



The Religious Leader

NEWS FROM THE MINISTRY AND PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP STAFF GROUP • WINTER 2007

IN THIS ISSUE

- 1
[Office of the Director](#)
From the Director
- 2/4
[Ministerial Credentialing/
Internship Clearinghouse](#)
Coming Clean
Internship Clearinghouse News
Other Clearinghouse News
- 4/6
[Religious Education Credentialing
& Renaissance Program](#)
What's New in the Religious Education
Credentialing Program
Inactive Candidate Status
RE Credentialing and Anti-Oppression/
Anti-Racism
Renaissance Program News
Professional Development Opportunity for
Religious Educators
Scholarships
- 6/7
[Transitions](#)
For Interim Ministry Hopefuls
For Interim Ministers-to-Be
Easy Does It in Search
- 7/8
[Professional Development](#)
What Did You Do Over the Holiday Break? Or, Did
You Have One?
Memorial Page
From CENTER—Continuing Education Arm
of the UUMA
- 9
[Church Staff Finances](#)
Health Plan Update
- 10/12
[Resources & Possibilities](#)
MFC Meeting
Congregational Ethics and Safety
Resolved: Congregations Can Learn More about
Racism and Classism
UU Funding Program
Unitarian Universalist Partner
Church Council (UUPCC)
UUMA Executive and District Services
Team Up on Code of Ethics Change
Association Sundays
AUUA Certification Awarded

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

From the Director

As I write this it has been exactly seven months since I reported to work here at the UUA. The first year in any ministry is an intense learning experience, and this year in this ministry is no exception. I wrote in this publication last fall that my intention for this year is to listen, learn, and engage. I continue to resist the urge to articulate some new vision and set a specific course for MPL. It is sometimes hard to resist! As I engage with other UUA staff, the UUMA Executive, other professional groups, and many others who care as I do about our religious professionals, I learn of gaps and needs, heartfelt longings, and creative ideas. There are so many possibilities and opportunities. As a recovering chronic gap-filler, I am challenged to strike the right balance between doing what I can to address needs and holding back on significant new initiatives and changes.

The MPL Directors and I are deeply committed to serving Unitarian Universalism through care for the competence, strength, health, and well being of our religious professionals. During a fruitful two-day retreat in October, we acknowledged that while we each have an already full plate, the direction and effectiveness of MPL is a group effort. We articulated three conclusions: 1) We need to keep on doing what needs to be done while we 2) work together to figure out how we might do it most effectively and efficiently, and, at the same time, 3) we will think and work creatively together on new initiatives to enhance our service to Unitarian Universalist religious professionals. It became clear that we are not staffed and resourced sufficiently to fulfill

the mandate of our transition from Ministry to *Ministry and Professional Leadership*. We are committed to investing the time to clearly identify our needs and priorities so that we can seek appropriate resources. We sometimes feel like the comic strip character Pogo when he said, "We are confronted with insurmountable opportunities." It will take a while and we welcome your suggestions.

Meanwhile, I have two MFC meetings and one RECC meeting under my belt with another of each coming very soon. I've visited students and staff at Starr King, Meadville Lombard, and Harvard Divinity School. I have had the privilege and pleasure of meeting many of you in a great variety of contexts. I am learning and growing and feeling so blessed to be here. Thank you for all the help, support, tough questions, and even the complaints you've given me as I get my feet wet. It's all important and useful. Please do not hesitate to be in touch. ●

—Beth Miller, Director of MPL

Service of the Living Tradition

As reported in the fall edition, Revs. Barbara and Bill Hamilton-Holway, co-ministers of the UU Church of Berkeley in Kensington, CA, are our co-preachers for the 2007 Service of the Living Tradition at GA in Portland. We have since selected the music director for this service, Keith Arnold, minister of music at Jefferson Unitarian Church in Golden, CO. Keith is president-elect of the UU Musicians' Network.

MPL STAFF GROUP DIRECTORY

FIRST INITIAL LAST NAME@UUA.ORG
(EXAMPLE: BMILLER@UUA.ORG)
UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED

MICHELLE BENTLEY
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR
773-643-6988

A'LLYN ETTIEN
ASSISTANT TO THE DIRECTOR OF MPL
617-948-6406

CHRISTINE MAY
MINISTERIAL CREDENTIALING ADMINISTRATOR
617-948-6403

ANGELA MERKERT
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANT
505-603-8400

RALPH MERO
CHURCH STAFF FINANCES DIRECTOR
617-948-6404

BETH MILLER
DIRECTOR OF MPL
617-948-6407

DAVID PETTEE
MINISTERIAL CREDENTIALING DIRECTOR
617-948-6402

JIM SARGENT
HEALTH INSURANCE COMMUNICATIONS
HEALTHINSURANCE@UUA.ORG
617-948-6405

EMILY SCHWAB
TRANSITIONS ASSISTANT
TRANSITIONS@UUA.ORG
617-948-6408

LESLIE STAPLES
MFC ASSISTANT
617-948-6452

JOYCE STEWART
RETIREMENT PLAN SPECIALIST
617-948-6421

JOHN WESTON
TRANSITIONS DIRECTOR
TRANSITIONS@UUA.ORG
617-948-6409

BETH WILLIAMS
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CREDENTIALING DIRECTOR
BETHWILLIAMS@UUA.ORG
617-948-6417

KIM WILSON
INTERNSHIP CLEARINGHOUSE COORDINATOR
203-421-0148

TRACY WITHY-BROWNE
INSURANCE PLAN ADMINISTRATOR
TWITHY@UUA.ORG
617-948-6401

MINISTRY AND PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP STAFF GROUP
25 BEACON STREET, BOSTON, MA 02108; FAX: 617-742-2875

LOCATED: 41 MOUNT VERNON, 4TH FLOOR

THE RELIGIOUS LEADER IS PUBLISHED THREE TIMES A YEAR BY THE MINISTRY AND PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP STAFF GROUP. PLEASE SEND COPY FOR THE PRE-GA EDITION IN MS WORD TO A'LLYN ETTIEN (AETTIE@UUA.ORG) BY NO LATER THAN APRIL 13, 2007.

