



The Religious Leader

NEWS FROM THE MINISTRY AND PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP STAFF GROUP • PRE-GA 2006

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

UUA Health Insurance—A Critical Milestone

The UUA Health Insurance Plan moved closer to reality on April 23 when the UUA Board of Trustees approved going forward with an open enrollment from May 1 to October 15. After 500 church staff are enrolled, the Trustees will vote to take the final legal and administrative actions to implement the plan on January 1, 2007.

With this plan we declare, “We are all responsible, each to the other, to solve the problem of affordable, high quality health insurance for those who work for UU organizations.”

The Office of Church Staff Finances is now spreading the news through all available channels. Enrollment began on May 1, and, by October 15, we must meet the mandatory minimum enrollment of 500 subscribers (the insurance term for “employees”). Enrollment is open to staff of UU organizations who work at least 1,000 hours per year, plus self-employed community ministers and recent retirees who have Medicare and need this plan as a Medicare Supplement.

Nearly four hundred ministers, educators, administrators, musicians, and other staff have been working for UU congregations with no health insurance at all. Interim ministers often find it difficult to obtain insurance when they move to a new congregation.

We act on our commitment to one another by banding together through a common health plan, as we meet our responsibility to provide adequate health insurance for our ministers and staff.

The new UUA plan is very different from a previous plan that was

cancelled by Massachusetts Blue Cross Blue Shield eight years ago. Instead of contracting with an insurance carrier, this is a UUA-owned and operated plan designed to serve our congregations. This new plan is administered by Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield of Pennsylvania, which administers similar plans for other religious denominations.

Persons may enroll as a single adult, two adults (married couples or domestic partnerships), one adult with children, or as a family, without discrimination based on affectional preference.

A nationwide Preferred Provider Organization plan (PPO) and a High Deductible Plan are offered. Both include affordable access to the largest national network of doctors and hospitals, prescription drugs, emergency care, worldwide coverage, a Blue Cross Blue Shield ID card, and complete portability if you change jobs within UU organizations. Both plans will be administered by Highmark.

Visit the UUA website, www.uua.org, for plan details and rate information, and the Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield website, www.highmarkbcb.com, where you can confirm your doctor's participation in the plan and tour the “Member Site Demo” to explore the features offered.

All congregations are urged to contribute at least 80 percent of the premium cost for employees, and at least 50 percent of the cost for additional family members. The UUA District Compensation Consultants will work with congregations as they consider how best to support this crucial campaign.

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TYPESETTING AND EDITORIAL BY
ANNMARIE G. KLYZUB, KALZUB DESIGN,
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We have engaged Jim Sargent to drive this critical enrollment effort. Jim is a UU lay leader with broad experience in healthcare issues. He has served as a board member, Finance Committee member, church president, and as a member of search committees. Jim is available to answer questions at 617-948-6405 or jsargent@uua.org. We will be offering workshops at the St. Louis GA and will provide materials and information at a booth in the GA display area.

Summer tends to be a slow time for many congregations, and it is critical that we have as many persons as possible enroll before summer

vacations. People who enroll before October 15 will not have to submit a medical history and will not be excluded because of pre-existing conditions. This cannot be guaranteed after October 15.

Enrollees should not cancel any current insurance coverage until all subscribers are notified in late October that the plan will take effect on January 1, 2007.

Please do not put this off until September—go now to www.uua.org and help put us on the path to a new level of service on behalf of congregations and those who serve them. ●

—Ralph Mero,
Church Staff Finances Director

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

Hail and Farewell

It is with great and sincere joy that I welcome Rev. Beth Miller, who will officially become the new Director of Ministry and Professional Leadership on July 1. Beth has generously agreed to actually join our staff starting June 12 so that we can do some transition work here in Boston and participate in events together at GA. As you may already know, Beth has been minister at the UU Church of the Monterrey Peninsula in Carmel, California since 1997. Before that she served congregations in Mentor, Ohio and Halifax, Nova Scotia. All along, Beth has been an active and valued participant in UUA, UUMA, and other UU programs. From my work with her on the UUA's CENTER committee, I learned about her fine intelligence, depth of understanding, and affirmative and affirming leadership style. I couldn't be happier that she will be the new Director of MPL.

The saying farewell part of this is a little more difficult for me.

I am ready to retire. I have no doubt about that. I can even imagine losing some meaning and purpose in my life and not being too

upset about that, at least for a while. I have been working steadily for a long time. A little free time now will be appreciated and probably used well.

I am deeply grateful for the time I have spent at the UUA and, before that, in the congregations I served as minister in Hudson and Dedham, Massachusetts, as well as my internship in Arlington, Massachusetts. At my ordination, Conrad Wright told the congregation that one of its primary jobs was to shape my ministry. The congregations I named, the UUA, and you my UU colleagues, have provided just the kind of encouragement, education, and correction I have needed along the way. I will very much miss the frequent contact I have had with you. Even though I know how truly hard, complicated, and challenging it is to be a good UU minister or professional leader, and also am well aware of the sometimes spectacular ways in which we (with the best of intentions) still fail, I have grown more and more appreciative of and filled with respect for your ongoing courageous and dedicated work. Thank you.

