



The Religious Leader

NEWS FROM THE MINISTRY AND PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP STAFF GROUP • FALL 2005

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Office of the Director—David Hubner, A'Llyn Ettien

The Hurricane's Power

By the time you read this we all will be a month-and-a-half away from the linked disasters of storm and indifference that struck New Orleans and the Gulf Coast at the end of August.

By this time, my prayer is that we as a people and a nation will have found ways to counter some of its terrible destruction and dislocation and to bring some sense of wholeness and hope to those most affected. My even deeper prayer is that by the time you read this we will have broken through our own defenses enough to see and confess to the terrible cost and literally deadly effects of our historic indifference to the poor, our denial of our racism, our disregard for our earth, and our indifference to establishing a government that supports a true sense of caring for each other and our world has cost us.

Because of the things we have seen and because the truths about the failures of our society that we have learned are so painful and so complex, there is a fear that threatens my hope: We will not be able to hold this in heart and mind long enough to use this frustration, anger, and sense of failure to encourage and support us in proclaiming what we have seen and what we have learned; and then call ourselves and others to the work of righting these wrongs.

A few days after the storm, one of our ministers whose congregation was flooded out told me that once he had found and cared for his people, he wants to find a way to go on the road to talk about race, poverty, and corporate culture.

Let us mourn the dead. Let us comfort and help the suffering. Let us do what we can to help people rebuild their families, their communities, and

their hope. But let us remember what we have seen and what we have learned. Let our despair lead us into a heartfelt commitment to work with each other with all our strength, not only to build a new New Orleans and restore the Gulf Coast and its people, but to do whatever it may take over whatever time is needed to build a radically changed and genuinely caring and just society here in the United States. Let us cooperate with others in spreading these blessing in our world. •

With the deepest kind of doubt and concern, but also with a sense of possibility, determination, and hope,
David Hubner, Director of MPL

After the Storm: Compassion and Engagement

The earth was a vast waste,
darkness covered the deep,
and the spirit of God hovered
over the surface of the water.

—Genesis 1:2

How does one do an Opening Sunday water communion after a devastating hurricane on 9/11? Somehow in each of our congregations we did that this year. Somehow we moved back and forth between our grief and rage over what has been lost and our compassion and engagement in building anew.

It has been strengthening and encouraging to see just how quickly and naturally and with what determination and creativity we Unitarian Universalists, and all other caring people and organizations, have responded to the challenges of Katrina. Our confusion about what we might do has

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THE RELIGIOUS LEADER IS PUBLISHED THREE
TIMES A YEAR BY THE MINISTRY AND
PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP STAFF GROUP. PLEASE
SEND COPY FOR THE WINTER EDITION IN MS
WORD TO A'LLYN ETTIEN (AETTIEN@UUA.ORG) BY
NO LATER THAN JANUARY 15, 2006.

TYPESETTING AND EDITORIAL BY
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been caught up by the necessity of actively finding ways to serve our brothers and sisters in need. We have given money. We have called colleagues and held them in our prayers. We have voted with our feet, and gone down to offer to help in any way we can. We have linked our congregations with those most in need. We have organized fundraising efforts in our congregations and through the combined efforts of our professional groups and organizations—UUMA, LREDA, AUUA, UUMN, SCM, and UURMAPA. The congregations in the area have operated 24/7 from the day the storm hit. The UUA and the UUSC are working together actively. Religious educators, ministers, musicians, and administrators have given all they can to help. The leadership of the UUA and the districts and their staffs have worked tirelessly to gather resources, to give voice to our shared concern, and to provide needed and appropriate support to the victims of the storm and to our congregations and leaders in the area. We have moved from confusion and shock to growing effectiveness and strength in our actions and in our caring.

In the story in *Genesis*, after God hovered over the water, there came light. Our hope and our prayer and our faith is that this will be our story too. Heartfelt thanks to you all for the caring and actions on your part that will help us move ahead. ●

Hurricane Relief Resources

Please go to www.uuworld.org and www.uua.org to get updates on our

hurricane relief efforts and to find out ways in which you can help. ●

The 2006 Service of the Living Tradition

We are pleased to announce that Judith Meyer, minister of the UU Community Church, Santa Monica, CA, has accepted our invitation to be the preacher at the 2006 Service of the Living Tradition at GA in Saint Louis.

Because the entire schedule of GA has been moved forward one day this year, the Service of the Living Tradition will be on Thursday evening, June 21, starting at 8:00 p.m. ●

A Challenging but Rewarding Ministry

Let me remind you that Kay Montgomery is actively receiving applications from people interested in becoming the next Director of the UUA Ministry and Professional Leadership Staff Group after I retire at the end of June, 2006.

