



# The Religious Leader

NEWS FROM THE MINISTRY AND PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP STAFF GROUP • FALL 2006

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## Office of the Director—Beth Miller, A'Llyn Ettien

### From the New Director

*We forgive ourselves and each other;  
we begin again in love.*

—Rob Eller-Isaacs, #637, SLT

**I** often think of these words as autumn unfolds and we move toward Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. Rob takes us through a litany of all too human failings (been rigid, selfish, silent, and so on) followed by the above refrain. And he ends, “For those and so many acts both evident and subtle which have fueled the illusion of separateness; We forgive ourselves and each other; we begin again in love.”

“The illusion of separateness. . . .” Isn’t that, more than anything, what we’re up against all the time—that idea that we are isolated beings, expected to be sufficient unto ourselves and unable to rely on others to share our burdens with us?

This autumn, three months into my position as Director of MPL, I am aware of how easily I slip into that mindset, especially when I’m new at something, less certain than I wish I were. It may be so for many of you: new in your congregations or your community settings, unsure of yourselves, excited by the challenge but anxious to bridge that all too common gap between what you know and what the job needs for you to know. I invite you to join me in trying very hard to resist “the illusion of separateness,” to forgive ourselves and anyone who might make the road a bit less smooth than it might be, and to begin again in love, each day, each hour if necessary. As we welcome the autumn of 2006, I know I am surrounded by amazing people—here at the UUA and out there among you—who will help me

and forgive me and begin again with me as needed, if I will let them. My prayer for you is that you are, too.

I am so grateful to my predecessor, Rev. David Hubner, for the time and care he took with me in my first few weeks here. Photos of the RV he and his wife, Michael, rented this summer provide assurance to me that he is not languishing in retirement. I know you join me in once again thanking David for his many years of service to the UUA, and especially to his colleagues, and in wishing him the very best as he transitions into this new phase of his life. You go with our love and admiration, David.

I hope you know that you are served in MPL by an amazing staff. The highlights of their work are in their individual columns, but what I want to tell you is how dedicated John, Ralph, Beth, David, and Michelle are and how hard they work on your behalf. Serving those who serve Unitarian Universalism in our congregations and in the larger community is a mission they take very seriously. As I get to know them and become more and more familiar with what we do here, the greater grows my appreciation for these people and for the administrative staff (A'Llyn, Chris, Joyce, Angela, A'ashia, Tracy, Emily, Leslie, Kim, and health insurance consultant, Jim Sargent) who make it all happen.

Many of you wonder what will change with David’s retirement and my appointment as Director. The truth is, I don’t know yet. People have asked me if I have a vision for MPL. Again, not yet. I applied for, carefully researched, and accepted this position because of my appreciation for and admiration of the work of MPL. I

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know our mission is to serve Unitarian Universalism through our support of its religious professionals. I know the commitment to broaden our service beyond ministers is still in its infancy, and, as it grows, we must remember that ministers are particularly crucial to the health and well-being of our movement. I know there are key stakeholders within the UUA and throughout our larger UU universe who care deeply about what we do and how we go about it. My intention this year is to listen, learn, and engage. That said, the fast-rushing stream that is our work won't allow me to only observe. Change will inevitably occur just because decisions must be made. I am committed to working collaboratively with MPL staff and our constituencies in shaping the evolution of our work and my own role as Director. I look forward to becoming more intimately aware of your concerns, especially through meetings with the groups that represent you (UUMA, LREDA, SCM, UUMN, AUUA, UURMAPA, and so on), but also directly with individuals.

Changes? New vision? No, not now. But I do begin this time with a hope. I hope you will come to know me as a strong, open, just, and caring

leader and trust that helping you to be the best leaders you can be for this faith we share is my ultimate goal. I believe being the best leader you can be is your goal, too. And when we fail, which we inevitably will sometimes, I sincerely hope that we can "forgive ourselves and each other; [and] . . . begin again in love." It is good to be here. ●

—Beth Miller,  
Director of Ministry and  
Professional Leadership

## Service of the Living Tradition

It gives me great pleasure to announce that the preachers for the Service of the Living Tradition at GA, 2007, in Portland, OR, are Revs. Barbara and Bill Hamilton-Holway, co-ministers of the UU Church of Berkeley in Kensington, CA. There has been some concern expressed over the tone of the service and I have invited Barbara and Bill to not only preach, but work with us on taking a close look at the service as a whole. I could not hope for better partners in this effort. ●

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

### Some Blasts from the Past

I've been aware this month that I am starting my fifth year as Ministerial Credentialing Director, which has reminded me how quickly time flies when one is busy! There have been a couple of changes in the office that will be of interest. In recognition of the excellent work steadfastly performed by Chris May, Ministerial Credentialing Office Administrator, she has been promoted to supervise the Ministerial Fellowship Committee Assistant! I'm still very fortunate that Chris will continue to work with me!

Speaking of the MFC Assistant, we were fortunate to hire Leslie Staples, who started in her position in mid-May. Leslie is a recent graduate of Northeastern University, and was drawn to her position because of the UUA's commitment to social justice issues and open-minded spirituality. As we have, you will enjoy getting to know her!

It is not all that uncommon for aspirants and candidates to get busy and perhaps miss important information that has been referred to in prior editions of *The Religious Leader*.

Thus, I've decided to selectively highlight some of the more important things that are worth remembering.

