



The Religious Leader

NEWS FROM THE MINISTRY AND PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP STAFF GROUP • FALL 2009

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Office of the Director—Beth Miller, bmiller@uua.org, and
Julie Shaw, jshaw@uua.org

From the Director

Change is in the air! I write this on the first day of fall as the days begin to grow shorter and the temperatures cooler. I'm always a little ambivalent about this time of year. On the one hand, New England is especially beautiful in the fall and there are lots of wonderful things going on and great holiday celebrations to look forward to. On the other hand, things are dying and the year is coming to an end. We're in the midst of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, Judaism's High Holy Days marking the New Year. It is a time for taking stock, making amends, beginning anew. Again, a time of ambivalent feelings for me. Taking stock is an important exercise and beginning anew feels good. But the letting go part can be difficult.

Change at the UUA: In case you haven't read about it yet, I have a new boss. Our new President, Peter Morales, has promoted Harlan Limpert to Vice President and given him oversight of the program staff groups of the Association. These include MPL, Lifespan Faith Development, Identity Based Ministries, Advocacy and Witness, and Congregational Life. Peter's intention is to improve collaboration across staff groups so as to better focus and coordinate our initiatives. Kay Montgomery remains as Executive Vice President and, along with Treasurer Tim Brennan, continues to oversee the administrative and operational functions of the Association. Harlan has been a wonderful colleague and a helpful mentor to me as I've learned my role here as Director of MPL over the past three years. He has talent, good sense, a lot of experience, boundless energy, and exceeding goodwill. I have great faith in Harlan's leadership as we move forward with Peter's top priorities which are: growing our movement, creating a new ministry for a new America, expanding our movement's capacity in public witness and social action, and becoming more effective at using new technology to facilitate communication and collaboration. Although I feel this is a positive change and look forward to the advantages it brings, I will miss my close relationship with Kay as it shifts under this change.

Change is happening in the MPL staff: We welcomed Marion Bell (my assistant for the past year) as the new MFC Coordinator upon Mohammed El-Khatib's departure this summer and Julie Shaw (formerly Bill Sinkford's assistant) to replace Marion in the MPL Director's Assistant position. In the Office of Church Staff Finances (OCSF), Liz Oliver became Health Plan Coordinator upon the departure of Tracy Withy-Browne and Linda Rose was hired to replace her as Group Insurance Coordinator. I am grateful that our administrative staff is strong and stable and here to respond to your needs.

As we've previously announced, John Weston will retire as Transitions Director following General Assembly 2010. In order to be competitive with the search process for ministers interested in leaving their present congregations, I will have the job posted on the UUA website by October 31, 2009 and will make a decision by the end of February, 2010. Please feel free to speak with either John or myself if you want to know more about this position.

Richard Nugent has been **Acting Director** of the Office of Church Staff Finances for a little over a year. He is doing a fantastic job in a very challenging time in OCSF as the process of evaluating retirement plan proposals and making recommendations to the Board continues, we re-evaluate our group insurance offerings, deal with replacing outdated software, and weather the financial crisis and its many challenges. I am very pleased to announce that we've made the decision to remove the "Acting" from Richard's title and retain him in the position permanently. He will spend about half his time in Boston, work from his home in Washington, D.C. the rest of the time, and be readily available in either location.

And finally: Last but certainly not least, I am pleased to announce that Reverend Paige Getty is our preacher for the 2010 Service of the Living Tradition. Paige, a graduate of Wesleyan College and Harvard Divinity School, received preliminary fellowship and was ordained in 2000. She performed her student ministry in San Diego, was interim minister in Overland Park, KS from 2002–2003, and has served the UU Church of Columbia, MD since 2003. Our new president's choice of preacher is symbolic of the kind of inquiry he is instigating regarding the future of our ministry. What, Peter asks, will our ministry look like in the decades to come? Paige is one of our many dynamic newer and younger ministers who will be instrumental in leading us into that future. ●

—Beth Miller, Director of MPL

Ministerial Credentialing/Internship Clearinghouse—David Pettee, dpettee@uua.org, Christine May, cmay@uua.org, Marion Bell, mbell@uua.org, and Kim Wilson, kwilson@uua.org

Ministerial Credentialing Report

I'm writing here from my office in mid-September, which affords me the privilege of looking out the window toward the west side of the Massachusetts State House. Already, I notice that summer is fading fast and a few leaves are beginning to change color. Even though I am entering my eighth year as Ministerial Credentialing Director, I'm struck by the sense of newness and excitement that each fall brings for many as they move forward toward ministerial fellowship. This fall, I am beginning to use Skype video technology to keep in touch because the amount of travel I am able to do has been cut given the UUA's response to the economic downturn. Should you make an appointment to speak with me through Chris May, please let her know if you use Skype!

While much of the routine of the Ministerial Credentialing Office is driven by our support of the Regional Sub-

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Committee on Candidacy and Ministerial Fellowship Committee interviews, this fall is a bit different in that I am actively preparing for a sabbatical that begins December 14, 2009 and continues through March 12, 2010. I will be using this time to work on a book to draw out and articulate what I've learned from my pilgrimage of the last three-and-a-half years, exploring my family history as it relates to having twelve ancestors who enslaved and/or traded kidnapped Africans. Learning this history has been both painful and transformative. I have needed to reckon with my ancestral relationship to slavery that began in 1637 and ended in 1858, located here in New England.

