/ministry/mfc/december2004proposal.html for the text of the statement adopted by the MFC on this matter.

Other business conducted at the meeting included policy changes, which are detailed in Rev. David Pettee's report in this publication. Rules updates and revisions were voted which reflect current practice. This review will continue at the March meeting. The Rev. Lynette Cox and the Rev. Jim Zacharias facilitated a discussion on polyamory. Starr King School for the Ministry students hosted a reception for the MFC on Thursday evening.

The committee interviewed twenty-two candidates (six men and sixteen women), all of whom were encouraged to move forward toward preliminary fellowship, with varying contingencies. Sixteen chose the parish category and six are planning community ministries. Eight ministers were granted final fellowship, eleven moved to a second renewal of preliminary fellowship, and thirteen were granted a first renewal.

Rev. Emily Brault and Rev. Rali Weaver served as liaisons to candidates. UUA Moderator Gini Courter attended as an observer. Daily inspirational services were led by Abbey Tennis.

The MFC will next meet March 31–April 3, 2005, in Chicago. The open portion of the business meeting will begin at 1:30 p.m. Enquiries and comments may be directed to mfc@uua.org. ●

Phyllis Daniel, Chair,
Ministerial Fellowship Committee

UUMN National Conference Workshop

Mark your calendars for August 2, 2005 from 9:00–4:00! The Professional Development Leadership Group of the UUMN invites you to join your colleagues for a day-long workshop with former UUA president, John Buehrens, entitled “An Introduction to Liberal Theological Tradition.” The workshop will commence the annual UUMN National Conference in Denver, Colorado, August 2–7, 2005. Rev. Buehrens will discuss how the liberal religious tradition emerges from the biblical tradition, drawing on his work in progress (with Rebecca Parker), *A House for Hope: An Introduction to Liberal Progress* and on his recent book, *Understanding the Bible: An Introduction for Skeptics, Seekers, and Religious Liberals*. Look for more information in the next edition of *The Religious Leader!* ●

Scholarship Awards for Advanced Studies

The UU Scholars Program, funded by the *UUA Panel on Theological Education*, is offering grants for the 2005–2006 academic year to scholars doing advanced work in liberal religious studies. The program’s purpose is to help persons train for graduate level teaching in subjects pertaining especially to Unitarian Universalism.

Candidates must have completed an M.Div. Degree or its equivalent, have an ongoing commitment to Unitarian Universalism and be enrolled in an academic doctoral program. Application deadline is April 10, 2005.

For application information contact A’Llyn Ettien, UUA, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, MA 02108 or e-mail aettien@uua.org. ●



The Religious Leader

NEWS FROM THE UUA MINISTRY & PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP STAFF GROUP

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