TYPESETTING AND EDITORIAL BY ANNMARIE G. KLYZUB,
KALZUB DESIGN; KALZUB@WL.RR.COM.

Ministerial Credentialing/Internship Clearinghouse—

David Pettee, Christine May, Leslie Staples, Kim Wilson

Coming Clean

Preparing for ministerial fellowship is not a journey for the faint of heart. Repeatedly, there is one moment of reckoning after another to meet the next requirement: getting admitted into theological school; completing a career assessment; interviewing with the Regional Sub-Committee on Candidacy; gaining congregational sponsorship; applying for a Clinical Pastoral Education unit; fulfilling the internship requirement; and finally, meeting with the MFC.

One of the challenges all ministers face is learning how to deal candidly with the fullness of what each of us bring into the ministry. We need to be able to access all our gifts and growing edges and commit to facing the parts of us that remain to be discovered. A minister who is not able (or who is unwilling) to own all of who they are risks much disappointment. I believe that Unitarian Universalist clergy are marked by our unique denominational habitude. We are expected to be able to minister from that personal well where each of us "is a bundle of relations, a knot of roots, whose flower and fruitage is the world," as Emerson once observed. There is an imperative to be skillful at being able to present a coherent narrative that helps others understand how we were called to be ministers and why we should be entrusted with the sacred responsibility of providing religious leadership.

This central task of ministry is not about the development of an articulate script that leaves a false impression of self-awareness. It is a woeof professional practice to cultivate learning how to avoid touching the raw edges. To manufacture this kind of narrative undermines the much deeper work of discovering where we truly reside in our deepest recesses. When a candidate's presentation is organized around concealing their real selves from honest

engagement, members of the MFC are quick to notice because it is so painfully transparent.

There are numerous ways to learn how to embrace all that we bring to ministry. A willingness to engage in individual or group therapy, spiritual direction, or counseling are examples of a few professional practices that many excellent ministers use as needed. Developing strong and honest collegial relationships is critical. I have seen the use of MFC study groups and mock MFC interviews work effectively, but only when the candidate was willing to share all the materials included in their MFC packet. The MFC has the rare perspective of seeing all the references together: the field education and/or internship evaluations, the career assessment, and the CPE evaluation. In this way, dynamics and patterns often readily surface that may not be so apparent if these documents are seen independent of one another.

Lest you think that the journey of ministerial self-discovery ceases with a successful MFC interview, fear not. It is an illusion to expect the pressure to be magically released. As I approach fifteen years in the ministry, it is fair to say that much of the professional and personal growth I have worked for over the last decade has been centered around revealing that which was once so maddeningly invisible to me—the enormous costs relating to growing up and living in a racist society.

By the time many of you receive this copy of *The Religious Leader*, my wife Mindy and I will be in Africa. Last spring, following an upgrade of an online genealogy subscription, I discovered quite unexpectedly that one of my ancestors was engaged in the transatlantic slave trade in eighteenth century Rhode Island. Following confirmation of this long hidden and suppressed story, I have felt called to visit

the emotional, spiritual, and geographical places in West Africa where my ancestor directly participated in the enslavement of hundreds of African men, women, and children.

In the spirit of the new year, I wish for all a fuller embrace of those places where we are holy, the deeper capacity to discover where we are whole, and the grace and courage to confess where we still have holes. ●

In the faith,
David Pettee,
Ministerial Credentialing Director

Internship Clearinghouse News

As Clearinghouse Coordinator, the majority of my contacts are with prospective interns. It's the intern's responsibility to make sure that all i's are dotted and t's crossed with regard to MFC rules and policies. Beyond that, and equally important, the intern must create an internship offering maximum opportunity for personal and professional development, and for growth into the role of ordained minister. Most of my work focuses on offering guidance and feedback in these areas.

I also spend time working with intern committees and committee chairs, often the unsung worker bees making an internship happen. They are often the ones creating the congregational profile for the Clearinghouse web page; they are involved in the interviewing and selection process of the intern; they can take an intern in and make him or her feel welcomed while simultaneously offering many combined years of wisdom, counsel, and common sense. I offer feedback, guidance, and answers to these incredibly dedicated volunteers.

And then there are our colleagues who offer time, teaching, and wisdom to the interns. The MFC and Ministerial Credentialing Office consider the supervisory relationship the critical foundation of any internship. Our hats are off to you, our internship supervisors, because without your devotion to this specialized

calling, there would be no internships as we know them! Because supervision is so important, and lack of adequate supervision in an internship has too often led to inadequate formation for candidates, we can't emphasize enough the importance of having the supervisor present on site. The MFC recently tightened and revised several policies to improve the odds of interns receiving the supervision they need. First, off-site supervision (intern working in one location, supervisor in another) will only be permissible "in situations where on-site supervision is impossible." Second, "the MFC discourages congregations from offering internships during the minister's sabbatical year." It's nice to have some professional leadership while you're out on sabbatical, but unless there's another minister on staff, your absence forces the intern to find off-site supervision during that time, which puts the intern at great risk. There simply is no substitute for a supervisor present on site; several candidates have come before the MFC from an internship with a sabbatical, and been seen as unprepared.