I am co-writing this book with my friend Susan Hutchison, who is a descendant of Thomas Jefferson. She and a handful of other white Jefferson descendants have been building relationships with some of their Jefferson–Hemings cousins now for several years. By virtue of having made close connection with other European–Americans who share our common kind of ancestry, Susan and I are becoming aware of intergenerational patterns that we believe pass forward in families of those who enslaved or oppressed others that deserve to be identified.

We are actively interviewing descendants at this time to gather more information. If you, or someone you know, might be interested in participating in this project or want to get more information, please don't hesitate to contact me directly.

During my time away, the work of the Ministerial Credentialing Office continues! I am asking that if you have any questions and concerns during my sabbatical that you start first with Chris May, long-time and skillful administrator of the Ministerial Credentialing Office. If you haven't been in contact with Chris, she is a great person to get to know! She helps all

candidates get organized for their Ministerial Fellowship Committee (MFC) interview. Chris will refer questions and concerns that she feels need the attention of other Ministry and Professional Leadership staff. Jory Agate, Ministerial Development Director (who also staffs the Ministerial Fellowship Committee with me), has agreed to work closely with her during my time away. Thank you, Chris and Jory!

Before Jory was in her current role, she served as the Chair of the Ministerial Fellowship Committee. Jory will help Chris with Candidate File Reviews and with organizing the agenda of the Candidacy Working Group for the MFC meeting held in Boston in March, 2010. Internship-related questions should continue to be directed to Kim Wilson, Internship Clearinghouse Coordinator. Jory has agreed to be available to collaborate with Kim regarding any internship-related questions or concerns or MFC matters, on a case-by-case basis.

Some people have wondered what effect, if any, we are seeing in the Ministerial Credentialing Office as fallout from the economy. I counted by hand today the number of aspirants and candidates that we currently believe are in process toward ministerial fellowship. Since last fall, we have increased to 433, of which 50 have self-identified as a person of color, Latino/a, Asian/Pacific Islander, are multiracial, or are from a historically underserved community. I'm not sure how to explain the increase, up nearly 60 from the year before. In addition, Chris May and I are observing a very steady number of inquirers making contact with the Ministerial Credentialing Office, with a particular growing interest among those who seek to serve a military ministry.

I hope this fall is a time of putting into motion all the good energy that was gathering during a summer of renewal. ●

In the faith,

David Pettee, Ministerial Credentialing Director

Internship Clearinghouse News

Our GA workshop, focusing on best practices and creative approaches to handling the many tasks of Internship Committees was well attended. My many thanks to the supervisors, intern committee chairs, and interns who participated.

The 2009–2010 edition *Ministerial Internship Manual* is now posted online. The biggest change is that it is extensively hyperlinked, making it simple to jump to the desired page or the related web page. There are other changes, too, so it is important to use the current version.

To date, I have approximately 50 current internships in my records. This is down slightly from last year at this time. Please contact me if you are a supervisor or an intern and you're not sure that I have been contacted. A reminder that the Ministerial Fellowship Committee requires all interns to submit a final draft Learning and Service Agreement to me for review within the first two months of the internship.

If you serve a congregation that would like to become an internship site beginning in the fall of 2010, I encourage you to consider applying for a UUA Internship Stipend Matching Grant. The application form is available on the Ministerial Internships web page. The deadline for submission is November 1.

I know the internship process can be mysterious and confusing at times, so please don't hesitate to contact me with any questions, concerns, or needs for guidance. ●

Yours in faith,

Kim D. Wilson, Internship Clearinghouse Coordinator;
(203) 484-5081 (voice and fax); mailing address: 766 Totoket Rd., Northford, CT 06472

Religious Education (RE), Music Leader Credentialing & Renaissance Programs—Beth Williams, bethwilliams@uua.org, and Paula Welling, pwelling@uua.org

The Religious Education Credentialing Program—Re-visioned

The UUA's Religious Education Credentialing Program completed its fifth year of operation in October of 2008. Recognizing that a five-year mark was a natural re-evaluation point, the Religious Education Credentialing Committee (RECC) began a process of examining both the accessibility and the logistics of the program. They considered feedback from the Liberal Religious Educators Association Board, program mentors, credentialed religious educators, parish ministers, the UUA Board, and a large number of religious educators working in the field.

The re-visioned program allows greater accessibility and flexibility, offering choices of final project forms and evaluation modes and a tenure-track option for religious educators with 10 or more years of experience prior to May 1, 2009. The goal of the program is unchanged: it is to strengthen UU religious education through the continued development and professionalization of lay religious educators, and to provide a clear and effective system for standards and recognition of these achievements.

For more detailed information, please see our website at uua.org/recredentialing.

Congratulations to Linda Volkersz who was awarded Credentialed Religious Educator, Associate Level status, by the RECC on May 29, 2009.