I will also very much miss the daily contacts with and support I receive from my colleagues in Ministry and Professional Leadership and on the UUA staff. It has been good to puzzle with, be frustrated along with, laugh with, and see the incredible dedication of each and all of them. They are a joy and a treasure.

But, as I began, I am also so pleased that Beth Miller will soon be here and will be taking on the challenges and joys of this good work. ●

Deepest thanks for our shared efforts and dreams,
—David Hubner,
Director of Ministry and Professional Leadership

Ministerial Credentialing/Internship Clearinghouse—David Pettee, Christine May, Kim Wilson

From the Ministerial Credentialing Office

Those of us who work in the Ministry and Professional Leadership Staff Group grow more aware with each passing day that David Hubner will be retiring at the end of June, and how much his wisdom, solid counsel, and wicked sense of humor will be missed. I'm very grateful to have had the chance to work with and for him, and I hope his retirement will bring him many more rewarding years. While we plan for David's departure, we all look forward to the arrival of Beth Miller in early June to carry forth the work of the leadership of our staff group. Speaking further of transitions, we hope very soon to hire a new MFC Assistant, who will be under the supervision of Chris May, for whom I am delighted to announce this worthy promotion!

It has been my custom at this time of year to take an informal snapshot of the ministerial credentialing office to look for interesting trends and developments. The number of people in our files preparing for ministerial fellowship remains about the same at 450. I believe that is likely an inflated number, in that a considerably smaller number of aspirants and candidates seem serious about getting to the Ministerial Fellowship Committee. My educated hunch would be between 150 and 200 people will get as far as an MFC interview. There seem to be a growing number of younger aspirants and candidates—some home grown, but a good number very new to Unitarian Universalism, with a subset of these folks having discovered Unitarian Universalism while in seminary. It would appear that the percentage of

women preparing for ministerial fellowship has leveled off, at about 65 percent of all aspirants and candidates. In addition, the percentage of aspirants and candidates imagining service as a community minister is about the same as last year at 35 percent. The Unitarian Universalist Association remains fortunate that overall interest in our ministry remains strong and constant.

During the last year, we have noticed a troubling dynamic. Twelve candidates chose to cancel their interviews so late in their preparation that we were unable to invite those on the waiting list to fill the vacated slots. This trend risks backing up the system for other candidates who are anxious to interview. Chris and I encourage candidates to arrange their MFC interviews no more than a year in advance, and only if the candidate feels confident that they will be ready at the time of the interview. Coming to see the MFC too early is a very risky strategy. The MFC makes no allowance for candidates who have yet to fulfill or be accountable to a given competency area. The excuse that a UU history or polity course won't be offered until the following year doesn't go over well. The MFC wants to interview candidates who are ready!

Finally, it seems hard to believe that once again Ministry Days and General Assembly are right around the corner. As is my typical schedule, I plan to offer twice "Have You Ever Considered Going Into the Ministry?" Within your congregations, if you are aware of folks whom you could imagine as colleagues, please feel free to encourage them to attend one of the

workshops. And if you happen to be in attendance at St. Louis, please make a point to stop me and say hello! ●

In the faith,
—David Pettee,
Ministerial Credentialing Director

Appointments at GA

For an individual appointment with Rev. David Pettee at General Assembly please contact Chris May at 617-948-6403 or cmay@uua.org. David's schedule is usually full by the time GA begins, so please make an appointment in advance. ●

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Internship Clearinghouse News

After a slow trickle around the holidays, I saw a steady stream of potential interns seeking sites and congregations seeking interns for the fall, which is just now trailing off. From mid-winter through early spring, those involved in making arrangements for their new relationships generally find this both an exciting and anxious time—potential interns find that a site has just accepted another intern or a congregation finds its favorite candidate has chosen another internship. But, for most, the final matches have now been made, although there are still a handful of congregations and prospective interns hoping to make arrangements for the upcoming year. As of this writing, 52 interns have found placements, including five who will be serving in a community setting. Forty-five congregations listed information on the Internship Clearinghouse's web page (www.uua.org/programs/ministry/credentialing/internship), which is in keeping with recent years, and 50 prospective interns listed their profiles. Having prospective intern profiles available for viewing by supervisors and intern committee chairs (a feature of the Internship Clearinghouse developed last year) makes it much

easier for congregations to get in touch with potential interns, although the number of supervisors and intern committee chairs who requested the password to access the profiles was down from last year.

We made several changes to the Internship Stipend Grants Program last fall, including opening the program to all size congregations, but requiring that the congregation not have had an intern within the past five years, as well as an essay on the congregation's anti-racism work. I was impressed by the level of involvement in this important work by many of the applicants. This year, as always, we were faced with some difficult choices. The grants have now been finalized, with four congregations receiving first-year grants and four receiving renewal grants.

Several interns approached me a few months ago with a new idea for General Assembly: Could we arrange to have an informal gathering of interns? Well, you asked, and we try to please! I've arranged for just such a gathering on Friday, June 23, from 5:30 to 6:45 p.m. in the Lafayette Boardroom of the Renaissance Grand Hotel, located right next to the convention center. Recent and current interns, as well as those with internships lined up for the fall, are welcome. It's your time, so make whatever use of it you like—whether it's to meet each

other, network, hear about each others' experiences, or just spend some time with folks at a similar stage of the ministerial preparation process. I also will be there, so feel free to ask me anything that's on your mind regarding internships. And I hope you'll take a moment to introduce yourself. Since most of our dealings are via e-mail and phone, I'd love to meet you in person!