Responses to a recent informal survey on how the Clearinghouse might offer more support to supervisors lead to three new developments. First, a new listserve, "Super-Chat," lets supervisors ask questions, seek others' opinions, discuss experiences, challenges, and successes, and chat about anything else related to supervising. Second, on CENTER Day 2007, I will host a panel of excellent supervisors representing a variety of perspectives, who will respond to and engage in discussion on supervisory questions and issues. Finally, a one-day supervisory training session is currently in the planning stage. Session leaders will include Rev. Nan Hobart from Meadville Lombard; Patti Lawrence from Starr King; Rev. Jory Agate, MFC chair; several experienced supervisors; and myself. We anticipate this will take place the day *before* CENTER Day, June 18. More details will follow. ●

Other Clearinghouse News

- The UUA Compensation, Benefits and Pension Committee voted to increase the recommended monthly internship stipends for the first time in four years. New amounts are:
 - Less than 250 members: \$1,300 (currently \$1,200)
 - 250–499 members: \$1,500 (currently \$1,300)
 - 500–749 members: \$1,600 (currently \$1,400)
 - More than 750 members: \$1,750, (currently \$1,500)
- A grant from the St. Lawrence Foundation for Theological Education was awarded to a

PROFESSIONAL CONTACT DIRECTORY

AUUA

DONNA ZIMMERMAN, PRESIDENT
PRESIDENT@AUUA.ORG

BARB KOUMJIAN, SECRETARY
OFFICE@UUNASHUA.ORG

LREDA

SUSAN ARCHER, PRESIDENT
SARCHER@CEDARLANE.ORG

AISHA HAUSER, SECRETARY
AEKHADR@MSN.COM

SCM

JEANNE LLOYD, PRESIDENT
JLLOYD@UUMA.ORG

SARAH VOSS, SECRETARY
SARAHVOSS@COX.NET

UUMA

KEN SAWYER, PRESIDENT
PRESIDENT@UUMA.ORG

JANETTE M. LALLIER, ADMINISTRATOR
ADMINISTRATOR@UUMA.ORG

UUMN

ELIZABETH NORTON, PRESIDENT
BETHNORTON@EARTHLINK.NET

DONNA FISHER, ADMINISTRATOR
UUMN@UUMN.ORG

UURMAPA

NANCY DOUGHTY, PRESIDENT
NWDREV@CHARTER.NET

JEAN ROWE, SECRETARY
JROWE@UUMA.ORG

deserving intern in a community internship that would otherwise have been unpaid.

- In keeping with our Diversity of Ministry Team commitment, we continue to extend an open-ended offer of support to interns who may be underserved by the UUA, as well as their internship supervisors, through letters and phone conversations.
- Prophetic Outreach is one of five basic areas of competency that the MFC expects all interns

to address, and a new resource, featuring opportunities for prophetic outreach through UU-affiliated organizations, is available for download on the Clearinghouse web page.

- An *Internship Manual Supplement* is now available, with important updates to the 2005 manual, including changes in MFC policies.

At this writing, only a few intern-to-site matches have taken place, but dozens more will occur

over the next few months. If you are a supervisor or intern, a quick note or call for my records, letting me know who's going to be where, would be greatly appreciated.

As always, feel free to contact me if I can be of help in any way. •

Yours in faith,

—Kim D. Wilson, Internship Clearinghouse Coordinator;
kwilson@uaa.org; office hours:
Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday,
3:00–5:30; 160 Princess Drive,
Madison, CT 06443; 203-421-0148

2007–2008 Financial Aid Forms

2007–2008 Financial Aid Application Forms are now available at www.uaa.org/programs/ministry/credentialing/preparation/financialaid.pdf. You may also contact your RSCC administrator or Chris May, Ministerial Credentialing Office Administrator, at cmay@uaa.org or 617-948-6403. Application deadline is April 15, 2007.

Religious Education Credentialing & Renaissance Program—Beth Williams

What's New in the Religious Education Credentialing Program

Many congratulations to Leia Durland-Jones who was awarded Credentialed Religious Educator status on October 23, 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:

Greta Porter, OM

Kathy Strawser, OM

Inactive Candidate Status

A procedure was approved by the Religious Education Credentialing Committee for a candidate to return to the program from Inactive Candidate Status: A new essay must be submitted explaining to the RECC why the candidate feels s/he is ready to move forward in the program

at this time, and a plan for completion of the program must be developed with the RE Credentialing Program Director. *Policy is effective immediately.* •

RE Credentialing and Anti-Racism/Anti-Oppression

The mission of the Religious Education Credentialing Committee (RECC) is to develop professional standards and to credential religious educators to serve the UU movement. As we go about the work of identifying core competencies and skills, evaluating candidates, granting credentials, educating congregations, and preparing religious educators to act as agents of change and transformation, we strive to incorporate an anti-racist, anti-oppressive (A-R/A-O) perspective in all our processes and practices.

As part of the UUA, the RECC supports the A-R/A-O agenda of our denomination and of the religious educators' professional organization, Liberal Religious Educators Association (LREDA). Candidates at each of the three levels of the credentialing program are expected

to demonstrate an understanding of UUA A-R/A-O efforts; and those seeking recognition at the Credentialed Religious Educator and master's levels are required to submit work samples demonstrating an application of that knowledge. Through our own commitment to the work of A-R/A-O, the RECC models for candidates what we ask of them.

Following some initial A-R/A-O training shortly after the RECC was constituted (we plan a follow-up training for an upcoming meeting), the Committee regularly employs two strategies to help accomplish our objective in this area: First, we give ourselves reading assignments and devote time at each meeting for discussion of the reading. (At October's meeting, we discussed *Waist High in the World: A Life among the Non-Disabled*, by Nancy Mairs.) Second, we incorporate an A-R/A-O perspective in our daily process observation, utilizing questions, such as "Were probing questions asked about the impact of decisions on underrepresented and oppressed persons?" "Did discussion indicate that committee members are conscious of the systemic power of oppression?" and "Were policy decisions/recommendations made that moved the UUA closer to being an anti-racist/anti-oppressive institution?"