Information about the position and how to apply can be found at www.uua.org/hr/openings.html#dmpl. The deadline for applications is January 15, 2006. Although I will not be involved in the search process, I would be glad to talk to interested applicants about the job and its ministry. ●

Regards,
David

Ministerial Credentialing/Internship Clearinghouse—

David Pettee, Christine May, Griffith Bell, Kim Wilson

From the Ministerial Credentialing Office

The relative quiet of summer quickly disappeared with the arrival of Katrina. You have seen with David Hubner's column that the

UUA and MPL have been, and will continue to be, very active with recovery, support, and rebuilding efforts. Not only have ministers been willing

to head to the Gulf Coast to offer support and respite, but some ministerial candidates with experience in relief efforts and emergency management have also answered the call. Chris May and I have sought to identify every applicant, aspirant, and candidate who might have been affected. Should you hear of or know of anyone preparing for ministerial fellowship who has not been contacted by the UUA field staff involved, or a representative from the UUMA, please let us know as soon as possible. My prayers remain with all who have been affected by this catastrophe, and with those who are seeking to try to make whole the lives of those affected.

Kim Wilson, in her column from the Internship Clearinghouse, has touched upon changes to the Internship Manual, as an outcome of significant changes made by the MFC when they eliminated the granting of ministerial categories during the interview for preliminary fellowship. The Internship Manual, I might add, is much shorter and incorporates many suggestions from the Society for Community Ministries as they pertain to community ministry, and follows an audit by the Journey Toward Wholeness Transformation Committee.

The Journey Toward Wholeness Transformation Committee also reviewed in great depth all of the materials related to the ministerial credentialing process, and I'm glad to report the fruits of their labors have also been incorporated into the Initial Inquiry Information packet and the *Information for Candidates—RSCC Revised Edition* and appendix. Last April, the results of the JTWTC audit were also incorporated into the UUA Financial Aid materials. I extend my deep thanks and appreciation for the hard work and the candid and astute recommendations of the JTWTC for helping make the ministerial credentialing process more fair, anti-racist, anti-oppressive, and respectful of multiculturalism. To be sure, the work will continue, as the MFC and the RSCCs deepen sophistication around these issues.

In the Pre-GA edition of *The Religious Leader*, I made a reference to anticipated structural changes within the RSCC system. After completing an analysis of the entire RSCC system in 2003, one clear trend emerged: The numbers of aspirants interviewing with the Mid-Atlantic RSCC and the South RSCC has remained constant over these five years. Given respect for fiscal concerns, when this information was reviewed by the MFC at their March/April 2005 meeting, the MFC determined that these two RSCCs should be merged into one RSCC, which was effective July 1, 2005. The new body, the South-East RSCC, has the benefit of experienced members from the two RSCCs. Gratefully, Kathy Williams, administrator of the former Mid-Atlantic RSCC, has agreed to carry the full administrative responsibility for this new RSCC. Kathy is the point of contact for any applicants and aspirants who have been in touch with the Mid-Atlantic and South RSCCs. I also want to particularly thank Laurel Amabile for her over-the-top support and work over the last year with the South RSCC.

The other significant learning from the first five years of RSCC experience was that following their first RSCC interview, 80 percent were granted candidacy status, 16 percent had candidacy postponed, and 3 percent had candidacy denied. On a couple of occasions, the RSCCs deferred from making a decision based upon unusual circumstances. Most of those who had candidacy postponed, and who returned for a second interview after addressing concerns raised during the first interview, were granted candidacy status. There is no question in my mind that the RSCCs have faithfully and successfully helped prepare candidates for meeting with the MFC, and far more important, for stronger ministerial leadership in our congregations and the larger community!

Those of you who may be interviewing with the MFC this and next year may notice that a familiar face will be sitting on one of the MFC

panels. In our ongoing efforts to improve consistency of all RSCCs as they relate to the MFC, one RSCC member will be sitting with the MFC during the next five MFC meetings. I'm a strong believer in collaboration and cross fertilization. Chris and I will have to share the joy we often feel with this RSCC member, as we typically have been the only ones associated with the MFC who got to know aspirants before they became candidates, and to witness to extraordinary unfolding that takes place!

When I am out visiting with students, I commonly ask if there are any unbelievable urban myths about the credentialing process floating around. Please do not hesitate to contact me with these seemingly outrageous but supposedly true stories. It's a whole lot easier to clarify and debunk things before significant decisions get made that are based on old or convoluted advice! As always, Chris May, Kim Wilson, Griff Bell, and I welcome your calls and e-mails and we are anxious to be helpful! ●

In the Faith,
David Pettee,
Ministerial Credentialing Director

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Internship Clearinghouse News

This past June at General Assembly in Fort Worth, I met with a number of students, future, current, and finishing interns, intern committee members, and intern supervisors. It was a great opportunity to discuss your concerns, questions, and ideas (and some recent ideas for internships have been *very* creative, which is wonderful!). But, also, there's nothing like meeting or touching base in person, especially because most of my communications are done through e-mail or by phone.

During Professional Days, David Pettee and I co-facilitated a panel of speakers for a dialog that included two supervisor-intern pairs and two other experienced supervisors called "Conversations on Ministerial Internships and Diversity: Stories We Need to Tell, Stories We Need to Hear." We learned something. As a result of these identities, people of color, Latino/a/Hispanic people, and bisexual, gay, lesbian, and transgender interns have different experiences in their internships than other interns. We suspect these issues are similar for interns with disabilities. These identities often bring up conversations about race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and gender identity that might not have occurred otherwise—whether the intern wanted these conversations to happen or not. Often these interns encountered unscheduled conversations, misconceptions, and prejudice.