I will have half-hour appointment slots available during GA for anyone who would like to meet with me one-on-one. You can either arrange a meeting in advance via e-mail or phone or go to the MPL booth in the Exhibition Hall at GA to set one up. I'd be happy to meet with anyone who'd like some assistance in planning and setting up an internship, perhaps designing a non-traditional internship, or deciding what kind of internship to pursue. I'm also available to meet with current interns, intern supervisors, and intern committee members. For all who plan to be at GA, I look forward to seeing you there! ●

Yours in faith,

Kim D. 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

Meadville Lombard Theological School— Summer Intensives 2006

Spiritual Leadership and Political Ministries, July 24–28, Larry Greenfield

Creation–Evolution, the Sacred, and Creative Living, July 10–14, Karl E. Peters

Twentieth Century Liberal Theology, July 17–21, Jerome A. Stone

Liberal Religion and the Arts: Art as Spiritual Practice, August 5–12, Ferry Beach, John Tolley

See www.meadville.edu/Ac_CourseOfferings.htm for details.

What's New in the Religious Education Credentialing Program

Congratulations to the following religious educators awarded credentials by the Religious Education Credentialing Committee at its March 2006 meeting or by the RE Credentialing Director during this period:

Credentialed Religious Educator—Associate Level:

Amy Randall

Credentialed Religious Educator Level:

Jan Gartner, Anne Principe

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:

Lynn Hunt, CM
Julie Porter, MB
Jolinda Stephens, PC

Amy Popp, CM
Aubree Smith, PC

New RE Credentialing Policies and Procedures—Highlights

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

- Insufficiently completed Endorsement Forms will be returned or a new endorser will be required. Applicants will also be required to complete and submit an Endorsement Form. With permission, all Endorsement Forms will be sent to the LREDA Committee on Mentoring and LREDA mentors.
- For program completion, candidates must submit an updated resume including a section where the 75 hours of relevant training, seven structured learning experiences, and required graduate courses (or equivalencies) are documented. Documentation must include the “seat time” (elapsed time) of the training.
- It will be possible to request a waiver of any program requirement or rule. A waiver form will be used for this purpose. In addition to certain equivalency proposals, the Equivalency Sub-Committee, rather than the full RECC, will now evaluate all equivalency fulfillments and waiver requests. The Sub-Committee will meet every other month.
- Reading list changes: *Uprooting Racism: How White People Can Work for Racial Justice* by Paul Kivel will

be required at the Credentialed and Master's levels, rather than the curriculum *Weaving the Fabric of Diversity. Nurturing Children and Youth: A Developmental Guidebook* by Tracey Hurd will be required at all levels. ●

RE Credentialing Strengthens Congregations!

The Religious Education Credentialing Committee has been reviewing portfolios and interviewing candidates for more than two years. We are in the process of surveying credentialed religious educators and the congregations in which they serve to find out what the credentialing process has meant in the life and health of the congregation. While we are still collecting overall data, we know anecdotally that the program can have tremendous benefits, not only for the person undertaking what is an intense professional development journey, but also for the congregation or organization supporting that professional religious educator. We are hearing wonderful stories of the positive difference the program is making, and we'd like to share some of them.

On Thursday, June 22, at 1:00 p.m. the RE Credentialing Committee will offer General Assembly attendees a chance to hear from Credentialed Religious Educators, lay leaders, and parish ministers as they share their experiences. They will highlight the benefits to congregational leadership and staff teams that come from increasing the professional skill and standing of the religious educator through the credentialing programs, and tell how the credentialing program impacts the children, youth, adults, and families they serve. Panelists Benette Sherman, Credentialed Religious Educator, UU Fellowship of Ames, IA; Natalie Fenimore, Credentialed Religious Educator, UU Congregation of Fairfax, VA; Jan Devor, Credentialed Religious Educator—Master's Level, First Unitarian Society in Minneapolis, MN; and Alice Springer, Credentialed Religious Educator, UU Congregation of Santa Fe, NM will be joined by parish ministers and lay leaders from their congregations, sharing their inspiring stories. Join us! ●

—From Gail Forsyth-Vail,
for the Religious Education Credentialing Committee

Ask Beth—and Members of the RECC

Questions about the RE Credentialing program and professionalism in religious education leadership? Come to this pre-GA LREDA Professional Day workshop on June 21 at 1:30 p.m. to meet with Beth Williams, RE Credentialing Director, and Liz Jones, Chair of the RE Credentialing Committee, and get the answers you need. ●

Renaissance Program News

Renaissance program modules scheduled for the coming year:

- Jul. 2–7, Teacher Development, The Mountain, NC,
Jessica York, yorkj3@bham.rr.com
Jul. 8–14, RE Administration, Ferry Beach, ME, Mindy
Whisenhunt, drefuss@capital.net
Jul. 8–14, Worship, Ferry Beach, ME, Mindy
Whisenhunt, drefuss@capital.net
Jul. 15–22, RE Philosophy, Star Island, NH, Gerald Peet,
brqagasp@omh.state.ny.us
Jul. 21–23, RE Administration, Vero Beach, FL, Connie
Goodbread, crgdre@tampa.rr.com
Aug. 1–3, UU Identity, Murray Grove, NJ, Andrea
Lerner, alerner@uua.org
Aug. 7–9, Ministry with Youth, North Bend, WA, Tandi
Rogers Koerger, tkoerger@uua.org
Aug. 18–20, RE Philosophy, Unicamp, Ontario, Canada,
Sylvia Bass-West, sylvia@cuc.ca
Oct. 26–28, RE Administration, Twin Cities, MN, Phil
Lund, plund@psduua.org
Oct. 27–29, UU Identity, de Benneville Pines, CA, Tera
Little, teralittle@att.net

We congratulate the following religious educators
who recently received Renaissance Recognition:

Treva Burger, PSW

Julie Caran, TJ

Katherine Martin, PSW
Lynn D. Stevens, FL

Amy Randall, PSW;
Jessica York, MS.

How to Be a Professional Religious Educator

Do you know of someone who is considering some aspect of professional religious education leadership as a career? Please invite them to this GA workshop on Thursday, June 22, 8:00 a.m., at America's Center, Room 261. This will be an opportunity to ask questions, explore the formation process, and find out what it is like to be in this profession from various types of religious educators. ●

Interim DRE Training

The UUA has begun offering Interim DRE Training. This year the training will take place August 8–9 at Eliot & Pickett House, UUA, Boston. If you think you might be called to the work of an interim, or you know of a congregation that may need this training for its religious educator, please contact Beth Williams, RE Credentialing Director, MPL, at bethwilliams@uua.org or 617-948-6417 for more information. ●

—Beth Williams,
Religious Education Credentialing Director

GA Event List

Thursday, June 22

Effective Leadership Teams; Professional Leadership Coordinating Council Members; Renaissance Grand, Majestic Ballroom B: 8:00 a.m.

How to Be a Professional Religious Educator; Rev. Beth Williams and Professional Religious Educators; America's Center 261: 8:00 a.m.

A Compensation Program You Can Be Proud Of; Frankie Price Stern, Peter Henrickson; America's Center 231: 9:45 a.m.

Are You Considering Going into the Ministry?; Rev. David Pettee, Chris May; America's Center 262: 9:45 a.m.

In Covenant—How Do We Work Together in Healthy Congregations? (PLCC Sponsored); Susan Archer, Dale Lantz; America's Center 224: 9:45 a.m.

Religious Education Credentialing for Stronger Congregations; Religious Education Credentialing Committee Members, Credentialed Religious Educators, Congregational Representatives; America's Center 264: 1:00 p.m.

Finances for Seminarians; Patti Lawrence, Joyce Stewart; America's Center 231: 1:00 p.m.

Friday, June 23

Investment Planning 201; Joyce Stewart, Richard Hart; America's Center 231: 11:00 a.m.

UNUSUAL Suspects: Doing Justice for Our Whole Congregation (PLCC Sponsored); Revs. Greg Stewart, Jan Carlsson-Bull; America's Center 267: 11:00 a.m.

A Health Insurance Plan for UU Congregations; Rev. Ralph Mero; America's Center 264: 2:15 p.m.

Meet the MFC; Revs. Jory Agate and Mark Belletini; America's Center 121: 4:00 p.m.

Saturday, June 24

A Health Insurance Plan for UU Congregations; Rev. Ralph Mero; America's Center 264: 8:30 a.m.

Are You Considering Going into the Ministry?; Rev. David Pettee, Christine May; America's Center 242: 8:30 a.m.

Working Together as a Church Staff—Gifts and Impediments (PLCC Sponsored); Sue King, Yvonne Rochon, Robert Griffith, Revs. Kurt Kuhwald, Patricia Shelden Ward, Don Garrett; America's Center 231: 2:15 p.m.

Sunday, June 25

Ministerial Transition: Making the Most of It; Rev. John Weston; America's Center 264: 7:15 p.m.

Two Office Matters

You will notice that this screed comes not from Settlement, but from the Transitions Office. Heretofore, we were known for the penultimate stage in the transitions process: Settlement. Henceforth, it will be by the process itself.

I am sorry to see the departure of Marie DePaul, who will shortly depart the Transitions Assistant position for graduate school in New York City, which she will finance by teaching in a public elementary school. Lucky for the kids, sad for us. ●

An Invitation

If you'd like to meet with me at General Assembly, to talk about search, about your present situation, or about your career in general, please contact us to make an appointment. ●

The Log of Being Sixty

It's not a stretch to say that the UUA ministerial placement process for ministers entering "permanent" (i.e., non-interim) positions has changed radically over the past decade: from Central Planning *a la* Stalin to NASDAQ *a la*, well, pick your poison—Bill Gates, perhaps, or Darwin. Both ministers and ministerial search committees express feelings of liberation. The paranoia about what havoc "Boston" hath wrought in the lives of each seems to have evaporated.

Still, no system is perfect, either in conception or in consequence. The largest mote in the eye of the Ministerial Settlement System as I see it (obscured, no doubt, by the log in my own) is the unseemly high frequency with which highly experienced ministers are passed over in favor of theologues newly fledged. Don't get me wrong—I love to see folks young in ministry make good. And yet.