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:

Tracy Beck, IA
Lisa Randolph, IA
Halcyon Westall, RI

Kim Mason, NJ
Jennifer Wapinski-Mooradian, NY

Scholarship Assistance

A reminder that modest amounts of financial aid are available to religious educators for professional development opportunities, such as Renaissance Modules and other related training, for those serving Unitarian Universalist congregations as religious education professionals. Additional continuing education funds are available for candidates in the UUA Religious Education Credentialing program for significant professional development endeavors. For more information and an application form, please contact Paula Welling, RE Credentialing Assistant, at recassistant@uua.org or (617) 948-6418. Congratulations to the 2009 recipient of the Barbara Marshman & Ann Fields Memorial Scholarship, Louise Marcoux, Sharon, MA, and to the 2009 recipient of the Veridan Fund for Religious Education Excellence Scholarship, Karen Fisk, Augusta, ME. ●

Renaissance Program News

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

October 29–31, 2009, Philosophy, Angelus Oaks, CA, Tera Little, teral@att.net

November 13–14, 2009, Curriculum, Westfield, MA, Deborah Levering, dlevering@uua.org

November 13–15, 2009, Administration, Glen Rose, TX, Connie Nolan, swduua@aol.com

January 7–9, 2010, Administration, Manchester, NH, Rick Carkin, rick@carkin.com

February 26–28, 2010, Philosophy, Cleveland, OH, Kathy Strawser, kstrawser@wsuuc.org

March 12–14, 2010, Teacher Development, Browns Summit, NC, Sue Sinnamon, ssinnamon@uua.org

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

Lara Douglas, SW
Jessica Holcomb, BC

Lisa Fritsche, CMW
Leah Purcell, STL

Music Leadership Credentialing

On behalf of the Association, we welcome the following members of the newly appointed Music Leadership Credentialing Committee: Ken Herman (chair), San Diego, CA; Rev. Paul Beedle, Stafford, TX; June Dye, Nashville, TN; Jan Gartner, Rochester, NY; Sarah Dan Jones (UUMN representative), Decatur, GA; Beth Norton, Concord, MA; and Barbara Woolf, Bloomfield Hills, MI.

We encourage those of you who are interested in becoming a candidate for the Music Leadership Credentialing program to visit our website at uua.org/leaders/leaderslibrary/musicleadership/index.shtml for an application. The deadline for application is March 31, 2010. A candidate must be a member of the Unitarian Universalist Musicians Network (UUMN), as well as a professional musician in a congregation s/he has served for at least one year. The program involves three years of coursework in which nine courses are to be completed. These courses will be offered at the annual UUMN conference. This program is designed to serve all musicians who serve our congregations as music leaders and have a potential and desire for excellence in music ministry. Upon successful completion of this program, candidates will be credentialed by the UUA as music leaders in our Unitarian Universalist congregations.

The tuition for each candidate is \$350 per year, in addition to the UUMN conference fees. It is our expectation that a candidate's congregation, understanding the significance of this credentialing program, will affirm participation in the credentialing process and will provide appropriate funds for these expenses. We hope you will consider this path of professional growth and enrichment. Any questions may be addressed to Beth Williams, RE & Music Leader

Credentialing Director at bethwilliams@uua.org or Paula Welling, RE & Music Leader Credentialing Assistant, at pwelling@uua.org. ●

—Rev. Beth Williams, Religious Education & Music Leader Credentialing Director,
and Renaissance Program Co-Director

Transitions—John Weston, jweston@uua.org, and Emily Schwab, eschwab@uua.org

The Passing Scene

You may have forgotten the (eminently forgettable) fact that MPL is digitizing and thus electronically storing the files we maintain on all living UU ministers. Nevertheless, it matters, because:

- a sprinkler malfunction, much less a fire, will no longer eliminate the history of our ministry;
- the right granted to ministers by the MFC that “information about a minister from the files of the Committee shall be shared with that minister except for information transmitted in confidence or otherwise deemed confidential by the MFC” will become practically enforceable;
- your MPL staff will be more informed and hence more helpful, because most information bearing on you and your ministry will be rapidly accessible when you call;
- your MPL staff will no longer have the occasional opportunity to waste valuable time playing “where’s the file?” when a colleague calls in with a question. “Where’s the file?” “Where everything is: online”; and
- materials for preliminary fellowship and renewals will be—and now are—distributed to MFC members electronically rather than in the huge mailings of yesteryear.

The project is taking longer than foreseen (what doesn’t?). The bulk of the work will be completed this fall.

Forty ministers were called to full-time ministries new to them in the past year. Thanks to the recession, I have little doubt that this number represents a 33 percent decrease from the preceding ten years’ annual average. However, the duration of service and the motives for departure of the 39 ministers that earlier departed from the congregations to which the 40 have been called show no significant difference from previous years. My sense is that we do not adequately appreciate the effects of ministers’ duration of service: 9.5 years average with each congregation, 8 years median. The stability brought about by such service is an asset to our congregations of no little worth.

Average compensation of newly called ministers decreased—one of six years in the past twenty that have decreased, and, at 10 percent, by far the largest. Again, thank the recession.