- Due to changes in the language in MFC Rules and Policy regarding internships, interns need to pass their Learning and Service Agreements past Kim Wilson, Internship Clearinghouse Coordinator, for her affirmation. This is not meant as a heavy-handed requirement, but as a helpful mechanism to make sure that all interns are aware of the new MFC expectations for internships.
- Those persons who commenced their preparation for ministerial fellowship prior to the emergence of the RSCC system will be required to interview with an RSCC if they haven't seen the MFC prior to December 2006. This policy was added in January 2005.
- Last May (for reasons still unknown to me), the number of aspirants, candidates, and those no longer in seminary, *but starting an internship this fall*, who applied for UUA scholarship assistance, fell markedly. The annual date for applying for financial aid remains, as it has for many years, on April 15. I would urge each and all to be "wise as serpents" in trying to avoid accumulating student loan debt.
- As part of applying for candidacy status, aspirants agree to abide by the Rules and Policies of the Ministerial Fellowship Committee, and by any amendments thereof, and also agree to defer accepting any ministerial position other than internships, student field placements, contract ministry positions, or summer ministry positions approved by the Ministerial Credentialing Director. In addition, for those who are granted candidacy status, candidates are urged to join the UUMA and commit themselves to its Code of Professional

Practice. It can be easy to forget that congregations are not accountable to MFC and UUMA requirements. Thus, it becomes essential that the aspiring minister know what is expected. I would also add here that your ministerial colleagues fully expect that you know about the Code of Professional Practice, and will hold you accountable to it accordingly.

- Finally, it's been a year now since the MFC decided to no longer award preliminary fellowship on the basis of category. The MFC expects all candidates to be prepared and basically competent to serve in the myriad places to which ministers are called to serve. Ministerial specialization is more a focus of the years during preliminary fellowship.

As always, I am happy to answer questions either by e-mail or by phone. Please feel free to contact me or Chris May if you have any questions, and particularly if what you hear sounds just too strange to be true! ●

In the faith,  
—David Pettee, Ministerial  
Credentialing Director

## Internship Clearinghouse News

**F**or many of us, General Assembly is already a distant memory (but a good one, I hope!). Interns at GA, who are otherwise spread across the continent, had an opportunity this past June to be in community with each other. At the suggestion of several interns, I arranged for a simple gathering (to my knowledge, the first time we've done anything like this). Not only was turnout excellent, but folks said they loved it. Interns had a chance to meet and chat with each other, David Pettee, and me. Feedback was so enthusiastic that we plan to make this an annual event. So, if you're currently an intern (or will be in 2007), we hope you'll be able to join us next year in Portland!

In keeping with the expressed desire for more of a sense of community among interns, a listserve specifically for interns was recently created, and response has been overwhelmingly positive.

About 63 interns are either beginning internships or continuing part-time positions this fall, about 20 fewer than last year. With few exceptions, interns this past year have been in direct contact with me at some level. My hope is that someday every intern will be "in the loop." If you are an intern who hasn't connected with the IC, please drop me a line. Working with the Internship Clearinghouse has become almost essential in the process toward preliminary fellowship.

One reason for this is that the Ministerial Fellowship Committee now requires all interns to submit a Learning/Service Agreement to me *within the first two months of the internship*, which I must review and affirm. If revisions need to be made, I will work with the intern to help ensure that the internship is meeting all MFC requirements. So if you're

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an intern or supervisor, please note this requirement and timeline. The MFC certainly notices!

I encourage you to visit the IC web page, which continues to add resources, information, and functional improvements. There you will find the *Internship Manual*, essential reading for all interns, supervisors, and committee members, as well as the new *Internship Manual Supplement*, informing readers about important updates, including changes in MFC policies and rules, as well as new information on the tax status of interns. This supplement is updated as needed, so it's worth checking every so often for additions.

The IC web page is also the place for internship sites to post their profiles (preferably by November) and for prospective interns to post theirs. While site profiles are public, intern profiles are accessible only to supervisors and intern committee chairs. Most

matches between sites and interns are made through use of these profiles. We recommend that sites accept applications through early December, select their top candidate by February 1, and ask candidates to respond one way or another within two weeks.

If you serve a congregation that would like to become an internship site, I encourage you to consider applying for a UUA Internship Stipend Matching Grant. A program description, qualification guidelines, and application form are available on the IC web page. Check it out soon: the submission deadline (for internships beginning in fall 2007) is November 1.

One of my goals this year is to offer more support to all you hard-working supervisors. Without your dedication and guidance, none of these internships would be possible and I want to take this opportunity to say "thank you!" I've heard several requests for resources on supervisory training. With that in mind, I'll be

developing a link on the IC web page to a list of field education offices offering training, as well as written material, which I hope will be helpful. Another thought: would you as a supervisor be interested in an internship supervisor listserve? I welcome feedback on this and other ideas on the kinds of IC support that would be helpful to you as supervisors and the same for interns.

I know the internship process can be challenging and confusing at times, so please don't hesitate to contact me with questions, concerns, or requests for guidance. I hope this autumn season is filled with blessings great and small for all of you. ●

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

### **Educational Opportunities—Online Education at Starr King, Spring 2007**

Starr King School for the Ministry offers 14-week online courses, suited for students from non-UU schools, ministers seeking continuing education opportunities, and those considering the ministry. Visit <http://online.skism.edu/courses07.php> for more about upcoming courses, or contact Cathleen Young, Online Education Director, at [cyoung@skism.edu](mailto:cyoung@skism.edu).