An A-R/A-O-related issue that came before the RECC recently concerned a candidate who was having difficulty completing her reading list because of a visual learning challenge. The Committee's discussion of this situation led to a commitment to research which books on the reading list, if any, are currently available on tape or other electronic media, and to pursue the possibility of obtaining a grant to produce audio versions of key resources.

Another current initiative involves updating the reading lists. Rather than grouping all A-R/A-O-oriented books in a separate category, the Committee is integrating A-R/A-O resources within as many other categories as possible. This more holistic approach emphasizes the fact that A-R/A-O is not an isolated or discrete orientation, but a lens for approaching all aspects of religious education and congregational life.

An A-R/A-O commitment asks us to bring more and more people to the table—each bringing valuable knowledge, experience, and perspective to our dialog—and to partner with diverse constituencies. In addition to LREDA, the RECC welcomes conversation with the UUMA, UUMN, and AUUA that will help to bring us all closer to being anti-racist, anti-oppressive organizations within an anti-racist, anti-oppressive denomination and the world. Please contact Beth Williams with your questions about the program (bethwilliams@uua.org) or Liz Jones (ljonesd@aol.com) with ideas or feedback for the Committee. ●

—Colleen McDonald, Member, RECC

Renaissance Program News

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

Mar. 2–4, RE Philosophy, Winston-Salem, NC, Pam Lpley, pamlepley@yahoo.com

Mar. 2–4, Worship for All Ages, Pensacola, FL, Linda Cobb, cobbl@cox.net

Mar. 2–4, Teacher Development, Fort Wayne, IN, Jennifer Teed, dre@uufarmington.org

Mar. 6–7, UU Identity, Newton, MA, Sarah Hawn, sarahnwah@earthlink.net

Mar. 9–11, Curriculum, Sisters, OR, Tandi Rogers Koerger, tkoerger@uua.org

Mar. 23–24, Youth, Yarmouth, ME, Helen Zidowecki, hzmre@hzmre.com

Mar. 23–25, Multicultural RE, Canton, NY, Jacki Thompson, lepican@unitarian.ithaca.ny.us

Jul. 15–22, Teacher Development, Star Island, NY, Kathy Cronin, kathy.fpb@verizon.net

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

Kate Beasley, TJ
Katy Carpman, SW
Mary Darner, OM
Carolyn Freud, MNY
Jessica Gray, SW
Kasandra Green-Gruener, PNW
Amanda Neff, MB
Sarah Ohl, CUC
Mary Partain, SW

Jane Podell, SL
Amanda Robinson, SW
Thea Shapiro, MB
Denice Tomlinson, MNY
Susan Walthour, NH/VT
Barbara Weber, OM
Beverly Weinberg, MD
Lynne Weygint, MB
Natalie Wolc, SW

Professional Development Opportunity for Religious Educators

Event: RE Leadership School

Sponsor: Mountain–Desert District, UUA

Dates: Sunday, August 5 (5:00 p.m.) to Saturday, August 11, 2007 (12:00 noon)

Location: LaForette Camp and Conference Center, Colorado Springs, CO; fly into Colorado Springs or Denver. Ground transportation will be coordinated

Facilitator: Dr. Helen Bishop, lead teacher with district staff and religious educators assisting

For more information: Contact Nancy Bowen, executive@mdduua.org or 303-726-967

Scholarships

A reminder that the Barbara Marshman & Ann Fields Memorial Scholarship is awarded annually to a religious educator engaged in a program of graduate study and serving a Unitarian Universalist congregation. This \$500 prize

is given through the generous contributions of those who wish to memorialize and honor the work of these two great religious educators, and through the ongoing support of the UUA. The Veridan Fund for Religious Education Excellence Scholarship is awarded to a candidate in the UUA Religious Education Credentialing program in order to undertake a significant professional development experience. This \$3,000 annual prize is given through the generous contributions of the family, friends, and colleagues of the late Rev. Norma Veridan to honor Norma's life and ministry, and through the ongoing support of the UUA. The VREE Fund was established according to Norma's wishes to provide scholarships to religious educators who

strive to strengthen religious education in our UU congregations by advancing their professional development to a new level of expertise, as outlined in the UUA Religious Education Credentialing program. The application deadline for both scholarships is May 1, 2007. Modest scholarship assistance for training in religious education leadership is also available to all religious educators serving UU congregations. Please contact Beth Williams at bethwilliams@uua.org for application information. ●

—Beth Williams,
Religious Education Credentialing Director

Transitions—John Weston, Emily Schwab

For Interim Ministry Hopefuls

Last spring's interim ministry placement process started in mid-April and never quit! In the current year, 106 colleagues are serving in interim ministry positions—17 more than the year before and 39 more than the year before that! Of those 106, 42 are AIMs (Accredited Interim Ministers) and AIMITs (AIMs-in-Training). What the demand may be in the year to come is, as yet, a closed book.

For colleagues wishing to prepare themselves to serve a congregation “in the interim,” please plan to update your Ministerial Record and submit an application for interim ministry online by April 1 and to have your interim ministry packet ready to send out by April 20. That's the date on which I start making recommendations. In the Interim, online at www.uua.org/programs/ministry/publications/interim/, should be your guide to all things interim.

As most of you are aware, the Ministerial Settlement System, for settled ministries, resembles the NASDAQ in affording ministers the opportunity to inform themselves about congregations and to exercise a high degree of individual election. Interim ministry placement works quite differently. Given the press of circumstance and the confusion in which many congregations find themselves following the announcement of a ministerial departure, interim placement operates more like the Soviet economy pre-Gorbachev.

Thus the brevity of the application to conduct an interim ministry: asking only about ministers' preferences as to the Districts and types of interim ministry in which they are willing to serve. Beyond that, it is up to the Transitions Director to provide each congregation with a list of the four ministers best qualified to serve it in light of the needs of all other congregations. Only AIMs and AIMITs are asked for their specific congregational preferences. Given the uneven distribution of preferences among them, even their elections cannot always be honored.