With this in mind, I would like to extend an offer to prospective interns who will likely encounter the same responses from people in their internship as one potential place of additional support. Feel free to call or e-mail and let me be what help I can—whether it be a listening ear, guidance, assistance, a referral, anything to be of help.

Knowing when interns identify as being a person of color, Latina/Latino/Hispanic, bisexual, gay, lesbian, and/or transgender, and/or as having a disability(ies) is extremely

helpful to us here. While this information is optional, it may be useful in helping us help you and other interns with these identities in their internships. There is much work being done for ministers in search with these identities with the Beyond Categorical Thinking program (www.uua.org/obgltc/bct/brochure.html). Congregations in search are encouraged to undergo the program, and, to date, we have found that congregations that do this are nearly twice as likely to call a minister with one or more of these identities than those who do not. There is still more to be learned, but working together we can continue our efforts to live our values and serve all of our people.

During GA, Rev. Nan Hobart, the Field Education Director for Meadville Lombard, Patti Lawrence, Field Education Director for Starr King, and I again co-led two panel-style workshops called "Becoming a Teaching Congregation." For those who were not able to attend, this was a kind of nuts-and-bolts look at what's involved in being an internship site. We described various aspects of a UUA internship, and a recent supervisor and intern on the panel were available to share their valuable perspectives, as well. If you're interested in exploring the idea of having your congregation become an internship site, please get in touch with me and we can talk further about it.

The big news from the Internship Clearinghouse this fall is the release of a newly revised *Internship Manual*, which can be downloaded from the Clearinghouse web page (along with supplementary materials on religious education and music). Not only is the new version more succinct (and, we hope, more easily read), but it incorporates the new *MFC Rules and Policies*, which all interns, supervisors, and intern committees need to be aware of. Some of the changes include:

- Beginning with the September 2005 MFC meeting, candidates will no longer be checking off a ministerial category in preparation for their MFC interview. The MFC will be granting pre-

liminary fellowship to Unitarian Universalist ministers. The question of a ministerial specialty will be addressed in the renewal process. Now, *all* interns will be expected to gain competence in five major areas: pastoral work, prophetic outreach, teaching, practical arts, and worship arts, as defined jointly by the MFC and the UUMA.

- All interns will need to submit their Learning/Serving Agreement to me, preferably *within the first two months* of their internship for approval. The MFC wants to make sure that all internships will adequately address these five areas of ministerial development and formation.
- Off-site supervision, although still an option, is available in cases in which on-site supervision is impossible. The MFC has become concerned that interns were choosing off-site supervision as a first choice arrangement, when it was meant to be understood as a last resort.

I welcome your feedback on the new manual, including suggestions for improvements.

Based on my records, there are approximately 70 internships taking place this year. If there are any interns out there that haven't made contact with me at the Clearinghouse, please do so as soon as possible so that you can be assured that your internship is meeting UUA requirements. It will also enable me to better offer support or guidance during the year, should you need it.

Prospective interns, supervisors, and intern committees, I encourage you to use our recommended internship schedule, to the extent possible. The Internship Clearinghouse, Meadville/Lombard, and Starr King recommend the following date ranges:

September 1–November 1, 2005:

Congregational sites should list their profiles on-line with the Clearinghouse

November 1–December 1, 2005:
Prospective interns make applications to sites

January 1–February 1, 2006: Site selects candidate for position

February 1–February 15, 2006:
Candidate accepts internship position

The Clearinghouse is once again offering an Internship Stipend Grant Program. The deadline for applications for the 2006–2007 year is November 1, 2005. A description and application form can be downloaded from the Internship Clearinghouse web page at www.uua.org/programs/ministry/credentialing/internship. You will note that this year congregations of *all* sizes are encouraged to apply.

Prospective interns, please don't hesitate to get in touch with me if you have any questions about the process of finding or designing an internship. Be sure to list yourselves and your internship preferences online with the Clearinghouse before you begin contacting sites. A confidential password system will enable potential supervisors and intern committee chairs to view your profiles. This way, congregations or community sites looking for interns can easily contact you.

Interns who have accepted positions: *Please be sure to send one copy of your Learning/Service Agreement to Chris May in the UUA Ministerial Credentialing Office and one copy to me within the first two months of your internship (see my e-mail and mailing*

addresses below). I am available to help you in the process of creating the Learning/Service Agreement, so feel free to send me a draft and I'll be happy to give you feedback on it.

My final request to all prospective or current interns, supervisors, and intern committee members is to *please read the new manual* and then feel free to call me with any questions or needs for guidance you may have. I'll be happy to help. ●

Yours in Faith,

Kim Wilson, Internship
Clearinghouse Coordinator
kwilson@uua.org; office hours:
Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays,
3:00–5:30; 203-421-0148 (voice and
fax); mailing address: 160 Princess
Drive, Madison, CT 06443

Religious Education Credentialing & Renaissance Program—Beth Williams, A'ashia Short

Note from Beth

Like many UU religious educators my recent thoughts and prayers are for all those affected by the devastation of hurricane Katrina, as well as those who may be hurt by the hurricanes to come in this season. A thousand thank yous to the congregational, district, and UUA staff members across the country who have worked tirelessly to organize practical aid and offer a caring presence to all who suffer in these crises.