Some 92 interim ministries are in being this year, and an unknown number of consulting ministries. Given the greater involvement of the Transitions Office in bringing consulting ministries into being, attention must be given in the coming year to constructing a meaningful count so that adequate resources can be secured and applied. ●

Autumnal Thoughts

Almost two years ago I let colleagues and my masters here at the UUA know that I would be retiring in mid-2010. Why so far in advance? In the first place, if I had to keep silent about the experience I wouldn’t be able to have it—or any emotionally loaded experience, for that matter. In my psychic economy, block one Big Thing and you block ‘em all. In the second, in view of the many holders who have their stakes in the UUA’s settlement and interim processes, I wanted to give Beth Miller as much planning time as she could use. And in the third, I wanted to explore for myself what it means to be in transition, and report to colleagues on what I find. It seemed like a good Last Thing for a Transitions Director to do.

Frankly, I have been surprised by the vulnerability I feel, more like a clam on the half shell than at any time since I sold my business and entered Meadville 24 years ago. People have conversations about things that should happen after I’m gone, which means at least in part after I’m out of the way. They sometimes have those conversations at lunch—and I’m not at the table. They envision alternative futures—each one without me. It’s like knowing your wake is going on, and you’re not there.

Occasionally someone will ask me what I think ought to happen in the coming years. I would be struck here by the wisdom contained in our *Guidelines*—“the minister must take no leadership role in the planning and development of program or policy for the period after his or her departure”—if I had any opinion. I don’t. Maybe if I had, I would wish to remain in place. But virtually everything I’d hoped for has come to pass, for good and evil, and I have no hopes for anything different.

That’s the Self side of it. Then there’s the Others side. The question that comes my way most often is, “What are you going to do?” I answer, “Retire.” “Yes,” comes the reply, “but aren’t you going to do interims?” “Interim ministry is not retirement,” I respond, “and in any case, no, I’m going to retire.” “But what are you going to *do*?” “Backpack more, read more, become a better worker in wood, be a more present grandfather than mine were.” Still I get doubtful looks.

I wonder if my skeptical colleagues—and as far as I can tell they’re all skeptical—sense my vulnerability. Or is it that they sense their own? As I live it and observe it, ministry is immensely seductive. In what other business, trade, or profession is one’s own particular amalgamation of the personal and the professional confirmed daily in the eyes others?

Who and what will we be without that confirming regard? Who and what will I be when I am no longer seen to be doing ministry? I doubt that I can ever give an answer to that question without resuming the identity and the role—and hence not giving an answer at all. ●

—John Weston,
Transitions Director

Ministerial Development—Jory Agate, jagate@uua.org, and Margaret Montore, mmontore@uua.org

News from Ministerial Development

The Ministerial Development Office is looking forward to another year of opportunities for strengthening your ministry.

Continuing Education (CE) Grants—There is good news and bad news regarding continuing education grants. The bad news is that we have run out of funds for the first half of the year. The good news is that this year, for the first time, we divided the budgeted money in half and will grant the remaining funds starting January 15. Getting your application in early will increase your likelihood of receiving a grant. Please see our website (uua.org/leaders/leaderslibrary/ministerialdevelopment/continuingeducation/23119.shtml) for the latest guidelines and an application form and apply now!

Ministers in Preliminary Fellowship—All ministers in preliminary fellowship are being asked to fill out an annual Ministry Registration Form. This will enable our office to keep track of your current whereabouts and the location of your ministry. Forms are available via email from our office. If you have not filled out your form for this year, please request a form from this office immediately.

First Year Ministers’ Seminar—If you are in your first year of ministry (fellowshipped and currently working at least half-time in a compensated position) be sure you are registered with our office by completing the Ministry Registration Form mentioned above. You will be invited to a seminar April 7–9 with the possibility of additional time for meeting with mentors April 5–7. Contact our office for more information.

Addictions Ministry—If you are interested in connecting with other ministers and lay leaders who are committed to supporting people wrestling with all kinds of addictions, be sure to join the Addictions Ministry email list. To register for the list go to uua.org/members/emaillists/index.shtml.

Call for Ministerial Papers—The Andover–Harvard Theological Library at Harvard Divinity School serves as a major resource for those interested in studying the Unitarian Universalist tradition. They have books, pamphlets, films, sound material, photographs, correspondence, reports, and other records that document the rise and growth of Unitarian Universalism and its affect on our society. These records include the papers of many Unitarian and Universalist ministers, which they preserve and make available to scholars and researchers from all over the world. If you are interested in donating your papers to the library, contact Fran at frances_odonnell@harvard.edu or (617) 496-5153. A list of the ministers’ papers currently at the library can be viewed at www.hds.harvard.edu/library/bms/pers.html. The online guide to donating material to this library can be found at www.hds.harvard.edu/library/bms/guidelines/donating.html.

Natalie Gulbrandsen Scholarship Fund for International Studies—Congratulations to Thom Belote who was the 2009 recipient of the Gulbrandsen Scholarship. Thom will travel to Cuenca, Ecuador to study the racial and cultural

identities of the mestizo and Amerindian peoples who inhabit the High Sierra regions of Ecuador. He will also study Catholic social services in Quito. The Scholarship Fund has been established to provide opportunities for ministers and ministerial candidates to engage in meaningful ways in a developing country for academic, interfaith, or social justice purposes.