*Children's Literature: A Religious Education*

*Congregational Polity*

*Unitarian Universalist Community Ministry*

*World Religions*

*Andalusia: Judaism, Islam and Christianity, Part 2*

### **Meadville Lombard—January Intensives 2007**

All intensive classes meet for one week, generally Monday–Friday, six hours per day—the equivalent of thirty hours of residential classroom work. See [http://meadville.edu/Ac\\_CourseOfferings.htm](http://meadville.edu/Ac_CourseOfferings.htm) for more information.

*Creating Quality Worship in Congregations:* Jan. 8–12

*Arts of Ministry III: Justice, Ministry & Advocacy:* Jan. 8–12

*Problems in Public Ethics:* Jan. 8–12

*Putting First Things First:* Jan. 13–14

*Community Ministry Seminar:* Jan. 16–19

*Evil, Trauma, and Ambiguity:* Jan. 16–19

*The Big Blue Marble: Theology and Globalization:* Jan. 16–20

*Music as the Doorway:* Jan. 22–26

*Unitarian Universalist History:* Jan. 22–26

*Moral Math: A Window into Religion, Science, and Love:* Jan. 22–26



## What’s New in the Religious Education Credentialing Program

**C**ongratulations to **Tryst Chagnon** who was awarded Credentialed Religious Educator—Associate Level status on August 29, 2006.

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:

Karen Fisk, NE	Sheri Phillabaum, SW
Jessica Gray, SW	Nathan Ryan, SW
Laura McNaughton, PNW	Jennifer Thrall-Thomas, PNW
Correna Ness, JP	Bob Williamson, CMW

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## Getting the Word

Communication has been one of the areas on which the Religious Education Credentialing Committee has been working. We realize that communication is two-way. We need to get information out to religious educators, ministers, and congregational leaders about the program and what it means to both religious educators and congregations to either be an active participant in working on a credential or to have received a credential. We also need to hear about the impact of the program on individuals, congregations, and our Association.

There are several ways the RECC and the Religious Education Credentialing Office have been working to get information out to as broad an audience as we can. The Religious Education Credentialing Office and Beth Williams, Religious Education Credentialing Director, have created a wonderful website. You can find an overview of the program, program requirements, procedures, forms, resources and benefits at [www.uua.org/programs/ministry/reco/recp.html](http://www.uua.org/programs/ministry/reco/recp.html). This is the most complete source of information in print about the program! There are also three brochures: a bulleted overview that can be used to introduce the program; a more detailed brochure explaining the Credentialing Program in more depth; and one aimed at congregational leaders, explaining both the benefits to and responsibilities of a congregational leader in connection to having a credentialed religious educator, or one who is in the process, on staff. The RECC also has a credentialed religious educator who observes each meeting and reports on how the committee works, as well as their thoughts about our process. These reports, along with précis of the meetings, can be found on the website. In addition, a portion of one of our two annual meetings is open to any observer.

The RECC also wants to hear back about the credentialing program and process. The official observer’s report is one way, but there are several others. At one RECC meeting a year, the committee holds a time for comments. This is an opportunity for individuals to provide thoughts and observations about the program directly to the committee as a whole. An announcement and guidelines are published before each time for comments on both the REACH List and the LREDA List. Some comments are delivered in person and some are submitted in writing and read aloud to the committee. Recently submitted feedback can also be found on the website. Direct comments can also be made to the RECC by clicking the “Contact the RECC” link on the website. The RECC and Credentialing Office are working to survey program participants to learn about the impact that credentialing has had on individuals and their congregations. This process is underway at the moment, and plans exist to survey on a regular basis so we can gather a body of knowledge about the impact of the program.

Be sure to let the RECC and the Credentialing Office know if you need information so we can help you find it, and take advantage of one of the ways to let us hear from you. It always works best when communication is two-way! ●

—Liz Jones, Chair, RECC

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## Renaissance Program News

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

Oct. 26–28, Teacher Development, Northfield, MN, Phil Lund, [plund@psduua.org](mailto:plund@psduua.org)

Oct. 27–29, UU Identity, de Benneville Pines, CA, Tera Little, [teralittle@att.net](mailto:teralittle@att.net)

Dec. 1–2, Curriculum, Woodstock, CT, Deborah Levering, [cbdpc@charter.net](mailto:cbdpc@charter.net)

Jan. 19–21, Curriculum, Tallahassee, FL, Connie Goodbread, [crgdre@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:crgdre@tampabay.rr.com)

Feb. 9–11, UU Identity, Clinton, OH, Lucy Carney, [lucycarney@cox.net](mailto:lucycarney@cox.net)

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

Sparrow Alden, NH/VT	Ellie Lopez, PC
Lynne Bacon, PNW	Stephanie Ludwig, PSW
Laura Beth Brown, MNY	Jennifer McAdoo, NE
Lara Campbell, MNY	Riley McLaughlin, PC
Britt Cryer, MNY	Michael Molk, PNW
Patricia Dadkhah-Jazi, MD	Julie Parker-Amery, MB
Natalie Fenimore, JP	Celeste Plumlee, PSW

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Shelley Fisher, PC  
Karen Fisk, NE  
Diana Friedell, SL  
Kate Holland, MB  
Melinda Hughes, PNW  
Claudia Jimenez, FL  
Beth Kline, MS  
Daniel Kluger, MNY