The UUA's interim ministry program looks first to the placement of AIMs and AIMITs, i.e., those who take the extended training, attend the seminars, serve in interim ministry positions year after year, and relocate every year or

two. The rationale: AIMs and AIMITs can only be there for the congregations if the congregations are there for them. Given the sharpened sensibilities AIMs and AIMITs bring to their work, this is at it should be.

Those of you neither AIMs nor AIMITs will want to know what your chances are of finding a position. In the current year there are some 85 interim ministries in progress. Of the ministers serving, approximately 45 are AIMs or AIMITs. ●

For Interim Ministers-to-Be

Ministers who will be conducting their first interim ministry, or their first in five or more years, are expected to attend the Orientation to Interim Ministry, to take place at Boston University from 5:00 p.m. Monday, July 23 to 5:00 p.m. Wednesday, July 25. Travelers should plan to arrive Monday night.

The cost of the orientation is 1.5 percent of your Salary plus Housing for the year to come. (Pledges are accepted—due Nov. 1, 2007). In return, the UUA provides you with room (Monday and Tuesday nights) and board (three meals Tuesday and Wednesday's breakfast and lunch), course materials, and program, and reimburses your transportation costs to Boston and back.

Ministers who wish to attend the orientation in the hopes of landing an interim later in the summer are welcome to do so. The cost will be \$350 in advance for room and board, course materials, and program. These ministers cover their own travel costs. Registration period is May 15–June 29. ●

Easy Does It in Search

Imagine for a moment that you are on your first pre-candidating weekend. After the Sunday service, as you are sitting down in the restaurant with the search committee, they ask you to excuse them for a moment. You take a walk around the parking lot. “It has gone well,” you are thinking.

You are then collected, orders are taken, and, as you sit there waiting for them to drill down into your sermon (or maybe just heap accolades upon you), the chairperson clears her throat: “We’ve been talking, Pat. We are convinced—now, after your sermon, more even than we were last night, if that’s possible—that you are the best minister in the world for our beloved West Overshoe. We want to ask you now: Will you consent to become our candidate?”

It is early February. Not only is it your first precandidating weekend; it is also West Overshoe’s. You have three more such weekends scheduled, and so do they.

Think of the inconvenience, the reshuffling, even the heartache that an assent from you will cause. The three committees you cancel will have to scramble to fill their now empty slots with alternates at the last minute, and to find new precandidating dates and neutral pulpit sites to accommodate them. The three ministers cancelled by the search committee will find themselves suddenly one anticipated-opportunity the less, and their next year’s situation even more in doubt. Such will be the early, practical results.

There will be other, longer term, not-so-practical results, too. The great achievement of the search process, for congregation and minister both, is the formation of a unique and promising “fit.” How often can the promise of

such a fit be recognized without the illumination provided by other fits, also unique but of less promise? Somewhere along the line the three other search committees, now cancelled, had become persuaded that you, no longer available, represented one of a number of attractive futures for their congregations. Now they find their continued consideration of that future, both in itself and for the light it might cast on other such futures, cut off.

Thus I beg you to follow the search calendar in the *Settlement Handbook*, and to adhere to the plan with which you enter the precandidating phase of the search process. If you commit to three precandidating weekends, complete the three. If four, complete the four. Play the schedule out. Don’t allow a committee to rush you into an early decision, and don’t rush them. Let the claims of due deliberation be met!

In that vein, I would invite ministers, as I have invited the committees, to consider holding off on entertaining a mutual commitment until March 31, thus giving our congregations as well as yourselves the greatest possible opportunity to choose among the alternative futures that attract them. How can such mutual thoughtfulness not strengthen Unitarian Universalism? ●

—John Weston, Transitions Director

Professional Development—Michelle Bentley, Angela Merkert

What Did You Do Over the Holiday Break? Or, Did You Have One?

It’s been five years since I pastored a church and was responsible for the Thanksgiving, Christmas, Hanukkah, Winter Solstice, Kwanzaa, New Years, and other Sunday services during the holy—and holiday—season between the months of November and January. So much planning and singing and eating and preaching and stories, and trying to make time for family—*wow!* When I worked as the chaplain for a major substance abuse center and in a hospital for chronically and terminally ill children this season was just as full—emotions and memories are intense, deep, and, as you well know, all over the place.

I am reminded of one Christmas staff party that the LaRabida Children’s Hospital gave. Everyone dressed up, brought a friend or partner; there was plenty of catered food and good drinks, and even a hired disk jockey. I started the evening off with an interfaith prayer recognizing the children, their families, and staff, then gave thanks for the food. The party got off to a very slow start and was on its way to being a dud, which would have been sad. There was little interaction among the staff. The music was playing but not a soul was on the dance floor. Then the music of James Brown, the godfather of soul, came through the speakers and everyone—the housekeepers, nurses, administrators, physicians, social workers, cooks, chaplain—was up out of their seats with

arms waving in one motion to the sweet, no-boundary, and soul-mending music of James Brown. With *Papa’s Got a Brand New Bag* playing, the party was on.

Today I remember James Brown because of the effect the prayer-full, political, social, soul-filling music had on the dedicated and weary hospital personnel who worked day in and day out with chronically and terminally ill children and their families, and because of the effect his music had on the weary feet of those marching for human rights in the late 1960s and 1970s. His bridge-building music continues to have a positive effect on communities of all ages.

This holiday season my family didn’t take a planned trip as we usually do. Instead we stayed close to home and took long naps and engaged in the spontaneous together—sometimes with a friend(s) and sometimes alone. James Brown’s CD played in stereo in my car and home. The needed rest and focus gained from the not doing and having no expectations brought this weary soul back to life. May you tend to your soul this winter and then spring.