Ministers and candidates who are interested in broadening their liberal religious knowledge and understanding, and in strengthening their international sympathies, by immersing themselves in or studying in a developing country are encouraged to apply.

Grant Guidelines: 1) Grants will be made to individuals who are Unitarian Universalist ministers serving in a congregation or community setting or to candidates for ministerial fellowship. 2) Grants will be made to individuals so that they may have meaningful exposure to developing countries. The goal is to inform their ministry with an understanding of the nature and consequences of poverty and of the economic differential between nations and regions of the world. 3) Developing countries shall be defined as those falling in the lower 50 percent of the nations of the world economically, as determined by the *United Nations Human Development Report* or other such indices. 4) Grants of at least \$1,000 will be made for projects of an academic, interfaith, or social justice nature. For more information or to receive an application, please be in touch our office. ●

In faith,
Jory Agate and Margaret Montore

Worship & Music Resources—Erik Walker Wikstrom, ewikstrom@uua.org

Las voces del camino

All of us who were eagerly awaiting the publication of *Las voces del camino* were seriously disappointed when we learned that there are some significant problems with the book (primarily with the Spanish translations) and that it needed to be taken off the market. Yet there has not been any formal communication from the UUA about the state of this important project since President Morales' email in August and that has, unfortunately, left many people with questions.

First and foremost, perhaps, is, "How did this happen?" Well, how does any tragedy occur? Usually a number of small steps build into larger ones, and over the course of the several years that *Las voces* was in development there were numerous opportunities for problems to slip in through the cracks. And they did. One of the first responses of the UUA staff was to recreate the chronology of events. We want to learn from the mistakes of the past so that they would not be repeated on this—or any other—project. We truly believe that we have and are doing so.

Then, of course, the question is, "What's next?" The current edition of *Las voces* has been taken off the market and we are doing a thorough review, yet it can be said that there are mistakes of one kind or another throughout. If you are wondering if there are some songs that you can use, unfortunately, for now please don't. Yet rest assured the UUA staff has every intention of producing a corrected edition by General Assembly 2010. This truly is a top priority, as President Morales said, our "commitment to becoming a multicultural faith remains unshaken." ●

—Erik Walker Wikstrom,
Worship and Music Resources Director.

Office of Church Staff Finances/UU Health Plan Office—Richard Nugent, rnugent@uua.org, Joyce Stewart (Retirement Plan), jstewart@uua.org, Jim Sargent (Health Plan), jsargent@uua.org, Liz Oliver (Group Insurance), loliver@uua.org, and Linda Rose (Group Insurance), lrose@uua.org

Don't Be a Stranger

The Office of Church Staff Finances (OCSF) is a resource for administrators, ministers, musicians, religious educators, retirees and spouses, and other congregational staff to help them do their jobs better. OCSF manages the Health, Retirement, and Group Insurance programs and oversees many of the aid funds providing financial assistance to ministers, surviving spouses/partners, and other church staff. We also shepherd development of the *Salary Guidelines* and coordinate the

District Compensation Consultants program. Even more varied, some would say vexing, are taxation issues (housing, stipends, professional expenses, and so on) and other compensation questions posited from religious professionals and congregational leaders. ●

Financial Aid Funds (Ministers and Other Religious Professionals)

Do you have an extra-ordinary expense that is straining your budget? Do you know a colleague, particularly a retired colleague, who is struggling to make ends meet in these difficult economic times? If so, please know that our office administers various trust funds that provide emergency, rather than ongoing, assistance to ministers, retirees, surviving spouses/partners, and other religious professionals. While funds for nonordained clergy are limited, given the stipulations imposed by nineteenth century trust funds, we will strive to be helpful to everyone who is experiencing financial challenges.

In response to the ongoing recession, Reverend Bill Sinkford, then UUA President, authorized the release of additional aid funds, beyond the amounts regularly available, to better meet the pressing needs of our religious professionals. While the criteria we use to determine eligibility for aid funds remains unchanged, we'll have more funds to assist more individuals—particularly retirees and their survivors. We also work closely with the Society for Ministerial Relief and the Massachusetts Congregational Charitable Society who are able to provide ongoing financial stipends to individuals with extremely limited retirement funds. In coordination with the Unitarian Service Pension Society, our office manages the service gratuity program that provides quarterly checks to ministers (and their survivors), aged 66 or older, with 20 or more years of service. So if you, or friend, mentor, mentee, or fellow staff member is facing an unexpected bill, large out-of-pocket medical expenses, or some other financial need, please let me know. I can be reached at rnugent@uua.org or (617) 948-6456. ●

Long-Term Disability Insurance Is for All Staff Not Just Ministers

Sadly, every year several congregations are faced with an employee becoming disabled due to a health problem or accident. Invariably, some of these employees were not enrolled in the UUA Long-Term Disability program which provides 60 percent of pre-disability salary following 90 days if our insurance provider, MetLife, confirms disability. During the past year, we learned of several ministers, a music director, and several other staff who had to resign due to a health condition who did not have LTD insurance. In these circumstances, congregations are faced with extraordinarily difficult decisions particularly with long-tenured employees. To enroll or obtain information, contact Linda Rose at lrose@uua.org or (617) 948-4265. ●