If you haven't yet read one of the most trenchant set of observations on clergy search processes ever, Stephen Fried's book *The New Rabbi*, I recommend it. Conservative Judaism takes humane care of its own: experienced rabbis are not put out to pasture before their time.

All year I have been wracking my brain: what steps might be taken to infuse our system with greater justice? Not merely the "justice" of the unregulated marketplace, but the justice of which kindness, consideration, respect for the capacities demonstrated by previous accomplishments, and a due sense of the proper sequence of things are constituent parts.

If the concern I raise only occurs to 60-and-over types who read Jane Austen at least annually, I'd like to know it. Even more, I'd like to know your thoughts and ideas on this question, and on any others you have about the settlement process. ●

Confidentiality, Privacy, Transparency

I do not reveal the names of ministers who have indicated interest in a particular congregation: I keep their names confidential.

Ministers often, though not always, decline to reveal the names of congregations where they have indicated interest: they generally keep their interests private.

And then there is transparency, often cited, only intermittently practiced. At the annual AIM (Accredited Interim Minister) Seminar in mid-April, transparency was practiced in spades. Heretofore, once the AIMs had been informed of the congregations applying to hire an interim minister, they each gave me a piece of paper (usually folded) with their list of preferences. On the basis of these preferences and my own (private) judgment, I composed "recommended lists" of ministers to be sent to the various congregations. It was very hush-hush.

This year the AIMs decided upon openness. And so on several long tables they laid out sixty or so pieces of paper, each bearing the name of a congregation wanting an interim. Over two days and while other things, too, were going on, the ministers walked around the table, writing their name on this list or that one, sometimes only to scratch it out later as they thought about their preferences, and rethought them, and eyed the accumulating competition. Even so, many of the lists feature more ministers than the maximum of five that I am committed to recommending, and some lists may fail to feature ministers whom I feel I must recommend.

However, no longer do I have the ability to keep my decisions confidential. Thus, undoubtedly, there will be awkward conversations down the road when I am asked to justify the choices I made.

My bet is that both confidentiality and secrecy are often institutionalized less for the sake of people who might suffer from being seen to come in second, and more for the sake of people who would find it inconvenient to give reasons for what they do—people like me! ●

—John Weston,
Transitions Director

Leadership

I write this article from a hotel room in the French Quarter, almost seven months after Hurricane Katrina tore through and ravaged homes and uprooted the lives of hundreds of men, women, children, families, churches, and businesses in New Orleans, Louisiana. I'm in New Orleans for our CENTER meeting to finalize plans for Ministry Days in Saint Louis, 2006. As a sub-committee of the UUMA, we meet every so many years with the UUMA executive to re-envision our mission, and this is the year and the meeting for that discussion.

In September 2005 I traveled to Houston, Texas to the Astrodome to see what opportunities for ministry there were for me—folks were not allowed into New Orleans. I had to do something, and believe me, I found opportunities to minister in every direction. Our UU churches and colleagues in Houston, Baton Rouge, and New Orleans were deep in work related to the Katrina—and still are.

As several of us toured the Big Easy we saw that New Orleans is *far* from being put back together again. From the bottom (the lower Ninth Ward that was hit beyond belief) to the middle class neighborhoods, there remains ravaged homes and uprooted lives in most directions. The once vibrant and beautiful campus of Xavier University, a historically black college, looked like a ghost town. Not one part of my partner Ray's large family remain in New Orleans; all have relocated to Houston and other parts north and west and away from the Gulf.

We drove around the Superdome, and several times crossed the bridge where hundreds of mothers and babies were once stranded awaiting milk, diapers, and food from somebody, anybody. As I crossed the bridge, their desperate cries for help could still be heard. Many of the babies did not survive; this was a tragedy that did not have to be.

In the Big Easy, they prepare for a mayoral election—now down from 12 candidates to the final two. This con-jured up in my mind the concept of leadership and, moreover, every level of government's lack of leadership for the people and environment of New Orleans during Katrina (and maybe still).

I Googled the word "leadership" and it was interesting to note just how many sites on leadership had to do with clergy leadership. Let me briefly mention two sites that caught my eye with their catchy and to-the-point mottos/mantras: a Christian site, called The Leadership University, had this very interesting motto: "Telling the Truth at the Speed of Life"; and the mantra for a site titled The Art and Science of Leadership said succinctly, "The very essence of leadership is that you have to have a vision." Telling the truth and having a vision were both missing from the leaderships' solution of how to deal with the national disaster of Katrina and of how to make amends, reconciliation, and restoration.

Coming to this city of good music, good eatin' and drinkin' and lovin', and diversity, and where the people of color are mostly doing the cooking, serving, and cleaning—was a hard and clear reminder that I am a leader—you are a leader—we are leaders. And, as clergy, we—you and I—must wake up, get up, wipe the crud from our eyes, generate a vision(s), and stand up for the truth, our rights, and the rights of others—far more often than we do. There's opportunity for ministry in every direction.

Let's not forget what we saw and what we know. Many of us are doing something—keep sharing—there is much left to do.

What aspect of your formation and leadership skills needs sharpening, retooling, and deepening? Is there a professional development course or contextual learning opportunity that would help you focus a vision, and help you manage conflict that would free you up to tell the truth and act more often on it? There are still continuing education grants available for this church year that end June 30—if you are eligible for a grant, please take advantage of it.