Laura Renshaw, MD  
Esther Rosado, MB  
Heather Sawyers, PC  
Frances Sharp, MBD  
Laura Spencer, Heartland  
Barbara Stoddard, CB  
Sheila Swearingen, SW  
Lynne Webber, PSW

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## Interim DRE Training

Are you looking for a new professional direction as a religious educator? I invite you to consider the role of

Interim DRE. Individuals with the training to help our UU congregations navigate a transition in religious education leadership are highly sought. In addition to a Boston training location, trainers are now located in the Central Midwest, Joseph Priestley, Metro New York, Pacific Central, and Pacific Northwest districts. For more information about this specialty in professional religious education, please contact Beth Williams, RE Credentialing Director, Ministry and Professional Leadership, [bethwilliams@uua.org](mailto:bethwilliams@uua.org), or 617-948-6417 for more information. ●

—Beth Williams,  
Religious Education Credentialing Director

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## Transitions—John Weston, Emily Schwab

### The Year in Ministerial Settlement

The 2005–2006 season produced 56 ministerial settlements—the third lowest total in the past eight years, but up eight and 17 from 2004 and 2005, respectively. Twenty-five men and 31 women were called or hired to positions new to them, whether their first or their fifth. Their average age is 49. Six are ministers of color/members of historically marginalized communities, and an estimated seven are members of the GBLT community. Four co-ministry teams were called—a result unequalled in my memory, and reflecting the greater number of us seeking to serve as part of a ministerial team.

Four of our newly called or hired ministers are occupying positions that are either new or not previously occupied by a minister. For those colleagues departing a position, the long-time median tenure has been seven years. (The Alban Institute considers a pastorate “long” when it endures seven years or more.) Over the past fifteen years the mean has decreased by half a year (to 8.4) and the median increased by the same amount (to 7.4). These changes appear to reflect fewer very long and very brief ministries.

Positions in ministries previously occupied come open by virtue of the resignation (54 percent), pressured termination (22 percent), or retirement (21 percent) of the settled predecessor, with disability and death together amounting to 3 percent. The rate of resignations is up over both five and ten years, pressured terminations are down over both periods, and retirements, while up over five years, are level with ten years ago.

As of this writing, six colleagues have been serving their current congregation for 25 years or more. Five years ago that number was fourteen; ten years ago, 25; fifteen years ago, 35. ●

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### The Year in Interim Ministry

The demand for ministers to serve in interim positions for the year just begun was late and heavy—the heaviest

in all years but one. Many thanks to the colleagues who recalibrated their sights and decided to serve, and to the four colleagues-to-be who, though not yet in fellowship, bravely took positions in congregations “in the interim.”

It is worth noting that, if we accept the estimated figure of 750 UU congregations being served by at least one minister on a full-time basis, nearly 14 percent are currently being served by the 103 ministers now serving congregations “in the interim.” In the light of past experience, it is likely that the next couple of years will feature a high number of congregations in search. ●

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### Starting Up

I remember arriving at a new settlement and feeling heartsore at the deep mistrust that characterized several key committees. The mistrust in me I expected; it was the mistrust among one another that filled me with dismay. So it was with joy (aha! now I understand) and some resentment (why didn’t anyone tell me before?) that I recently stumbled on Jack Gibbs’s “Trust Formation Theory.”

In any social interaction, Gibbs claims, four major concerns arise:

*Acceptance*—Who am I in this group? Will I be accepted for who I am? Do I really want to belong to it?

*Data-flow*—Who else is in this group? How does it operate? What history bears upon it?

*Goal formation*—What are we here to do?

*Control*—What are our assets? How are we going to work together? Who are the leaders?

Not only do these concerns arise; they arise chronologically, the satisfactory resolution of each a prerequisite to moving on successfully to the next. So if you’re stuck at Goal-formation, for example, move back to Data-flow. To move ahead, step back. If you’re faltering, slow down. Not a bad idea in most situations!

You can find Gibb and other valuable perspectives in Glenn E. Ludwig’s *In it for the Long Haul* (Alban 2002).

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Early in the year or early in a ministry, it makes for a good reorientation. ●

—John Weston, Transitions Director

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## A Note from Emily

Greetings! I'd like to rather belatedly introduce myself as the new Transitions Assistant. In the past few months, I have learned both the location of the candy dish (eleven short strides across the hall) and the names of the other MPL-ers on the floor (even the bearded look-alikes). I

grew up in a UU congregation in Media, PA, and headed to Boston for college. This summer my husband quit his job to return to school (happily, he waited until I was done with my master's degree) and I found myself back in full-time employment and under the kind wings of Rev. Weston. Now I spend my days in the Transitions Office and my evenings and weekends writing about food for the local paper, a tasty habit I picked up as a graduate student several years back. ●

—Emily Schwab,  
Transitions Assistant

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## Professional Development—Michelle Bentley, Angela Merkert, A'ashia Short

### Professional Development Needs and Plans for the Year

Hello everyone! I pray your summer was relaxing and that you had quality time with self, family, and friends, and communed with nature. If, over the summer, you did not visualize your Professional Development needs and plans for the year—*it's time to do so now*.

Over the summer I thought about my needs as I enter my fifth year as a UU staff member in the Ministry and Professional Leadership staff group, and twenty-first year of ordination. I'm sorry to say I haven't been here long enough to have earned sabbatical time, but I have completed my D. Min. degree and attended a Career Center for career counseling in the last ten years. I'm also a sandwich child—mother living with me with Alzheimer's disease and my youngest child in his senior year of high school, preparing for college applications, and so on. I thought I could use some time for self this year—some real needed self-care. So, I've decided to revisit more of those things that brought me joy as a child.