UU Organizations Retirement Plan

The Compensation, Benefits, and Pension Committee (CBPC), staffed by Richard Nugent and Joyce Stewart, continue evaluating the comprehensive proposals to administer our retirement plan submitted by Fidelity, our current recordkeeper, and TIAA-CREF. During June and July, a survey of plan participants was coordinated by the Office of Church Staff Finances. Currently, the responses of 535 plan participants are being analyzed. Also, an independent consultant, Angell Pension Group, was retained to analyze the two proposals and advise the CBPC. In early fall, an independent investment advisor will be retained to assist the CBPC in identifying the best possible funds (balancing fees with performance) to offer participants whether we stay with Fidelity or shift to TIAA-CREF. Next, the CBPC will meet with each company and receive their “best and final” proposals. A recommendation by the CBPC to the UUA Board is expected in January, 2010. The UUA Board is expected to make the recordkeeper selection in April, 2010. If a change is made, it will likely not occur before January, 2011, and only after extensive planning and notice to all participants to ensure a smooth transition. Meanwhile, if you haven't re-evaluated your retirement plan allocation decisions recently, we encourage you to do so. Contact Joyce Stewart at jstewart@uua.org or (617) 948-6421 for any retirement plan-related questions. ●

Health Plan Continues to Provide Excellent Benefits

More than 700 employees of UU congregations, districts, UUA national staff, and other related organizations depend upon the UUA Health Plan for their health insurance. It is a self-insured plan, which means that it can be run

consistent with UU Principles. If you are not currently enrolled, there will be another Open Enrollment period in November. If you have any questions, you can reach Health Plan Director Jim Sargent at jsargent@uua.org or (617) 948-6405 or Health Plan Coordinator Liz Oliver at loliver@uua.org or (617) 948-6401. ●

On a Personal Note

After 13 months serving as the “Acting Director” of the Office of Church Staff Finances, I’m delighted to share the news that “Acting” has been dropped from my title. It has been great serving our faith in this capacity, collaborating with others in the Ministry and Professional Leadership Staff team, particularly Beth Miller, and working closely with my immediate staff (Joyce Stewart, Jim Sargent, Liz Oliver, and Linda Rose). I’ve learned a lot during the past year, and look forward to many more years of service. ●

—Richard Nugent, Director of the Office of Church Staff Finances

Resources & Possibilities

From the Chair of the Ministerial Fellowship Committee

As I write this our September meeting is still ahead of us. Please note changes in our meeting locations and our membership: To save cost our March meeting will be March 18 to March 21, 2010 in Boston, rather than in Chicago. We will welcome this year two new representatives from the UUA Board: At-Large Trustee Jose Ballester, and St. Lawrence District Trustee David Friedman. We are deeply grateful for the service of retiring Trustee members Jackie Shanti and Burton Carley.

In my column, I wanted to reflect on what the MFC members see in an area of our work that doesn’t get as much attention as the decisions we make about admitting candidates to preliminary fellowship, i.e., the review of renewals of preliminary fellowship. To achieve final fellowship, each minister is asked to submit evaluations from self, Board or Supervisor, and a Committee on Ministry for three different years of service comprising at least half-time ministry. These renewal evaluations present the new minister opportunities for engaging at some depth with those who have been trusted with the ministerial role. At their best, the renewals we read can be thoughtful and moving documents displaying the evolution of a minister’s self-understanding and a growing appreciation on the part of those who receive ministry of the importance of this role in their lives. At their worst, the renewals we read are perfunctory and shallow, squandering the opportunity they present out of fear, confusion, or laziness. Happily, I can report to you that more and more renewals lean toward the best and not the worst.

In the years since I started my first term of service on the MFC in 2001, the Committee and the staff have significantly improved the documents that guide the renewals, and our own process for giving them the attention they deserve. The month of September is our most intense month for reading renewals because so many ministers complete them at the end of a church year of service. Because each renewal requires at least two different readers to reach a consensus on the response, each member of the MFC has to read between six and sixteen renewals prior to each meeting. What can cause a renewal to be rejected for inclusion as one of the three required for final fellowship? Evidence that the effort put in by the minister or the lay leaders involved has been minimal; evidence that there is a disconnect between the minister’s self-evaluation and the lay leaders evaluation resulting in conflict; evidence that causes us to question whether to baseline competence we saw at the time of awarding preliminary fellowship is truly present; or an inadequate professional development plan without careful thought about the ongoing education that is so important in the early years of ministerial formation can cause rejections.

One use of the renewal process that I have not seen many ministers avail of since we started awarding preliminary fellowship without regard to specialty is ministers undertaking continuing education and evaluation in more than one specialty of ministry over the course of a career. Perhaps there is not enough incentive in the marketplace to encourage ministers to formally pursue and receive recognition in more than one specialty. The additional credentials that many ministers seek after final fellowship continue to be the traditional degrees (usually the D. Min.) and accreditations (usually for chaplaincy or spiritual direction). Ministers who find themselves starting a career in a parish-based role and moving into a community-based role are not seeing their new focus of employment as an opportunity to undertake the demands of evaluation associated with a new round of renewals. I can understand the reluctance to submit yourself to the process another time, but at the same time I wonder how many ministers appreciate that the opportunity is available to them and the value that it can hold.