From *EAP Perspectives*, “If you are thinking about changing your life for the better, one way to start is by identifying your goals. You are probably hoping to find some version of happiness or emotional well-being. That might look like any combination of the following: a sense of freedom, self esteem, self-confidence, happy to get up in the morning, working toward stated goals, a sense of purpose in life, and satisfying relationships.”

Friends, I look forward to reading about your professional development goals and plans and receiving your

continuing education grant requests. For detailed info, go to www.uua.org/programs/ministry/development. ●

Memorial Page

Colleagues Thom Belote and Ralph Mero have envisioned and created an inviting web log where you may share comments about our deceased UU ministers: <http://uuminmemorialpage.blogspot.com>. What a perfect venue to memorialize departed colleagues. Thank you, Ralph and Thom. ●

Peace, Michelle and Angela

From CENTER—Continuing Education Arm of the UUMA

The twentieth anniversary of CENTER seems to your CENTER Committee and the UUMA Executive Committee to be a propitious time to look at our Charter. We are considering all the ways that we and the stakeholders who believe in an educated, accountable, supported, and supportive ministry might improve how we meet our goals of training, enrichment, and renewal.

With that in mind, CENTER began reassessing its mission at its April 2006 meeting toward a vision of ministry for the twenty-first century. A proposal was made to the UUMA Executive to have a facilitated summit meeting with stakeholders to discuss long-range plans for continuing education for our ministers, as well as to identify gaps currently found in ministerial education and how they might be filled. Stakeholders identified are: the Ministry and Professional Leadership Staff Group, the Ministerial Fellowship Committee, the UUMA, and the

theological schools. The theme of the summit will be “Mapping the Ministry Matrix: Collaborative Ministerial Formation for the Twenty-first Century.” The goal of this gathering will be to identify best practices and environmental scanning regarding the nature of and need for continuing theological education and ministerial formation. Ministerial formation is viewed as a process that combines scholarship, religious/spiritual development, and practice (i.e., active professional engagement).

Members of the CENTER Committee welcome your ideas about how you can be better supported in what you do and in your lifelong learning and professional development while you minister to others, as well as anything else you think it might be helpful for us to know. We are listening!

Meanwhile, planning is well underway for CENTER Day 2007 in Portland, OR on Tuesday, June 19. Last year’s evaluations showed that many of you would like to go deeper into topics, so we have added more double-length workshops. We had many more workshop proposals submitted than we have space for—thank you to everyone for your proposals.

Finally, a word about Open Space: Our UUMA Executive informs us that important decisions will be made about the future of our Association at the 2007 GA. It is hoped that ministerial colleagues will participate fully, especially in the sessions that use Open Space Technology. Open Space Technology is described as, at the very least, a new way to hold better meetings. The normative experience is that groups, large and small (from five to one thousand members), self-organize to effectively deal with hugely complex issues in a very short time. Let us listen to one another.

Ministry Days’ theme speakers are Rev. Dr. Jeremiah Wright on growth 2007 and Dr. Walter Brueggemann, Old Testament Scholar 2008. ●

The Collegiality and Ethics Committee of the UUMA (ACEC)

This committee met for the first time in St. Louis, MO on June 25, 2006 and held a day long meeting in Tucson, AZ on December 8, 2006. The purpose of the committee, chaired by Susan Manker-Seals (National Good Offices Person), was to review and establish a middle way for right relationships among colleagues, and to establish a protocol and covenant before things get so bad that complaints or charges are brought to Ministry and Professional Leadership (MPL), Congregational Services, or the MFC. Committee members’ initial ideas include the following statement, “We might like to see a process of reconciliation—involving words, maybe ritual, maybe restitution or restorative justice [if called for].”

ACEC collected covenants and guidelines from various organizations for review in an effort to understand the various relationships among colleagues and/or institutions, including the UU Musicians Network, Diversity of Ministry Team (DOMT), UU Trauma Response Team, Youth and Young Adults, and the Mountain–Desert District UUMA Covenant. The information gathered and the work of this Committee will be of great benefit for the *UUMA Handbook*, now undergoing a major revision process. This is an important bridge and link to the policies and procedures of both the MFC and MPL.

A draft proposal from this group emphasizing right relations and restorative justice will be considered by the UUMA Executive in the month of January.

Training Programs from the Professional Development Office

New: The Ministry of Presence—Addictions’ Ministry Online Seminar: March 26–April 5, 2007: Rev. Denis Meacham of Brewster, MA and Drew Brooks of the Rush Center of the Johnson Institute—Faith Partners—will address the enormous advances, nuances, and hard facts of addiction, and the impact of substance abuse on the congregational system. Rev. Michelle Bentley will discuss the institutional response (UUA and UUMA/CENTER).

Finding Our Way Home: April 12–15, 2007: An opportunity for ministers and ministerial candidates who identify as African, Caribbean, Native/American Indian, Asian and Pacific Islander, Latina/o and Hispanic, Middle Eastern/Arab, Multi-racial, and Multi-ethnic UUs to gather for professional development, community building, spiritual sustenance, and mutual support. At the Kellogg Conference Hotel, Gallaudet University, Washington, DC. Seminar/retreat co-sponsored event by the Professional Development Office and the Identity-Based Ministries Staff Group.

First Year Ministers’ Online Seminar: May 11–24, 2007: Two new deans, Rev. Mel Hoover and Rev. Dr. Michael Schuler, join returning dean Dr. Angela Merkert. Information and discussion from this seminar will tie directly into the 2007 Ministry Days’ theme “A Paradigm Shift: From Theory to Praxis.” How “to serve this present age,” while maintaining personal integrity and honoring various traditions will be the focus of this presentation. For further info contact www.uuma.org/center/index.htm.

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

Health Plan Update

Three years ago we heard from 400 staff of UU congregations plus community ministers that they were without health insurance or were covered under plans that were ending soon or that they could not afford. Some had pre-existing conditions that made it virtually impossible to obtain health insurance when they moved from one church to another. Others were covered under a spouse’s coverage and the spouse was losing his or her job. Congregations were feeling “up against the wall” in what they could afford for this important benefit.