One such thing was to read mysteries. This summer I read six mysteries by Walter Mosley—currently the

most prolific African-American male author. Some of his writings remind one of Camus—very existential in nature, which I love. Mosley also writes commentary on the state of America and world peace. Check him out! This year I also plan to take guitar lessons, find an archery program, and I'm helping to plan my high school's fortieth year class reunion—that should give me much to think about and give me other ideas for my professional development planning.

Sabbatical, school, retreat, dancing! What one or two continuing education events for your professional development will bring you more or deeper joy, renewal, or skills for the upcoming year(s)?

This office has some funds to help make your plans become reality. We are excited to bring you an updated and expanded Professional Development web page for your review and for detailed information on how my office can be of service to you this church year.

This office looks forward to hearing from you soon! ●

Peace,  
Michelle Bentley,  
Professional Development Director

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### Continuing Education Opportunities

Continuing Education Opportunities' link for religious leaders ([www.uua.org/programs/ministry/development/continuinged.html](http://www.uua.org/programs/ministry/development/continuinged.html)) has been updated with expanded opportunities and resources, listed by category of related topic with links to providers of workshops and development opportunities. In this way, you can be confident of locating the most up-to-date information from agencies and providers. We invite your feedback, including suggestions for additional resources we might recommend.

Topics include: Academic Programs; Addiction Ministries; Anti-Racism, Anti-Oppression, and Multiculturalism; Career Assessment; Clergy Renewal/Sabbatical Support; Conflict, Negotiation, and Mediation; Congregational Systems; Leadership and Shared Ministry; Pastoral Care; Preaching and Worship; Resource for Continuing Education Planning; Spiritual Practices/Disciplines/Faith Development.

The bibliography on leadership link of print and web-based resources on the Professional Development webpage has also been updated and expanded, especially in the areas of Leadership; Multiculturalism, Anti-racism, and Anti-oppression; and Preaching and Contemporary Worship. Again, feedback is invited. Please offer suggestions for references that would be of interest to and support for colleagues at [www.uua.org/programs/ministry/development/b-leader.html](http://www.uua.org/programs/ministry/development/b-leader.html).

### ***FYI—From the Office of Professional Development Spiritual Directors' Network***

The Spiritual Directors' Network at [www.uusdn.org](http://www.uusdn.org) is another grassroots ministry offering. Religious leaders are encouraged to visit the website to read a brief introduction about spiritual direction and become acquainted with the spiritual directors who are located nearby. In preparation for making referrals to UUs interested in spiritual direction, lay and clergy leaders should feel free to contact directors to learn more about them and their unique practices. Consider inviting spiritual directors to lead worship or offer group spiritual direction experiences at your churches. It is unconventional, but because UU spiritual directors are not yet located in every district, some directors will meet with directees over the telephone. General questions about spiritual direction or the network may be directed to Rev. Jade Angelica at [jangelica@uuma.org](mailto:jangelica@uuma.org).

### ***UU Addiction Ministries Starting to Make a Difference***

When you stand in the pulpit on Sunday morning and look out at your parishioners, would it surprise you to know that more than half (probably closer to 75 percent) of the people in the room have had their lives traumatized by someone's alcohol or drug abuse? If there are 100 people at the service, statistically, between 10 and 30 will be in a world of trouble due to their own substance use. The reality is much more frightening because chances are nobody else, including you, will have any idea what they are going through. As a religious leader in your church, you face the question of how to respond to this hidden disease. The first step in responding to those who suffer directly or indirectly from addiction is to publicly acknowledge their presence and your concern for them and make it clear that you want to help them and that your church is going to work at becoming an open, supportive, nonjudgmental, and healing place for people struggling with addictive substances or behaviors. How can you help? UU congregations are establishing addiction ministries to respond to the many members of their communities who, because of the stigma still widely attached to

substance abuse, must hide this often all-consuming part of their lives. From Westport, CT to Denver, CO to the district-wide addiction ministry of the Pacific Northwest UU churches, congregations are organizing lay-led addiction ministries based on the model created at First Parish Brewster, MA. They are using Rev. Dr. Denis Meacham's *Addiction Ministry Handbook: A Guide for Faith Communities* (published by Skinner House) as a guide for creating programs and resources to respond to people in need. Addiction ministries have begun creating safe support groups and preparing first responders who will be the first line of healing. Groups and individuals are there to help people talk and face addiction. A good place to start this important work is to assess the needs of your congregation regarding addiction issues. You are not alone in facing this hidden disease.

### ***UU Addictions Ministry Collegial Conversation***

A clergy leadership team (Denis Meacham, Alex Holt, Katie Kandarian, Christopher Craethnenn, Angela Merkert, and Michelle Bentley) gathered 25 ministers during Ministry Days to discuss the need for a UU Addictions Ministry. We are a diverse group of clergy who may have been clean and sober for 30 years, ten years, or six months, who may be struggling to not leave the room for a drink, and those who might never have abused or used. Some of us have family members who are chronically ill or have a disability or dementia and need strong medication. Some are adult children of alcohol and/or drug abusing parents. Some are professionals in the field of addiction and mental health. All of us understand the destructive impact of addiction on the lives of congregants, youth, family members, and ministries, and wish to learn and do more in this growing and important ministry. The purpose of these conversations is to design workshops on alcohol and drug addiction, first for colleagues and then for implementation in our congregations. If you are interested in learning more and/or working with this ministry, please feel free to contact any of the folks named above. See the UU Center for Addictions Ministry page, [www.addictionsministry.org](http://www.addictionsministry.org), for additional information and contacts.