In the aftermath, I am struck by both our vulnerability and our strength as inhabitants of this planet. Sharing in this vulnerability are those UU religious educators whose future livelihoods are uncertain because of the impact of Katrina on their congregations and the economy of their communities. There is a specific way we can exercise the strength of working together to help our colleagues in religious education and other staff members of UU congregations: by earmarking some portion of your contribution to the UUA-UUSC Gulf Coast Relief Fund “for aid to staff of UU congregations” (written on memo line) and sending your check to UUA-UUSC Gulf Coast Relief Fund, Attn. Jamie Thompson, 25 Beacon St., Boston, MA 02108. ●

What's New in the Religious Education Credentialing Program

Many congratulations to Judith Frediani, who was transitioned into the status of Credentialed Religious Educator–Master's Level. Along with Julie Malm, Judith

was recognized for her accomplishment at the 2005 Service of the Living Tradition at General Assembly.

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:

Cathy Cartwright, PNW	Connie Dunn, TJ
Catherine Farmer, PSW	Deborah Levering, CB

Religious Education Credentialing Committee

The RECC meets twice a year. As a new committee we continue to fine-tune our procedures and processes, as well as our documents, to make the program easier to understand and to run more smoothly. We also continue to work toward making the program as accessible as we can to the diversity of individuals serving our congregations.

One of the exciting changes we have made to our original documents has been to our Reading Lists. Each of the three credentialing levels has a reading list. Some of the items on the lists are required reading, while, in other sections, candidates are allowed to pick from several choices. In order to help the candidate select books that will provide them with information that is well balanced and/or that is relevant to their current needs, we have now added

annotations to the list. These descriptions will help candidates select which books to read. These lists can be found at www.uua.org/programs/ministry/reco/resources.html. These lists were designed for the credentialing program, but anyone interested in furthering their understanding of Unitarian Universalist Religious Education will benefit from looking into the materials listed there.

In an attempt to find a site that is both financially and physically accessible to candidates, as well as to the committee members, the RECC has changed the date and location of its winter meeting this year. Rather than meet in Madison, WI, in February, the meeting will be held in Boston in late March. We hope that a location with a hub airport and a date later in the year may be better. We will continue to assess how we can best meet the candidate's needs as well as the committee's.

The UUA Board of Trustees has appointed a Board Liaison to the RECC. Rev. Dr. Pam Allen-Thompson, Minister of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Marin, in San Rafael, CA, joins the committee as a full voting member of the committee and our connection to the Board of Trustees. Our October meeting in Philadelphia will be her first meeting with the committee.

There are currently 26 individuals credentialed through this program—one at the Associate Level, nine at the Credentialed Level, and sixteen at the Master's Level. Many of these sixteen were transitioned to the Master's status from the former Religious Education Landscape program. There are currently forty-eight individuals who are participants in the program working toward credentialing—seven at the Associate Level, nineteen at the Credentialed Level, and twenty-two at the Master's Level. ●

Liz Jones,
RECC, chair

Important UUA Bylaw Change

The following change to the UUA Bylaws was approved by the 2005 General Assembly:

“(b) Minister Delegates and Religious Education Director Delegates. Each certified member congregation is also entitled to be represented at each General Assembly by the ordained minister or ministers in full or associate ministerial fellowship with the Association settled in such congregation, and by the director or directors of religious education having achieved Credentialed Religious Education—Masters Level status by the Association and employed in such congregation. In addition, each certified member congregation is also entitled to be represented at each General Assembly by any minister emeritus or minister emerita of such congregation in ministerial fellowship with the Association and by any director of religious education emeritus or emerita having achieved Credentialed Religious Education—Master's Level status by the Association designated as such by a vote at a meeting of the member congregation not less than six months prior to the General Assembly, provided that any such minister has

been settled previously in such congregation, and any such director of religious education who has been previously employed in such congregation.” ●

Religious Education Scholarship Recipients

We are pleased to announce that the first Norma Veridan Fund for Religious Education Excellence Scholarship (\$3,000) was awarded in June 2005 to Cindy Leitner of Tigard, OR. On receipt of the award, Cindy wrote, “I am amazed and very honored to have received this scholarship, especially in view of the fact that there are many wonderful and deserving religious educators currently serving congregations and the UUA. It will inspire me to give something back to the community of religious educators that has nurtured me for over twenty years. . . . Norma had a great idea for helping religious educators with this fund, and, although I miss her physical presence, her spirit is with me in receiving this gift made possible by her friends, family, and colleagues.”