The Committee members and I personally would welcome your questions and conversation about the preliminary fellowship renewal process, whether you are a minister or a lay leader who participates in it. It is a vital part of

ministerial formation, in its initial years and potentially later in the career, and we are proud of the importance that we place upon it. ●

—Wayne Arnason

Liberal Religious Educators Association (LREDA)

The center of our work as religious educators is belief in the transformative power of educating through our Unitarian Universalist faith.

At our February, 2009 Board gathering, we determined three focus areas going forward. The first is attention to our internal structures, including image and communication. We are delighted to announce the launch of our new logo and website at ireda.org, complete with membership log in, directory, and online registration for membership and events! Members and non-members alike are encouraged to visit and see how LREDA can help you!

Our second area of focus is Chapter support and leadership development. We are working internally to gather our Chapter leaders for support and education, *and* we are meeting with members of our collegial organizations, District staff, and UUA leadership to consider how to support the areas of overlap that will best serve our common endeavors.

The third focus area is an increase of commitment and support to our Credentialing body (the Religious Education Credentialing Committee) and to the development of professional collegial relationships that will enhance our abilities to serve our congregations with healthy leadership teams. We hope you have all seen and shared our invitation to ministers, musicians, and administrators to join us at Fall Conference in Providence at the end of October. We have provided a one-day Saturday option specifically aimed at encouraging our colleagues to join us for A Time to Exhale! (see ireda.org for details). ●

—In our common commitment to the learning faith, Anne Bancroft, LREDA President

News from the UU Musicians Network (UUMN)

Does your congregation have a new music leader? Would your musician benefit from interaction with colleagues? UU musicians frequently work in isolation for years before finding a network of professionals who can support, nurture, and inspire their congregational work. New musicians are warmly welcomed into the UUMN and are immediately connected with peers who understand the particular requirements of Unitarian Universalist music and worship life. If your musician is not a part of the UUMN, you may be the only person in their community who knows about the services provided by this association. Please refer them to uumn.org and the Network.

At the same time, the UUMN is seeking musicians with outstanding vision and organizational skills to become part of its leadership. You, as the district officer, the administrator, the religious educator, the ministerial student, or the parish minister may know of a musician who is ready to contribute energy to lift up our continental network of musicians in a leadership role. I welcome your recommendations for potential UUMN board members, program directors, General Assembly musicians, and district liaisons to be sent to me at keitharnold@jeffersonunitarian.org. ●

—Keith Arnold, President

Association of UU Administrators (AUUA) Announces Membership Drive!

The AUUA is kicking off its membership drive by announcing that paid, professional, lay congregational administrators can join the AUUA for just \$40, regardless of church size!

The AUUA Board realizes that in these challenging economic times, many congregations have had to “tighten their belts,” which usually impacts the professional expense line for ministers, religious educators, musicians, and administrators.

The AUUA offers peer support, invaluable information, and continuing education through the AUUA listserve (Church-admin-UU), our website (www.auua.org), district/cluster meetings, and Professional Day at General Assembly.

Soon we will be unveiling our new “members only” section on the AUUA website, which will offer a collection of documents, forms, and other resources for church administrators.

As part of this membership drive, the AUUA list serve (Church-admin-UU) will be closed to nonmembers on January 1, 2010.

We are asking all UU congregations to encourage their administrators to join *their* professional organization, just as other church staff belongs and participates in the UUMA, LREDA, and the UUMN.

For questions or more information, please contact Chuck Rosene, AUUA President, at crozene@uua.org, or Mary Ellen Morgan, Membership Coordinator, at businessadmin@uucb.org.

Membership applications may be found on the AUUA website at www.auua.org. ●

—Chuck Rosene, President

UURMaPA News

The UU Retired Ministers and Partners Association (UURMaPA) is a group that includes all retired ministers, partners, and surviving partners across the continent. Our membership is over 850.

We are currently focusing our efforts in several major areas:

- We are beginning to develop *A Helpful Guide for Retired Ministers and Partners*. This handbook will offer ideas, insights, and useful information for those who are approaching retirement, as well as for those of us who are already at various points on this rewarding part of life's journey.
- We are working on developing local gatherings (where this is geographically feasible) for our UURMaPA members through our Caring Network. These get-togethers may be for a meal, an afternoon program or trip, or a one-day retreat. Our hope is to provide connections for our retired ministers, partners, and surviving partners.
- We will continue to try to be as aware as possible of our members facing particular financial difficulties given the current economic challenges. From a survey of our membership, which we conducted this past spring, we know that there are many retired colleagues who are feeling the impact fairly significantly. We are very appreciative of the help and support offered by the Ministerial and Professional Leadership Staff Group. We are also appreciative of help and support offered by colleagues in local UU congregations.