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

### **The UUA Health Insurance Plan**

As of this writing in mid-September, the UUA Office of Church Staff Finances has received commitments from 155 congregations that they will enroll an estimated 260–275 staff members in the new UUA health plan. In addition, we expect to enroll 160 UUA staff and district field staff, plus a hard-to-estimate number of interim ministers, community ministers, and staff of UU camp and conference centers. Based on this information, we are optimistic we will achieve the minimum of 500 enrollees by the October 15 deadline.

The enrollment campaign has been driven by Jim Sargent, a lay leader in the Needham, MA congregation, and an expert with over 20 years in the insurance industry. The volunteer District Compensation Consultants were also of great assistance in contacting congregations in their districts to be sure local groups were well-informed about the plan.

By the time you read this, you will know whether or not the plan has become a reality. We have every reason to believe that it will be. So, if you were not able to enroll in the plan by October 15, you may still enroll by going to [www.uua.org/programs/ministry/finances](http://www.uua.org/programs/ministry/finances) to sign up on-line. You may also contact Jim Sargent at



healthinsurance@uua.org or at 617-948-6405 for enrollment forms or additional information.

Our plan will be self-insured. This means the plan must be independently financially viable. In order to support it, premiums must fairly represent those covered by the plan. The geographic and age-based premiums must be sufficient to cover claims, stop-loss insurance, and administration. As a result, the UUA plan rates may be higher for some persons than the premiums charged by large and well-established HMOs. However, church employees who are younger or who live in areas where the cost of healthcare is less than in other areas, may find their premiums to be lower.

Some sad facts were discovered in our enrollment campaign. We found that the UUA plan will cover perhaps half of the 400 UU church staff members who are currently uninsured. The campaign has revealed how limited the financial resources are for many smaller UU congregations. Some churches report they simply cannot afford to pay any portion of health insurance premiums. Other congregations can contribute a small amount to the monthly premiums, but not enough to make the plan affordable by individual staff members who would have to pay the remainder. And a few are just resistant to paying benefits.

Our current economy may account for the inability of our congregations to provide benefits for their employees. Congregational expenditures have increased by 4.2 percent, 2.8 percent, and 3.7 percent since 2003, while employee benefits costs, particularly for health insurance, have increased by two or three times these percentages. It has become increasingly clear that until UU congregations attain a higher level of income from pledges and gifts, they will find it more and more difficult to meet the fair compensation guidelines of the Association. ●

## The UUA Retirement Plan

We continue to be very pleased with the overall services provided to our plan participants by the Fidelity Investments Tax-Exempt Services Company. The overall median rate of return for our participants for the 12 months ending June 30, 2006 was 8.57 percent, compared with 8.63 percent for the Standard & Poors 500 Index.

We do, however, continue to be very concerned about the relatively small accounts of many participants in the UUA retirement plan. The mean average balance is \$60,383, and the median is only \$23,914. Unless participants have the vast majority of their retirement savings in other investments we don't know about, we can only conclude that many ministers and other church staff retirees will face great financial challenges after they are no longer able to work.

Fidelity has been very accommodating in trying to encourage participants to become actively engaged in managing their savings more wisely. The firm has provided workshops for attendees at GA and has offered one-on-one consultations for those who are interested. Participants can receive information from Fidelity over the phone at 800-343-0860, via [www.fidelity.com/atwork](http://www.fidelity.com/atwork), or at any of the Fidelity local offices around the country.

There are two specific ways in which participants can help themselves increase their retirement savings.

The first, a benefit often overlooked by plan participants, is the opportunity to increase their retirement savings and, at the same time, reduce their taxable income. Our plan offers a 401(k) pre-tax voluntary participant salary reduction to all those plan participants whose employers make at least a 10 percent employer contribution. Only 24 percent of the active participants are currently making these salary reduction contributions. The Salary Reduction agreement may be accessed at [www.uua.org/programs/ministry/finances/retirement.html](http://www.uua.org/programs/ministry/finances/retirement.html). For further information contact Joyce Stewart at [jstewart@uua.org](mailto:jstewart@uua.org) or 617-948-6421.

Second, it is still true that too many participants hold assets in only one mutual fund. Twenty-two percent of our participants have all their assets in one fund, too often a fund not well-matched to their age and anticipated retirement date. We believe we must do a better job at persuading plan participants to invest for greater performance, and we are working with Fidelity toward that goal.

Now is the time to review your benefit package—do you have adequate life insurance? What about long term disability insurance? Dental? Retirement plan account? Health insurance? Please contact any member of the UUA's Office of Church Staff Finances for help with any of these important employee benefits. ●

—Ralph Mero,  
Church Staff Finances Director

## Resources & Possibilities

### May This Light Shine: A Songbook for Children and Youth

The UU Musicians Network offers a new collection of 30 songs for chil-

dren, youth, and intergenerational singers to use in worship and religious education classes. The collection includes service music (songs for opening worship, welcoming congregants, chalice lighting, offertory, benediction), anthems for holidays, seasons, and themed services, songs

for teaching UU identity and values, and songs for the sheer joy of singing. The book comes in two versions: a director/accompanist edition with full piano accompaniments, chord symbols, and performance notes, and a singer's edition with vocal lines and chord symbols in lead

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sheet format. Both spiral-bound books feature artwork by UU children and cover photographs of the UU Children's Choir that sang at the 2003 General Assembly in Boston.