The 2005 recipient of the Barbara Marshman/Ann Fields Memorial Scholarship (\$500) was Jennifer Halperin of Pittsburgh, PA. When she read the news of the award, Jennifer wrote, “I know there are many of us who strive for excellence in what we do not only out of a sense of pride in our work but because of our commitment to Unitarian Universalism. Now more than ever, I think, we need to have a strong liberal religious presence in our communities, country, and world. I am honored to help make our principles come alive in our children, youth, adults, and families and to represent our faith community here and abroad.” ●

Interim DRE Pilot Project

In the few days before Professional Days and General Assembly 2005, four religious educators were trained in the knowledge and skills that are essential for successfully undertaking an interim position as a director of religious education. This experimental training was held in conjunction with the Orientation to Interim Ministry program; some of the time was spent in joint sessions with the ministers and other times in independent sessions. Many thanks to a superb faculty: Laurel Amabile, Barbara Stoddard, Patti Withers, and Beth Williams. Stay tuned for more information about the future of this program. ●

Renaissance Program News

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

Oct. 6–8, Philosophy, St. Louis, MO, Dori Davenport,
doridure@aol.com

Oct. 13–15, Administration, Grand Rapids, MI, Sharon Pedersen, sspedersen@msn.com

Nov. 3–5, Youth, Thousand Oaks, CA, Tera Little, teralittle@att.net
Nov. 4–6, Teacher Training, Ariel, WA, Tandi Rogers Koerger, tkoerger@uua.org
Jan. 5–7, Youth, Saco, ME, Helen Zidowecki, hzmre@hzmre.com
Feb. 3–5, Teacher Training, Akron, OH, Lucy Carney, lucycarney@cox.net
Mar. 17–19, Worship, Long Beach, CA, Tera Little, teralittle@att.net

Meadville Lombard Winter Institute

Not to be missed is the next Meadville Lombard Winter Institute, February 16–18, 2006 in Madison, WI. The theme of this year's Institute is "Bringing It Home! New Family Rituals for Our Living Tradition," featuring Meg Cox, author of *The Book of New Family Traditions*. For more information, call 773-256-3000, ext. 222. ●

Settlement—John Weston, Marie DePaul

The Present Moment

I want to add my voice to the voices of the presidents of the UUA-connected professional organizations—AUUA, LREDA, SLC, UUMA, and UUMN. Our fellow clergy and church staff in the destroyed and badly damaged Louisiana churches are just as much in need of their income as they were before the wind and flood. It is in our power to provide them—administrators, religious educators, ministers, and musicians—with the compensation their churches will be unable to provide for some time without enormous strain. And for community ministers in the region, whether employed or self-employed, the same holds true.

The easiest way to contribute is on the website that is so designated in the president's letter, if you are on a list-serve. If you are not, merely send a request for "the website address" to settlement@uua.org; you'll receive the address by return mail. Or, if you're patient, here it is, waiting to be typed into the address: <https://dnbweb1.blackbaud.com/OPXDONATE/donate.asp?cguid=13D450EA-1832-4F1C-B252-6B1E259D2D04&dpid=5433>. ●

The Year Just Past

By the time you read this, the 2005–2006 search season will be well under way. Let's hope it will offer more, and more generous, opportunities for ministers seeking new opportunities than have the last couple of years! We have been, there's no denying, in a trough: 39 ministers called in '05 and 48 in '04, versus an annual average of 67 in the five preceding years.

Interim ministries have been down, too: from 109 interim ministries in 2001–2002, to 89 in '02–'03, to 72 in '03–'04, to 67 in '04–05. This year, however, a turn up, to 82.

The largest single factor responsible for the trough is ministers' decisions to stay put. Other possible factors—deaths, disabilities, retirements, and negotiated resignations—have remained by and large invariant. Only voluntary resignations are down—and down sharply.

Why? How much of the drop is attributable to the society-wide risk averseness in the years following 9/11? How much to the coincident lackluster economy? How much are ministers receiving more adequate compensation, and, hence, not spurred to move? And how much are they simply hunkering down, trying to top up their retirement plans before the inevitable necessity to stop working and live on what's been accumulated? And what about—dare I ask?—happiness, and feelings of being well-used? How much do ministers stay because they have work to do, and because the work is good?

All the time I talk with ministers in transition. What about you who continue where you are? I would love to hear from you.

Here are some other features of last year's settlement scene. Inflation-adjusted compensation to those finding new ministries was down 6 percent from the previous year, the highest year ever, but is still the third-highest year on record. Twenty-seven women found new ministries and 13 men. For the first time since 1991 women commanded higher average compensation than men, by 2 to 4 percent depending on how you count. Median compensation among women was also greater, by 12 to 16 percent depending on how you count. Altogether, the three largest-size classes of congregation called or hired 10 women and 2 men. One minister of color/member of a historically marginalized community was called, and 7 out GBLT ministers. Finally, while average tenure in a congregation among departing ministers is down to 8.0 years from a previous-five-year average of 8.7, the median tenure, also at 8.0 years, continues at its highest level on record. Fewer ministries of great duration are coming to an end, and even fewer very brief ministries. ●

The Year in Progress

The claims of collegiality in the search process run in many directions. If you are a minister in search, in

addition to poring over the Congregational Records in the Ministerial Settlement System, you have claims on a congregation's District Executive, its interim minister, and its former ministers. You are also free to scout the District for particularly knowledgeable colleagues who can give you additional insight. Exercise these claims! It's best to wait to do so, however, until you and the committee have exchanged packets and have begun to plan a first interview—usually a phone interview. With the interview in the offing, your mind will be more concentrated and your questions of your colleagues more probing. Issues of

timing aside, the message to take to heart is: Exercise these claims! Only by doing so can you keep to a minimum the risk of making a terrible mistake—terrible for you, and terrible for the congregation.