For more information about UURMaPA, we invite you to visit our website at www.uurmapa.org. ●

New Resources for Congregational Stewardship & Giving

"Giving & Generosity Set" includes:

Wright, Lauren Tyler, *Giving—the Sacred Art*

Sweetser, Terry & Milnor, Susan, *The Abundance of Our Faith*

Clark, Wayne, *Beyond Fundraising: A Complete Guide to Congregational Stewardship*

Get all three books—a \$52.00 value—for only \$45.00. Order UUA Book store item #7425, available at www.uuabookstore.org/productdetails.cfm?SKU=7425.

Useful Website Links:

<http://www.uua.org/giving>

<http://www.uua.org/cde/fundraising/>

www.uua.org/spirituallife/worshipweb/ (search keyword: stewardship) ●

From Lifespan Faith Development

New Adult and Children's Tapestry of Faith Programs

Lifespan Faith Development is pleased to announce the online publication of four new Tapestry of Faith curricula. Explore all Tapestry of Faith programs and resources online at uua.org/tapestryoffaith.

Harvest the Power: Developing Lay Leadership: Harvest the Power offers 12, two-hour workshops to build stronger Boards, committees and lay leadership teams. The workshops may be used in sequence, singly, or in any number of combinations for a leadership retreat, training, or orientation. Written by Rev. Dr. Matt Tittle, Gail Tittle, and Gail Forsyth-Vail, the program develops the capacities of both experienced and new leaders and helps individuals integrate leadership service with their personal UU faith journey.

Riddle and Mystery: UU Responses to Big Questions (sixth grade; 16 sessions; by Richard S. Kimball) lifts up big questions we all voice, for example, "What is the purpose of my life?" and "What happens after we die?" Participants learn that while UUs may hold different theological beliefs, we agree on many of the answers, and our shared faith supports each and all of us in our search for meaning. Engaging, relevant activities include scripted dramas and reflective What I Think (WIT) Time.

Windows and Mirrors (fourth/fifth grades; 16 sessions, by Gabrielle Farrell, Natalie Fenimore, and Dr. Jenice View), a social justice program, develops children's ability to acknowledge their own experiences and perspectives and to seek out, care about, and respect those of others. Children create their own Window/Mirror Panels, responding to topics such as faith heritage, public service, anti-racism, forgiveness, and prayer.

Faithful Journeys (second/third grades; 16 sessions, by Rev. Alice Anacheke-Nasemann and Rev. Lynn Ungar) teaches who UUs are, what we believe, and how we make decisions and act on our faith. Stories about Christopher Reeve, Sophia Lyon Fahs, Ethelred Brown and others from our faith heritage help participants develop their own capacity for faith in action.

To learn about field-testing new Tapestry of Faith programs, contact fieldtest@uua.org or Alicia LeBlanc at (617) 948-4371. ●

From the UUA Office of Accessibility Concerns

Resources Available:

For people who don't hear well, borrow assistive listening equipment:

- For your sanctuary—borrow an FM transmitter, receivers, earphones, ear buds, ear speakers, neck loops
- For smaller groups, such as board meetings and RE classes—borrow a small portable FM transmitter, receivers, and so forth, and table-top microphones
- For personal one-to-one conversation—borrow a PockeTalker for comfortable conversations with people who have hearing loss.

For people who can't enjoy ordinary printed materials, request:

- Subscription to the *UU World* magazine on 4-track or regular audio-cassettes
- All lyrics and readings from both hymnals in Microsoft Word (can be enlarged to any size font)
- All UUA pamphlets in Microsoft Word (electronic files that can be converted to any size font)
- Some of our foundational UUA books in Microsoft Word: "Welcome"; "UU Pocket Guide"; other Skinner House books

Contact access@uua.org for more information. Also, people interested in accessibility and disability rights are invited to join Equal Access. Visit the website: www.equalaccess.org and please pass the word along to people who might be interested. ●

News from the UUA Office of Advocacy and Witness

UUA Justice Priorities for 2009–2010

We can accomplish so much more by working together than we can on our own. "Partnership, partnership, partnership" is a mantra for UUA justice staff, and we invite you to join us in whatever ways make sense for your congregation. Specifically, we encourage you to link your social justice projects to the collective organizing efforts of the UUA Washington Office for Advocacy, Standing on the Side of Love Campaign, UU state advocacy networks, and other UU congregations. The UUA Justice Priorities for 2009–2010 include:

- Comprehensive immigration reform;
- Economic justice with a focus on living wage;
- Environmental justice;
- Equal rights for bisexual, gay, lesbian and transgender people; and
- Reproductive justice with a focus on sexuality education.

If you're working on one or more of these issues, we want to hear from you. What are you doing? How can we help? Are you willing to partner with us? Drop us a line at socialjustice@uua.org. Please visit uua.org/socialjustice to learn more about UUA priorities, campaigns, and social justice resources. Let's work together! ●



The Religious Leader

NEWS FROM THE UUA MINISTRY & PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP STAFF GROUP

MPL STAFF GROUP CONTACT INFORMATION CAN BE FOUND AT: UUA.ORG/ABOUTUS/PROFESSIONALSTAFF/MINISTRYPROFESSIONAL/INDEX.PHP

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