Now the new UUA health plan is in operation, and while it can’t solve all the health insurance difficulties faced by UU religious professionals, we have taken a giant step toward nationwide coverage for the 593 enrollees plus dependents who now have UUA Blue Cross cards in their wallets. Implementation of the plan would not have been possible without the UUA enrolling its own headquarters and field staff, in some cases at an increasing cost to the Association. All of us owe the UUA administration an expression of thanks for stepping up in this manner.

Winning the enrollment of almost 600 persons took a monumental effort, primarily by Jim Sargent and Joyce Stewart on the OCSF staff. The number could have been higher if the UUA—like other denominations—had been able to require its congregations to contribute toward health insurance for their staffs; but we depend on congregations to make their own financial decisions, and, sad to say, there are still some UU societies that do not find adequate benefits an unavoidable obligation.

The three years of effort to enact a health plan taught us again that many UU congregations desperately need help in learning how to raise funds from their memberships. The response by UUs to Hurricane Katrina resulted in \$3 million for humanitarian assistance to those devastated by this natural disaster. We need a similar outpouring of new money for congregational budgets—not once, but year after year—if those who work for our congregations are not to enter ministry saddled by unmanageable seminary debt or forced to take positions offering minimal salaries and meager benefits.

While some ministry colleagues are undercompensated compared to others in comparable professions, they are infinitely better off than many of the religious educators, administrators, and musicians for whom our congregations avert their attention when it comes to benefits that the members would be outraged to do without in their own families.

Unless we can find a way to help congregations raise the funds to cover all of their employees, the benefits problem will persist. On the positive side, improving the situation of those who were uninsured, about to lose coverage, or covered by often inadequate individual plans is a huge step forward, both in absolute numbers and in the progress we have made toward a genuine dialogue within the UUA about the actions needed to get our congregations on a healthier and more responsible financial footing. ●

—Ralph Mero,
Church Staff Finances Director

MFC Meeting

The Ministerial Fellowship Committee Meeting was held November 29–December 3, 2006 in Emeryville, CA. The Committee met with members of the Board of Review to discuss our respective roles and procedures in handling hearings for removal of a minister from fellowship. The Committee is continuing its discussion of background checks on individuals seeking ministerial credentialing, and spent time reviewing issues of anti-racism and anti-oppression within our work.

The Committee has become concerned that the MFC rules and policies are out-of-date, neither reflecting current practices nor most effectively overseeing ministerial credentialing, so we have decided to make some radical changes to our rules and policies. A taskforce has been meeting and will bring suggested rule and policy changes for feedback at this year's General Assembly. Major areas of changes being proposed include: how the committee holds hearings to remove a minister from fellowship; how we discipline ministers for whom there is concern of misconduct; and updating rules to reflect current practice of not fellowshipping based on category of ministry. Many minor changes reflecting current practices are also being proposed.

Other business conducted at the meeting included reviewing requests for waivers of rules to ministers and candidates and reviewing evaluations for renewals of fellowship. Thirteen ministers were awarded final fellowship, eight ministers received a second renewal of preliminary fellowship, and seven ministers received a first renewal of preliminary fellowship.

The committee interviewed 20 candidates (two men, 18 women). Sixteen were moved forward toward preliminary fellowship, with varying contingencies; three were encouraged to continue in preparation for ministry but to return for another inter-

view; and one was discouraged from further pursuit of a career in the ministry.

Myriam Renaud and Diane Rollert served as liaisons to candidates. Carl McCargo, from the New England RSCC and Rev. Katie Kandarian, minister of Starr King Church in Hayward, CA, served as substitutes for absent committee members. Rev. Jim Zacharius led daily inspirational services.

The MFC next meets March 22–25, 2007 in Chicago. The open portion of the business meeting will begin at 1:00 p.m., March 25. Enquiries and comments may be directed to mfc@uaa.org. •

—Jory Agate, Chair, Ministerial Fellowship Committee

Congregational Ethics and Safety

The Ethics and Safety web page, www.uaa.org/cde/ethics/, gives constituents quick access to current resources addressing safety and ethical concerns, including:

Responsible Staffing:

Congregations are perceived as trusting and welcoming, and thus are vulnerable to those seeking easy access to children, youth, and vulnerable adults. Congregational leaders—paid and volunteer—have a responsibility to be proactive in creating a safe environment. www.uaa.org/programs/ministry/responsiblestaffing.html.

Balancing Acts: Keeping Children Safe in Congregations: An online manual offering information and procedural suggestions for leaders faced with the difficult task of helping the congregation decide whether and how to include a sexual offender in their religious community, with guidelines for developing policies, steps to take in the midst of a crisis, sample access agreements, and other forms. See www.uaa.org/cde/ethics/balancing for more.

Process for Handling Complaints of Misconduct: The Director for

Congregational Services is the primary point of contact for any person wishing to report an alleged instance of misconduct by a religious professional. Outline of the complaint process is available at www.uaa.org/cde/ethics/complaintprocess.html.

The Safe Congregation Handbook: Nurturing healthy boundaries in our faith communities is essential to safe congregations. Available at the UUA Bookstore, the *Handbook* contains clear guidelines, principles, policies, tools, and workshops to ensure that UU congregations are safe and secure for children and adults.