If you are serving the church as an interim minister or if you are a former settled minister, please recognize your colleagues' claims on you. Aside from the search committee and the DE, you are virtually their only source. Please take your role of informant seriously. ●

John Weston, Settlement Director

Professional Development—Michelle Bentley, Jean Hartman

The Superdome to Astrodome

Be prepared and agile. . . . The journey from hell to heaven . . . Superdome to Astrodome

Like many of you, the horrific situation in New Orleans, the lack of help with overtones and undergirdings of race and class sat me down hard. My husband's family is from New Orleans. They immediately moved to higher ground (all are alive and accounted for) thinking they could return home. They left everything—including jobs.

After two days of watching pictures and hearing stories of those unable to leave New Orleans, held captive in the Superdome, I phoned the Red Cross and the Salvation Army to ask how I might help them in the relief effort. After repeated efforts to phone, I drove directly to the Red Cross headquarters in Chicago where I was treated not only curtly, but was told at least five times that I couldn't offer my (over-20 years) experience because I had not had the Red Cross training (no trainings were currently offered) and I was not entered into their national database. Ticked, I returned home, phoned District Executive Ann Heller and we decided Houston is where I would go the next morning. Luckily my work is ministry (and my life includes an understanding partner) and I am able to do this. Not everyone is able to just get up and go, even though they might like to.

The Houston Astrodome/Reliance Center is huge and difficult to navigate. I didn't realize that Houston's ball teams built a new stadium—the Reliant Center—home to Houston's football team. The old Astrodome was put then to good use. One of the buildings was used for triage and a medical center, another to house the clothing and food donations, and two or three used to house the "evacuees."

The journey from the hell of the Superdome was hard for so many families. The Astrodome was considered heaven. Evacuees swept their areas clean and neat and kept the children in check and occupied. They were grateful to have had hot showers, food, and TLC by the "everyman/woman/people" of all races, religions, political ideologies, and professions.

I spent time with individuals and families during my crises counseling with FEMA or walking the floors and the streets. The following four incidents stand out:

"New Orleans is a bowl and black folks live at the bottom; under water level, poor land, no expectations for us, we're just like coffee grinds at the bottom of the pot, corruption throughout, and I get no sleep because of the violence of the lawlessness for us here at the bottom. Now I'm in Houston and we are all equal; now I can start over, have opportunities, go to school, and make a living for my two children, and get a good night's sleep. The folks here in Houston and the world are caring and treating us like we're somebody. Those who were shooting at those who were trying to help can ruin it for everyone else. . . ."

"Glory be to God. He let it [water] out and it blessed the land and blessed the children. . . . Glory be to God, sista."

New Orleans hospital staff and their families worked until they could no longer stay and had to be rescued. One of the nurses reported the following statement: "Suddenly the water rose to the fifth floor and the sixth floor caved in. We made our way to the roof where we were evacuated by helicopter and brought to this hotel, the Marriott, Medical Center." The Houston hospital volunteers purchased and distributed new clothing for the New Orleans hospital staff and their families in the hotel lobby where I was staying. The tears flowed and again folks were looking for loved ones.

Oscar and Natasha's story was great: They came to me smiling and asking if I could marry them right then and there. I put them in touch with Revs Jose Ballester and Gail Marriner of First UU of Houston. They tell me that the dates for marriage counseling and the wedding are all set. Opportunities to listen and offer counsel and prayer were ever present. Many prayers were said for the missing.

Learning to discern truths and to be with people and the implications of racism/poverty requires the ability to enter into different—and often frightening—places.

Ministers must be agile and prepared to be able to identify, name, confront, and engage in conflict, fear, anxieties, alienation, estrangement, poverty, death, and evil—issues of ultimate concern that are part of most peoples' lives. Attaining firsthand knowledge of how to manage, resolve, listen, walk with the other, risk, reconcile, atone, and build bridges and community amounts to a "baptism by fire" but begets integrative knowledge that will serve the pastor for the long haul of ministry. We must remember to also be open to the joys that are part and parcel of the experience of entering into different places.

What training are you in need of? What are your professional development goals for the year? Do they include experience in anti-oppression work? Be agile and prepared, there's much work to do this year and next. . . . You just might find god and yourself. ●

Peace, Justice, and Hope,
Michelle, Professional Development Director

First Year Ministers' On-line Seminar

Ministers in your first year of ministry plan to be part of the on-line seminar that tentatively is scheduled

the two weeks following Mother's Day! Cost \$100! The last three years we've had approximately 28 participants and for those who can, we meet during Ministry Days, Pre-GA. ●

Borden Sermon Winners

Congratulations to the 2005 Richard C. Borden Sermon Award winners. The three first place winners are: Bret Lortie, Meadville Lombard ministerial candidate; Reverend Cynthia Frado, Westborough, MA; and Reverend Krista Taves, Interim, Springfield, MO.

Second place winner is: Reverend Randolph Becker of Park Forest, IL.

The following ministerial candidates received honorable mention prizes: John A. Cullinan, Chicago, IL; Telos Whitfield, Berkeley, CA; Eric Kaminetzky, Durham, NC; Claudene F. Oliva, Chicago, IL; and Sally Hamlin, Berkeley, CA.