Please feel free to phone or write me anytime—I'd love to talk with you about your professional development plans and opportunities.

Peace and justice,
—Michelle Bentley,
Professional Development Director

Ministry Days Reminders

The 2006 Ministry Day theme speaker is Sharon Salzberg. Ms. Salzberg has studied and practiced meditation with Burmese, Indian, and Tibetan teachers for the past 25 years. She directs meditation retreats throughout the United States and abroad, and is the author of *Lovingkindness* and (on audio) *Lovingkindness Meditation*. This takes place on Tuesday, June 20.

First-Year Ministers' Seminar Participant Luncheon and Workshop #A, Tuesday, June 20

Addiction Ministries (New) A Collegial Conversation, Wednesday, June 21

Sankofa Gathering, Thursday, June 22 following the Service of the Living Tradition, POC Suite ●

Unitarian Universalist Spiritual Directors Network— A Dream Come True!

You are now able to look up listings by state to find a UU Spiritual Director near you. The Network is up and running: www.uusdn.org! Check it out! To date, there are approximately 45 clergy and laity in the Spiritual Director's directory. Rev. Jade Angelica is the coordinator.

Society for Community Ministries at GA

Making Affiliations Work; CENTER Day, Tuesday, 1:30 p.m. (Sponsored by SCM and the UU Community Ministry Focus Group).

What happens when a community minister enters into a relationship with a congregation? How does this affect the dynamics of the ministry and the congregation? A panel presents different arrangements between community ministers and congregations, exploring several options and allowing time for questions, discussion, and creative exploration to help develop this new way of doing ministry together.

Tending the Fire IV; Thursday, 1:00 p.m. Inspiring stories of lay and ordained UU community ministers bringing healing and social justice ministries to urban streets, underserved populations, and wherever healing and hope are needed. Bring your stories and questions.

Worshipping in Community; Saturday, 11:00 a.m. SCM's worship service will bring together community ministers and lay people who consider the work they do in the world to be sacred. CM friends are also invited to join in worship and share the grace and challenge of being called to ministries of justice and healing. The 2006 SCM Sermon Award winner will preach. ●

Notice to Jubilee Workshop Participants

Calling all ministers and leaders who have been involved with congregations in anti-racism work over the last several years! There will be a GA gathering of ministers, leaders, and congregational representatives who have participated in a Jubilee 1 or Jubilee 2 workshop and have been involved in anti-racism work both in Unitarian Universalism and within

their communities. Look for more information as GA approaches; contact dmartin@uua.org to register for e-mail updates. ●

MFC News

March 30–April 2, Chicago, IL

The Committee finalized forms for use in the renewal process, unifying our expectations for ministers in community, parish, and RE settings. We voted to remove rule 21, "Affiliated Status," and have requested the Board of Trustees to approve that change; we will instead encourage ministers who hold credentials in other denominations, but wish to show sympathy and support to Unitarian Universalism, to seek Fellowship from the UUA.

We met with a representative of the Oxford Document Management Company to discuss background checks and will work with members of the RE Credentialing Committee to design uniform guidelines and procedures for checking background records of religious professionals applying for credentialing by the UUA.

We considered the possibility of adding a new level of response to ministers coming to our attention for less-than-happy reasons; one that goes beyond warning or counsel, but precedes a full hearing for removal from Fellowship.

The committee interviewed 20 candidates (four men, sixteen women). Fourteen were encouraged to move forward toward preliminary fellowship, with varying contingencies; four were encouraged to continue in preparation for ministry but to return for another interview; and two were discouraged from pursuit of a career in the ministry.

The MFC will next meet September 28–October 1 in Boston. Enquiries and comments may be directed to mfc@uua.org. ●

—Jory Agate, Chair, MFC

Petition for Marriage Equality

Stand up against discrimination! Sign an interfaith letter to Congress and President Bush opposing the so-called "Marriage Protection Amendment," which would write discrimination into the U.S. Constitution.

This amendment defines marriage as only between a man and a woman. In real terms, it says that every state must deny same sex couples the right to marry, overriding any existing local and state level protections and benefits for gay and lesbian couples—or any other unmarried couple—including hospital visitation rights, inheritance rights, pension benefits, and health insurance.

If this amendment were to pass, it would be the first time the Constitution is used to restrict the rights of a group of U.S. citizens, rather than to expand individual rights and secure religious liberty.

Visit www.faithforfairness.org to sign an open letter to the President and Congress, developed by a group that includes the UUA. This is a unique and powerful advocacy opportunity for UUs to show that we stand on the side of love. Please add your name to the growing list of Americans who oppose writing discrimination into our Constitution.