The Office of Congregational Services is available for guidance with issues of ethics and safety, whether your board is developing safety policies, the DRE needs a screening form for volunteers, there is a complaint of professional misconduct, or there are other issues regarding congregational safety and ethics. See web pages above or contact Diane Martin at dmartin@uaa.org or 617-948-6461. •

Resolved: Congregations Can Learn More about Racism and Classism

At General Assembly 2006 a delegate-written responsive resolution was overwhelmingly supported by delegates from over 600 UU congregations. It urges us to reflect on how our congregations are dealing with the issues of racism and classism, and challenges us to continue in the struggle to grow individually and with renewed commitment to build communities that are just and inclusive. This considerable work is rooted in Unitarian Universalist identity, theology, and values. Learn more about the 2006 GA Responsive Resolution and suggested actions at www.uaa.org/actions/responsive/06racism. •

UU Funding Program

The UU Funding Program makes grants to UU congregations, committees, districts, and affiliates through the Fund for Unitarian Universalism, the Fund for International Unitarian Universalism, and the Fund for UU Social Responsibility.

Application deadlines are March 15 and September 15 each year. Grants range from \$1,000–\$20,000. Panel members are appointed by the UUA Board, with funding from the UU Veatch Program at Shelter Rock. Please call or visit our website for guidelines, annual reports, and more information (www.uua.org/uufp) or call 617-971-9600. ●

Unitarian Universalist Partner Church Council (UUPCC)

The UUPCC seeks churches that would like to expand the reach of their congregation beyond the church walls and the country's borders.

Partnership with Unitarians around the world can strengthen our faith at home and make new friends for life. It lets us live our values and practice welcoming hospitality. Having a partner overseas often brings the congregation into closer contact with ethnic groups in their own community. Partnering around the globe is one of the best ways to show a different face of America.

What do partner congregations do? They connect! They write e-mails, discover interests and passions of members of each congregation, and become caring friends to each other. They exchange music, greetings on holidays, and drawings and notes between RE classes. They visit each other. Gradually, more and more members of each congregation develop friendship links.

As the relationship matures and linkages become more robust, members of the congregation in the partner country speak more frankly about

their hopes and needs. Sometimes partners plan projects together that improve community life, such as repairing or building churches or helping with economic and community development. Sometimes the focus is on worship and ministerial roles, sometimes on new skills in democratic processes.

How do you become a partner? Visit our website, www.uupcc.org, to learn about churches looking for partners. Put a small committee together (former peace corps workers and first generation immigrants are often interested in this work). Download or buy the *Partner Church Handbook*, available on the UUPCC website.

The UUPCC has been discovering and learning the best ways partnerships work since our founding in 1993. We are happy to help you talk to other churches with partners. To get started, write us at outreach@uupcc.org or call 781-275-1710. The UUPCC will help you discover if partnership is right for your congregation and find a partner to help put your beliefs and principles into action.

Contact us at Unitarian Universalist Partner Church Council, P.O. Box 88, Bedford, MA 01730. ●

UUMA Executive and District Services Team Up on Code of Ethics Change

At their most recent meeting, the UUA district staff supported a change to their code of ethics that has been discussed for some time with the UUMA Executive Committee.

The addition to the code of ethics reads: "In the interest of maintaining positive and professional relationships with UUMA and LREDA members serving congregations within my district, and to avoid being triangulated in an unhealthy way, I will refrain from having sub-

stantive contact with members of a congregation without notifying the minister or other religious professional. Exceptions to this practice require consultation with the director for district services."

District staff teams also discussed the value that would come from working with local UUMA and LREDA chapters to create "Covenants of Relationship." They will endeavor to partner with chapter leaders to create such covenants. Good relations between district staff members and ministers and other religious professionals are important to the health and vitality of UU congregations and we encourage conversations about ways in which they can best work together. ●

—Ken Sawyer,
UUMA President
Harlan Limpert,
UUA Director for District Services

Association Sundays

What are *Association Sundays*?

We at the UUA know our congregations can do more together than alone, and so, as part of the "Now Is the Time" comprehensive fundraising campaign, we are organizing a series of Association Sundays. Because our surveys indicate growth is the highest priority, these Sundays will be devoted to growing our numbers, spirit, leadership, witness, and diversity. The first Association Sunday is scheduled for October 14, 2007. The theme will be "Growing Our Faith through Growing Our Numbers." Funds raised will be used for national marketing and growth outreach projects.

Why do we need Association Sundays? We need to bring congregations together to more effectively pursue our mission of affirming the inherent worth and dignity of every person in the world. We are "better together," and we can help one another by combining our resources to have a greater influence on others and on our country. Association Sundays will increase our connection

and effectiveness. *Now is the time* for our congregations to grow stronger and more vital; we believe our religious values are needed to help heal the wounded world.

How do I organize this Sunday in my congregation? Register with the Stewardship and Development Office at associationsunday@uaa.org by May 1, 2007, and schedule October 14 (or a Sunday close to it) for your Association Sunday service and special collection. You will receive a resource packet containing worship and educational materials, including flyers to share your enthusiasm and help get others involved.

How can I get more information? Contact associationsunday@uaa.org; Rev. Stephan Papa at

spapa@uaa.org; or Cherisse Haakonsen at chaakonsen@uaa.org or 617-948-6544. ●

AUUA Certification Awarded

The Professional Development Committee of the Association of UU Administrators is pleased to announce that Keri Barker Plumpton, Bookkeeper/Room Use Coordinator of the University Unitarian Church in Seattle, WA, has completed the required work for Level One Administrator certification.

Keri is the first candidate for our new AUUA Congregational

Administrator Certification program to be granted certification. She has worked hard, completing the program in addition to her regular working hours, and it is an honor to have her as our first certified administrator.

We congratulate the University Unitarian Church for their support of Keri while she completed her certification program. The church benefits from her accomplishments, just as she does.

If you are an administrator in a UU church and are interested in our Congregational Administrator Certification program, please visit our website, www.uaa.org/auua, for more information. ●



The Religious Leader

NEWS FROM THE UUA MINISTRY & PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP STAFF GROUP

Nonprofit Organization U.S. Postage PAID Boston, MA Ass. Permit No. 8652
--

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST ASSOCIATION
25 BEACON STREET
BOSTON, MA 02108