The sermons can be viewed on the website www.org/programs/ministry/development/borden.html. ●

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

Status of MPL Staff

Since Katrina hit, the staff has been under considerable stress at the UUA. It is important we try to keep all of our usual work moving along during one of the busiest times of the year, while also aiding colleagues and congregations that have been devastated by this monstrous storm and the deficient national response. By the time this is received, I hope more of a balance will have been found and our spirits restored. ●

UU Group Insurance

Information about the October 1, 2005 4 percent increase in dental rates was mailed in the September packet to all congregations. The rates will be \$41.90 for individuals and \$101.60 for families of any size. There are no changes to the rates or provisions of the term life or long-term disability insurance policies. See www.uua.org/programs/ministry/finances/insurance.html or contact twithy@uua.org or 617-948-6401 for more information. ●

Salary Recommendations

The salary range recommendations effective January 1, 2006 have been communicated to congregations via a direct mailing, the UUA website, and the district compensation consultants. See www.uua.org/programs/ministry/finances/compensation.html for the background

on these and who to contact. We are happy to assist with spreadsheets on how compensation can be allocated in individual cases. Contact rmero@uua.org if interested. ●

Health Insurance

The UUA Compensation, Benefits, and Pension Committee continues its work studying the feasibility of a UUA self-funded health insurance program for staff of local congregations. What has been learned of the experience of other denominations is sobering and financially challenging.

More congregations seem to be taking advantage of informal Health Reimbursement Arrangements through which they reimburse staff for medical expenses with employer-funds in a tax-exempt manner. Stay tuned. ●

Debt Reduction Grants

Ministers in fellowship who are working in ministry and making payments of at least \$100 per month on student loans may apply for grants to help with these obligations. See www.uua.org/programs/ministry/finances/drg_application.html. The deadline is Tuesday, January 17, 2006, with checks mailed in February. Money for this comes from the offering at the UUA Service of the Living Tradition and offerings at ordinations and installations. ●

—Ralph Mero, Church Staff Finances Director

Continuing Education Opportunities

Practical suggestions for continued learning, sabbatical planning, and life and skill enhancement may be found in the listing posted on the Ministry web page (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 800-486-1318, ext. 247 or e-mail education@alban.org

Senior Pastors: Leading Multiple-Staff Teams, November 14–16, 2005, Jacksonville, FL

Discerning Your Congregation's Call, January 24–26, 2006, Jacksonville, FL

Discerning a New Vision for the Long Pastorate, January 30–February 1, 2006, Canton, MS

Consulting for Vital Congregations: Foundational Practices & Perspectives, February 13-17, 2006

Leading Change in the Congregation, February 21–23, 2006, Jacksonville, FL

Emotional Intelligence & Clergy Leadership, March 7–9, 2006, Richmond, VA

Resources & Possibilities

An Appeal to UU Religious Professionals

Dear Colleagues,

Bill Sinkford has announced the creation of a UUA-UUSC Gulf Coast Relief Fund to assist in the recovery from hurricane Katrina. A panel from the Southwest and Mid-South Districts has been established to distribute money from the Fund to local relief efforts, especially for marginalized members of society and for UU congregations, so ministries in their communities can be restored.

A particular concern among many ministers and other religious professionals is the well-being of our colleagues in the affected area. The extent of the physical destruction and social disruption may challenge the ability of congregations to compensate the church staff, of local agencies employing community ministers to compensate them, and of

self-employed community ministers to be gainfully employed. Administrative structures, office records and equipment, pledge revenue, and church volunteers' energies are likely to suffer for months to come. Yet the need for effective ministry, both in and among UU communities and to the larger community, is greater than ever.

With this discouraging prospect in mind, the UUA is making it possible for those of us who wish to do so to earmark some portion of our contributions for the benefit of our colleagues. It is in our power to assure that our colleagues' compensation, insurance premiums, retirement plan benefits, and professional expense allowances continue, while at the same time we can provide the gift of significant financial relief to our congregations.

Our hope is that together we will contribute enough to ensure full continuation of income and benefits for our colleagues for the balance of the church year. Excess funds will be added to the general Gulf Coast

Relief Fund for the two-District panel to distribute.

Thus, we ask you all—even as your hearts go out to all who have suffered the aftermath of the hurricane—to remember our colleagues and the congregations with whom they serve and by whom they are supported. To make a secure on-line contribution to this effort, please go to <https://dnb-web1.blackbaud.com/OPXDO-NATE/donate.asp?cguid=13D450EA-1832-4F1C-B252-6B1E259D2D04&dpid=5433>. If you would prefer to make a pledge at this time, please call the UUA Stewardship and Development staff group, toll free, at 888-792-5885. ●

Sandy Leyenaar, President,
Association of UU Administrators;
Susan Archer, President, Liberal
Religious Educators Association;
Jeanne Lloyd, President, Society for
Community Ministries;
Ken Sawyer, President, UU
Ministers Association;
Elizabeth Norton, President, UU
Musicians Network