Contact Elizabeth Bukey at ebukey@uua.org or 202-296-4672, ext. 22, or visit www.uua.org/uuawo for more information. ●

The Eliot & Pickett Lodging House

There is space available for committee meetings and lodging during your tour of historic New England and our Unitarian Universalist roots. Contact us for information and reservations at 617-948-4679 or e&p@uua.org. ●

CLF On-line Classes

The Church of the Larger Fellowship offers terrific, modestly priced on-line courses taught by colleagues like you, such as, Buddhist meditation by Rev. Wayne Walder, UU history and theology by Rev. Roy Phillips, and the spiritual practice of writing by Rev. Amanda Aikman. We are seeking highly qualified teachers, ordained or lay, to lead future classes in our categories of UU Identity, Theology and Faith Development, Ethics and Social Justice, and Spiritual Practice. All class interactions take place via our on-line learning site, and run four to eight weeks. Teachers receive 75 percent of the income from classes. Registration is open to everyone, CLF members and non-members alike. If you are interested in teaching for the CLF, please contact our minister for lifespan learning, Rev. Lynn Ungar, at lugar@clfu.org.

Proceeds from on-line courses support CLF's work to bring Unitarian Universalism to isolated religious liberals throughout the world. Learn more at www.clfuu.org or contact 617-948-6150 or clf@clfu.org. ●

Life Is Religious if We Make it So

As UU parents, we want to accept and encourage our children's unique search for truth and meaning (Principle 4). But at what age are children old enough to decide for themselves that attending religious education classes will not enhance their spiritual journey? Parents of children and youth may face a child resistant to church attendance at any age.

Children in second through fifth grades are expanding their social awareness. They notice that not everyone worships and believes as their own families do. Depending on the child's personality, this awareness of difference may spark pride, curiosity, or concern. That concern may be expressed in resistance to church attendance.

Children this age like to fit in, to know where they belong and why. When there is a dichotomy between home and friends, they need to resolve the tension. They need help from the adults in their lives to provide a reason for the differences they are trying to understand.

A great way to reach children of this age is through stories of real people doing heroic deeds. This is the age where every soccer player wants to make the U.S. Olympic Team, every football player wants to turn professional, and everyone wants to have magical powers like Harry Potter. Children are starting to experience their own power and like to imagine doing great deeds. Religious education curricula, such as Gaia Brown's *UU Super Heroes* and *Super Heroes, Bible People*, are some of the wonderful tools available to teach our UU and Judeo-Christian heritage in a format that matches the developmental stage of children this age.

Parents need to learn these stories, too, and find ways to share them with their children. If being a UU is limited to the occasional Sunday morning, and never referred to in the course of daily life, then there is no way for a child to find any meaning or pride in his or her religious heritage, and, therefore, no motivating reason to attend church.

Many parents don't know the stories of our common religious heritage because they've come from other faith traditions. A good book for the whole family is *A Lamp in Every Corner: Our UU Storybook*, by Janeen K. Grohsmeyer. The UUA website and their bookstore link also provide many other great books to browse and purchase for home or for church libraries.

Children in upper elementary school still look to their parents for guidance. If parents make it a practice to attend church regularly, then their children will have an opportunity to get connected. If parents show an interest in their child's religious education by talking to their teachers, connecting with other families in the same age group, learning what their children are learning, then they will be better able to help their

children interpret life's daily scramble, using the lens of the religious values and spiritual depths they want their children to embody.

If parents show, through their own choices for themselves and their families, that the spiritual journey is worth time and effort—rather than engaging in a power struggle where parent and child both lose—they will have taught through example that their own superhero child is worthy of the challenges and rewards of that same journey. ●

—Claire Diehl,
Religious Educator

Faith Communities Today Survey

Thanks to staff and leaders from 497 congregations who responded to the Faith Communities Today survey sent to all UUA member congregations. You provided us with valuable input; now it's time to let you hear what your colleagues said! A preliminary report prepared for the UUA board is on-line now at www.uua.org/TRUS/apr06/D1d3-fct.pdf. In the weeks before General Assembly, more detailed reports will be linked from www.uua.org/cde/education, where results from the 2000 survey are currently posted. ●

DRUUMM Teleconferences

Our group includes students of African, Asian, Latino/a, Arab, and Native descent, in relationship with the broader UU People of Color community through Diverse & Revolutionary UU Multicultural Ministries (organized in late 1990s by leadership from African American UU Ministries, Latino/a UU Networking Association, and religious professionals of color in UUA congregations). Phone conferences offer guest speakers, as well as time for personal check-in and support. Past speakers include Kristen Harper, Danielle DiBona, Robette Dias, Rebecca Parker, David Pettee,

Sofia Craethnenn, Alicia Forde, Michelle Bentley, and more.

Upcoming Conferences (7:00 p.m. Eastern unless otherwise noted):

Tue. May 16, Chester McCall,
Church of the Restoration

Wed. May 31, John T. Crestwell,
Davies UU Memorial Minister

Mon. June 12, Manish Mishra,
incoming DRUUMM
President

Fri. June 23, 10:00 a.m., Bill
Sinkford, President's Suite, GA

Please call 641-297-5700, press 2,
then enter DRUUMM code: 378866.

Please RSVP to Joseph
Santos-Lyons at 503-490-5639 or
jsantoslyons@hds.harvard.edu. ●

UURMAPA Financial Presentations

In the 1970s, Harold and Shirley Hadley visited a small Massachusetts church where he was guest preaching. Shirley remembers, "We asked about the retired minister there (Harold was always interested) and went to visit him. We found him wrapped in a blanket with no food. Harold got in touch with the powers that be and they did something. How many others like that might there be?" This was the beginning of the UU Retired Ministers and Partners Association; part of our mission is to make sure it isn't *your* story. In 2002, UURMAPA received funds from the UUA Grants Panel to train financial educators for presentations to active ministers. UUMA chapters are strongly urged to take advantage of this free service. For information, contact Nancy Doughty, president, at 231-933-4801 or nwdrev@charter.net. ●

Alternative Format Publications

From the Massachusetts Association for the Blind: 4-track tapes with tone indexing and Braille labels (4-track player required).