Musical styles range from an interpretation of Mozart to Tanzanian gospel; musical difficulty ranges from easy chants and rounds to challenging harmonized anthems suitable for youth choirs. Several songs use call and response phrasing, a wonderful opportunity for children to teach adults in their congregations about singing together.

Singer's edition, \$8: bundle of 5 singer's books and 1 director/accompanist book, \$50. For information and order forms, see [www.uua.org/uumn/resources/csb.htm](http://www.uua.org/uumn/resources/csb.htm). •

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## Congregational Services Announces ARAOMC Website

Guiding your congregations through Anti-Racism, Anti-Oppression, and Multicultural (ARAOMC) transformation is an integral aspect of leadership in UU congregations. You fill an essential role in furthering UU Principles and approaching leadership using an ARAOMC lens. In recognition of the unique place our congregational leaders hold, a recently developed website focusing on ARAOMC issues for congregational leaders is now available: the UU Leaders Anti-racism, Anti-Oppression, Multicultural website at [www.uua.org/programs/justice/antiracism/leaders/](http://www.uua.org/programs/justice/antiracism/leaders/).

Congregational Services encourages you to visit the website for information on guidelines, training resources, and other relevant topics. The 2006 General Assembly resolved that congregations can learn more about racism and classism in a Responsive Resolution that brings ARAOMC issues to the forefront of congregational life. Consider the resolution as a call to deliberation and action (if your congregation has not yet engaged in

this) or an opportunity to share stories of struggle and success (if you are currently doing good work). Check out the new leaders website for a boost in that direction. •

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## All About Youth Ministry

Youth are present more and more in Unitarian Universalist circles. UU youth can really shake things up, sending waves that ripple out to the larger denomination and even into larger, more global communities.

*The Youth Office at the UUA headquarters*—What kind of ministry does the Youth Office do? We create and distribute resources for local youth groups and foster youth and youth advisor leadership on the local, district-wide/regional, and continental levels through Young Religious Unitarian Universalist governance structures, social justice, and trainings. These leaders take the skills developed at Youth Office-sponsored events back to more local levels, and eventually to local UU youth groups. The Youth Office manages modems of communication between UU youth, advisors, and leaders, and serves as a liaison between yUUth ministry and the larger UU denominations in the U.S. and Canada. We also do outreach, leadership support, and resource development for queer youth and youth of color.

*How can ministers and layleaders get involved with youth ministry?*—Support your local youth and your local youth group, if you have one. Get your congregation to buy the *Youth Group Handbook* and the *Youth Advisor Handbook* (available from the UUA bookstore). It is so important for ministers and lay leaders to be accessible to the youth in their congregations; youth are as much a part of congregational life as recognized adult members. •

—Kat Manker-Seale,  
Youth Ministry Associate,  
[kmankerseale@uua.org](mailto:kmankerseale@uua.org)

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## DRUUMM Seminars Caucus

We meet first Sundays and third Tuesdays by teleconference, with invited guests Bill Sinkford, Robette Dias, Rosemary Bray McNatt, Melvin Hoover, Manish Mishra, Jacqueline Williams, George Tinker, James Forbes, William Jones, and other religious liberal leaders and theologians. Denise Hall of Iliff School of Theology and Joseph Santos-Lyons of Harvard University are co-coordinators for 2006–2007. Other community programs include advocating for People of Color ministerial mentorship, religious professionals of color retreat, and an annual directory. To join, contact Denise at [yaaantesewa@yahoo.com](mailto:yaaantesewa@yahoo.com) or Joseph at [jsantoslyons@post.harvard.edu](mailto:jsantoslyons@post.harvard.edu). •

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## AUUA Certification Offered

The Association of UU Administrators (AUUA) now offers continuing education. The year-long pilot program for Administrator certification was completed successfully, and was widely and enthusiastically accepted by administrators and church leadership.

The program is designed to certify administrative competency in office management, communication, technology, facilities management, leadership, self care, Unitarian Universalism, finance, human resources, volunteer management, and risk management.

Three entrance levels are offered:

*Level 1 (estimated one-year program):* demonstrate reactive skills and knowledge, learn systems that are already in place.

*Level 2 (estimated two-year program):* build personal awareness of UU administration, become aware of policies, standards, and designs for improved systems.

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*Level 3 (estimated three-year program):* demonstrate proactive ability to create improved systems, propose and implement policy, supervise staff.

To take part in the program, administrators must have worked in a UU church for one year and be AUUA members. Application materials include an assessment to determine the appropriate entrance level, a personal letter of intent, an application with \$50 application fee, and letters of recommendation from church leadership. A \$500 annual program fee will be due upon the applicant's acceptance into the program; each additional year is \$300. For more information and forms, see the AUUA website ([www.uua.org/auua/](http://www.uua.org/auua/)).