The Consultation on Ministry to and with Youth

The UUA is embarking on a two-year process to revise, strengthen, and renew support for youth ministry across the Association. Conversations within congregations, districts, and stakeholder organizations (including the UUMA and LREDA) will focus on what they can do to support youth ministry at their level, and what the Association can do to support youth ministry as a whole. Ministers and religious professionals have a key role to play in supporting the spiritual, emotional, and social development of youth. The Consultation is an opportunity to have your unique needs and visions for youth ministry listened to and discussed on all levels of the Association. We urge you to engage in this process in partnership with youth in your community, in order to strengthen our denomination's ministry with youth. For more information and updates throughout the process, visit the Consultation's website at www.uua.org/trus/youth. •

In Faith,
David Hubner,
Director of Ministry and
Professional Development;
Judith Frediani,
Director of Lifespan
Faith Development

Church of the Larger Fellowship Announces Newly Designed Website

The Church of the Larger Fellowship (CLF)—a church without walls—provides UU connections to individuals and groups through e-mail, telephone, letters, **and** from our newly designed website: www.clfuu.org. Through the CLF, people will find a wealth of

materials and greater access to CLF members and staff.

Religious professionals can suggest the CLF as a resource for people who need assistance with worship and religious education. The CLF is ready to assist isolated religious liberals and small groups of UUs anywhere. Contact them at their website, www.clfuu.org, or call Lorraine Dennis, CLF Executive Director, at 617-948-6166. •

Invitation to UU Ministers (U.S. and Canada)

UU ministers are invited to attend the annual meeting of the Refugio Group, November 8–10, 2005, in the Santa Barbara area of California. The theme is “The Liberal Religious Voice in the Public Square.”

The principal speaker will be Dr. Wade Clark Roof. Dr. Roof is the J.F. Rowny Professor of Religion and Society and Director of the Walter H. Capps Center for the Study of Ethics, Religion, and Public Life—Department of Religious Studies, University of California at Santa Barbara.

For more information contact Lex Crane, Program Chair, at lex1304@aol.com or at Rev. Dr. John Alexie Crane, 1038-B Calle Sastre, Santa Barbara, CA 93105; 805-682-3476. •

2006 Stewardship Sermon Award

The UUMA, LREDA, and UUA Annual Program Fund jointly sponsor the Stewardship Sermon Award. In order to meet the publishing deadline for the 2006 General Assembly program book—where the awardee will be listed and acknowledged—the deadline for submission has been moved from the end of March to February 15, 2006. Sermons preached between January

1, 2005 and February 12, 2006 may be considered.

All Unitarian Universalist professional religious leaders, as well as those studying for professional religious leadership (in at least their second year), are eligible to participate.

Sermons are judged through a blind process by a panel of UU religious professionals and lay leaders. Additional information about the Award and award-winning sermons from previous years can be found on the Association website at <https://secure.uua.org/giving/apf/sermon.html> or e-mail apf@uua.org. •

Spicing Up UU Worship

What is “contemporary worship?” How can we be more creative in our worship services in order to attract a more diverse and intergenerational congregation? How can we work to embody our faith in addition to thinking about it? A new website has been created by the UUA Office of Young Adult and Campus Ministry. It includes a section on theology, tips on spicing up your worship services, a new e-mail discussion list for contemporary worship, and links to resources.

You can find the website at www.uua.org/ya-cm/resources/Worship/index.html.

For more information, contact Michael Tino, UUA Director of Young Adult and Campus Ministry, at 919-401-9944. •

Sixth National Conference for Midsize Congregations

Join the conference *Congregational Change Is Personal: Meeting People Where They Are and Moving On*. Today's midsize congregations (with 151 to 550 members) deal with the complexities of change in their organizations. Supporting

mission, cultivating growth, and nurturing aspirations are essential to smooth transitions and to attracting and retaining members. Join us for a dynamic program focused on these and more issues important to congregational leaders in Phoenix, AZ, March 2-5, 2006, for the Sixth National Conference for Midsized Congregations. Hear keynote speaker, William Bridges, Ph.D., and participate in speaker-led exercises, workshops, daily worship, congregational team activities, small group opportunities, and social gatherings. Make contacts as together we examine congregational change. On-line registration begins November 1, 2005. For more information go to www.uua.org/cde/. ●

CT Hospice, Inc. Internships

CT Hospice provides intensive palliative care for patients with terminal illness through home care and inpatient programs. Five home care offices throughout the state, and a fifty-two bed inpatient facility enables us to meet the medical, psychological, social, and spiritual needs of our patients and their families. Our interdisciplinary team of physicians, nurses, social workers, pharmacists, chaplains, artists, and volunteers coordinate their efforts to enable the patient to live as fully as possible during their illness. The interdisciplinary team supports the entire family as the unit of care. It seeks to make it possible for the family to keep the patient at home as long as is appropriate.

Spiritual Care Interns train at our inpatient facility, working one-on-one with patients and family. They participate fully in patient assessments, family meetings, weekly interdisciplinary team meetings, and monthly meetings with the spiritual care team. Toward the end of the internship period, time will be spent ministering in the home care environment.

The student receives supervision from their fieldwork supervisor for approximately 1.5 hours each week. The five other members of the Spiritual Care staff also mentor the intern. Interns receive a thorough orientation to CT Hospice and to the Spiritual Care department.

Lou Gonzalez administers the internship and can be reached at 203-315-7356 or l.gonzalez@hospice.com. ●



The Religious Leader

NEWS FROM THE UUA MINISTRY & PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP STAFF GROUP

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