A Chosen Faith: 1 tape (\$8)

Unitarian Universalist Pocket

Guide: 1 tape (\$8)

Day of Promise (meditations read by
Kay Montgomery): 1 tape (\$8)

*Welcoming Children with Special
Needs*: 2 tapes (\$16)

Send check or money order (free
shipping) to MAB Recording
Studio, 313 Pleasant St., Watertown,
MA 02472. Questions? Contact
Robert Pierson at 617-972-9117 or
rpierson@mabcommunity.org.

Free from Identity-Based Ministries.

UU World magazine, choice of
regular audio-cassettes or
4-track tapes

*Welcoming Children with Special
Needs*, mp3 format CD, spo-
ken word with tone indexing

The following are available as
Microsoft Word resources, as e-mail
attachment, or on CD, convertible
on personal computer to spoken
word (using screen reader software),
Braille, or any size print.

*Unitarian Universalist Pocket Guide
Singing the Living Tradition* (lyrics
and readings)

*Soul Work: Anti-racist Theologies in
Dialogue*

Weaving the Fabric of Diversity
(RE curriculum)

Unitarian Universalist Pamphlets

Contact IDBM at
access@uua.org or Deborah
Greenstein at 617-948-6451. ●

Conversations on the State of RE in Mass Bay

Results of the *Conversations on the State of RE in Mass Bay* are available on the Mass Bay website: www.mbdaua.org. Sixteen topics include: how religious educators count RE numbers; what is being done for junior and senior high programming; ideas on how to keep our young adults; how many are paid at fair compensation levels; and what educators are doing for Safe Congregations work. Conversations took place last fall and are organized according to

the size of the RE program. See report for questions or information relevant to a specific size program. General observations follow each question with trends, patterns, and concerns evident in our congregations' religious education programs. ●

GA Planning Committee Featured Presentation

This presentation is sponsored by Society for Community Ministries; UUA Advocacy & Witness, Congregational Services, and Identity-Based Ministries Staff Groups; and the UU Service Committee.

From the Heart: Building a New Democracy Movement; Saturday, June 24, 2:15–3:30 p.m., Ferrara Theater.

Linda Stout, Executive Director of Spirit in Action (www.spiritinaction.net) and author of *Bridging the Class Divide: And Other Lessons for Grassroots Organizing*, has spoken at dozens of UU congregations and several district gatherings. Her message of bringing spirit to social justice work, and an approach to anti-racism/anti-oppression initiatives that involves healing divisions, transforms how we do social change work. This workshop shares strategies for building a new inclusive democracy movement. Spirit in Action has been active in the coalitions to rebuild New Orleans based on visions of a new democratic community, and she will also report on the work for a just recovery in New Orleans and the Gulf. ●

Stewardship and Development Information

Focus on Giving

Church leaders have a lot to think about, not least of which is money. Questions include, How much do we need? Where do we find it? Where does it go? Why?

Lay leaders often look to professional staff for answers, so it's important for you as religious professionals to have the information you need to effectively respond. What you convey about giving to our association makes a difference—to your congregation and to the wider movement.

Annual giving to the UUA represents a significant financial commitment on the part of each congregation; support of our association is integrally linked to support of our shared mission and principles.

Each spring your congregation will be contacted by a designated Annual Program Fund Chairperson to make your pledge of financial support to our association, based on a per-member fair share amount determined by the UUA Board of Trustees. Congregations fulfilling pledges by the end of May will receive acknowledgment at GA in June.

For details about the Annual Program Fund and resources to help you and your congregation find answers to your questions, go to www.uua.org/giving/apt/, or contact Laurel Amabile, APF Director (lamabile@uua.org or 617-948-6513) or Julie Lichtman, APF Assistant (jlichtman@uua.org or 617-948-6512).

Umbrella Giving Services

Did you know that the UUA can help individuals make charitable gifts to benefit congregations, seminaries, or programs within the UUA, such as the Service Gratuities Pension Fund? The Office of Charitable Gift and Estate Planning can assist with planning life-income gifts or gifts through one's will that benefit congregations and UU organizations.

With life-income gifts, an individual makes an irrevocable contribution, usually of cash or securities,

claims an immediate, one-time charitable income tax deduction for a portion of the gift, and receives a stream of income for life and, if appropriate, a partner's life as well. After both donor and partner die, the remaining principle of the gift is given as the donor has directed: to a congregation, the UUA, another UUA-affiliated organization, or a combination of these.

Bequests are another great way to make a charitable donation. Through a will, an individual can designate a specific amount, or a percentage of the estate, to benefit a congregation, the UUA, or a specific program. The Charitable Gift and Estate Planning office can provide individuals and congregations with simple language to include a gift to Unitarian Universalism in their will.

For more information call 888-792-5885 or e-mail www.uua.org/giftplans. ●



The Religious Leader

NEWS FROM THE UUA MINISTRY & PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP STAFF GROUP

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