The AUUA strongly encourages congregations to begin the process of adding funds for this Certification Program to their 2007 budget so they can participate in the professional development of their administrators. ●

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## Diversity of Ministry Team

In keeping with the Diversity of Ministry Team's commitment to openness and transparency, I want to let you know that, as of our June 2006 meeting, I am replacing Rev. David Pettee as team convener. I am grateful for his faithful leadership over the past four years. DOMT is charged with pursuing one of the central missions of the UUA: to achieve an anti-racist, anti-oppressive, multi-cultural ministry. The team consists of members of the UUA staff, the UUMA, and affiliate groups whose missions focus on race and ethnicity. Our charge is the work of welcoming, recruiting, and advising seminarians and ministers from historically underserved communities; identifying and working to remove institutional barriers that prevent their fullest participation in the ministerial credentialing process and the achievement of successful ministerial settlements or

professional ministerial employment; and maintaining their access to ongoing professional development. I can be reached via e-mail at [sraethnenn@uua.org](mailto:sraethnenn@uua.org). Please feel free to contact me with concerns that relate to DOMT's mission. ●

In the faith,  
—Rev. Sofia Craethnenn,  
Program Coordinator for  
Racial and Ethnic Concerns

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## UUA Conference on Contemporary Worship

Ministers, religious educators, music directors, other leaders, and young adults of all sorts are invited to attend the first UUA Conference on Contemporary Worship, Feb. 22–24, 2007 in San Diego, CA. The program will feature energizing and grounding worship experiences, a keynote presentation by the engaging Dr. Marcia McFee, and 16 workshops led by experts from around our Association. Registration (\$250 for general participants, \$100 for students) includes all meals from Thursday dinner through Saturday lunch; limited travel scholarships are available. For information and registration forms, visit [www.uua.org/ya-cm/resources/worship/](http://www.uua.org/ya-cm/resources/worship/) or contact Michael Tino at [mtino@uua.org](mailto:mtino@uua.org). ●

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## Growth Sunday 2007

On October 15, 1995 almost 700 UU congregations conducted Sunday services on the value of the professional ministry, raising \$1.1 million for theological education, recruitment, scholarships, continuing education, and support for ministers and their families in times of crisis. Our ministry was honored, expanded, and made more effective. Now it is time to bring our strength and commitment together again to share the ministry.

Our purposes and principles call us to a shared ministry between professionals and lay leaders. Working together, we deepen and live our faith, and expand and extend our

influence, now and into the future. We can accomplish this through the participation of every congregation in a Special Sunday and Collection for the purpose of strengthening our ministry. What do you think is the most compelling need in ministerial and lay-leader development today? What is the most important program the UUA can provide to help grow Unitarian Universalism? What can you do to support our ministry and help our movement grow? Organize a Growth Sunday Service with a Special Collection in the spring or fall of 2007. Contact Stephan Papa, Special Assistant to the President for Congregational Giving and Growth Funding, with answers and questions at [spapa@uua.org](mailto:spapa@uua.org). ●

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## Stewardship Sermon Award 2007

*Why is it important for us to financially support our Unitarian Universalist faith?* The Stewardship Sermon Award was established in 1984 and is given annually for the sermon judged most effective in exploring and promoting financial support of our UU faith. This \$1,000 award is co-sponsored by the Annual Program Fund (APF), the UU Ministers' Association, and the Liberal Religious Educators' Association.

All professional leaders, including those in their second year of professional study or beyond, are invited to submit a sermon on the topic, delivered between January 1, 2006 and February 11, 2007. The recipient will be invited to deliver the award sermon at a General Assembly 2007 worship service in Portland, OR.

Send sermon submissions to Melissa Ferris, APF Assistant, [apf@uua.org](mailto:apf@uua.org), by February 14, 2007. For details on submission format and selection process, see [www.uua.org/giving/apf/sermon.html](http://www.uua.org/giving/apf/sermon.html) or contact Laurel Amabile, Director, APF, at [lamabile@uua.org](mailto:lamabile@uua.org) or 617-948-6513. ●

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## A Manual of Worship

*A Manual of Worship: Insights from Over 50 Years as a Unitarian Universalist Minister*, written by Frank Schulman and edited by Terry Sweetser, is a book written to fulfill a need often articulated by ministers and laypersons—creating more spiritually meaningful, well-structured worship services. Intended for new and experienced professional and lay leaders of worship, it combines theoretical and practical elements of worship in one volume. It is primarily focused on Sunday morning services, but also references other types of worship services, such as weddings, christenings, funerals, and ordinations. An essential resource for ministers or aspiring

ministers, this book is also ideal for anyone seeking a deeper understanding of worship and its role in our lives. Cost is \$14 (includes shipping). Order from [development@uua.org](mailto:development@uua.org) or Catherine Lynch at 617-948-4648. ●

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## Wanted: Penpals for UU Prisoners

Looking for a social justice project that UUs can do alone or in groups, in their homes, whenever it's convenient? The Church of the Larger Fellowship (CLF) has dozens of prisoner-members waiting to be matched with a (non-incarcerated) UU penpal through CLF's "Letter Writing Ministry."

All letters to/from prisoners are sent by mail (so UUs without web/e-mail can participate) and are forwarded through CLF's prison ministry (prisoners are told only their penpal's first name). The CLF's prison ministry staff makes penpal "matches" and remains available to all penpals for advice and support ([prismin@clfu.org](mailto:prismin@clfu.org)).

Individuals are welcome, or a group from one congregation can apply and ask to be "matched" at the same time to form an ongoing study/support group. Visit CLF's website, [www.clfuu.org](http://www.clfuu.org) (Prison Ministry tab), to review the guidelines for the Letter Writing Ministry and request an info-application packet, or write to CLF Prison Ministry, 25 Beacon St., Boston, MA 02108. ●

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## The Religious Leader

NEWS FROM THE UUA MINISTRY & PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP STAFF GROUP

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