



The Religious Leader

NEWS FROM THE MINISTRY AND PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP STAFF GROUP • FALL 2008

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From the Director

Autumn feels like a new beginning, or at least a shift in energy, whether you work through the summer or not. I spent a week at Star Island and another at Cape Cod, but mostly I was in my office working under the assumption that the summer slow down would allow me to clean off my desk and catch up on the more mundane aspects of my job. That didn't happen. Most of my piles are still piled. The "to be filed" is still "to be." I'm not complaining. I'll take any excuse to avoid those kinds of tasks anyway. And while we were busy all summer, autumn still feels like a new beginning as so many of you and your congregations shift your energy and become more engaged again. It is good to feel your presence more closely in our work again.

With very much gratitude to the Panel on Theological Education and to the UU Congregation at Shelter Rock in Manhasset, NY for their generous grant to the Panel, I want to update you on two projects MPL is working on.

- **Dreaming Big**, the study group to help prepare twenty ministers for service in large congregations, was announced last spring when ministers were invited into a very rigorous application process. Although most of the sixty-eight applicants were well qualified, the twenty chosen participants are: Kathryn Bert, Howard Dana, Nathan Detering, Gail Geisenhainer, Susan Frederick-Gray, Matthew Johnson-Doyle, Daniel Kanter, Kathy Huff, Elizabeth Lerner, Suzelle Lynch, Rosemary Bray

McNatt, Aaron McEmerys, Kathleen McTigue, Allison Miller, John Gibb Millsbaugh, Sarah Gibb Millsbaugh, Manish Mishra, Shawn Newton, Joshua Snyder, and Vanessa Southern. MPL and our Senior Ministers of Large UU Congregations (SMOLUUC) partners have worked on curriculum and organizational details this summer. We know that there are many more potentially excellent large church ministers in our congregations and seminaries. We are creating the model and program as we go and hope to eventually offer accessible resources and similar programs for a variety of ministries as this evolves.

- **Nurturing Excellence in Transformational Ministry** is the other program funded by the UU Congregation at Shelter Rock through the Panel. This is an "in-care" formation program for seminararians in non-UU schools developed by the Mountain Desert District (MDD) with the small Panel grant they received last year. The larger amount will fund MDD implementation and help MPL and districts and congregational partners to replicate similar programs for seminararians in non-UU schools in several other districts. Again, we are creating as we go and hope to expand to provide robust in-care programs for all seminararians.

The Excellence in Ministry Summit sponsored by the Panel will

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take place in Seattle, December 10–12. Sixty representatives from all the essential stakeholder groups have been invited to engage in this topic under the facilitative leadership of Rev. Susan Beaumont, Senior Consultant at the Alban Institute. Look for news from the Summit on the Panel's website early in the new year.

The Community Ministry Survey Results can be found on the MPL section of the UUA website at uua.org/leaders/leaderslibrary/communityministry/index.shtml. Robin Tanner, our ministerial intern working on this project, will be following up on some of the information gleaned from the survey and contacting many of you directly to get your stories. My goal is to provide appropriate support for community ministers and the congregations, parish ministers, and other church staff members with whom they affiliate. This is the year we will make the strongest case possible for the resources to make it happen, so please do all you can to help Robin.

The Tennessee Valley and Westside UU Congregations have been in the hearts and on the minds of so many of us following the tragic and very troubling shooting there on July 27. We continue to support the members, ministers, and staffs as they go through the long and chaotic process of grieving and healing. I am grateful to our UU Trauma Response Ministry (UUTRM) for their excellent work in the wake of that tragedy. UUTRM members deployed

to Knoxville included: Karen Reagle, Julie Taylor, Rosemary Bray McNatt, Susan Suchocki-Brown, Lisa Presley, Aaron Payson, Craig Hirshberg, Laurel Cassidy, Margie Allen, Kelly Murphy Mason, and Flo Gelo. These people and the rest of UUTRM volunteer their time to take training and go into whatever kinds of crisis situations they are called to on behalf of all of us. It is no wonder that they received the Outstanding Service Volunteer Award two years ago at GA. Many District staff and other ministers in the area responded with support and help as well. I wish we lived in a world where such horrible things couldn't happen to folks worshipping together in a sacred place on a Sunday morning, but when they do, it is good to know the support of our larger religious community will be there for us.

Please welcome new MPL staff members Rev. Richard Nugent, Acting Director of Church Staff Finances, Rev. Erik Walker Wikstrom, Worship and Music Resources Director, and Assistant to the MPL, Marion Bell, replacing ALLyn Ettien who received her Master's Degree in Library Science and landed a great library job at Boston University Medical Library. One of the great parts of my job is working with all of the wonderful folks in MPL and these three simply add to the joy. I hope you will get to know all of the MPL staff and appreciate them as much as I do. ●

—Beth Miller, Director of MPL

Ministerial Credentialing/Internship Clearinghouse—David Pettee, Christine May, Mohammed El-Khatib, Kim Wilson

Ministerial Credentialing Report

The refulgent summer of New England quickly ends when the day after Labor Day rolls around. I'm hoping that summer for many of you was both relaxing and refreshing, as it was for me. Occasionally, I get asked if there are any new developments regarding my efforts to make meaning of my family's involvement in the

transatlantic slave trade. In June and in August, I joined with others at a Coming to the Table gathering hosted by Eastern Mennonite University (www.emu.edu/cjp/comingtothetable/). This justice-making initiative brings people together with a family history similar to mine, along with descendants of enslaved Africans

to have honest dialogue and create a new legacy out of the shared history of slavery. It is powerful and hopeful work.

Last January, the UUA Board approved a comprehensive overhaul of the Ministerial Fellowship Committee (MFC) rules. Then, in April, the Committee followed by updating the language of the MFC policies. Finally, in June at General Assembly, delegates had the opportunity to vote to approve proposed language changes to the MFC rules and policies. The Ministerial Credentialing Office spent the rest of the summer significantly updating our materials to incorporate all these changes. The *Initial Inquiry Materials*, the *RSCC Revised Edition*, and *RSCC Revised Edition Appendix* were conflated into one document titled *Requirements for Ministerial Fellowship with the Unitarian Universalist Association*. Further, the *Economic Realities of the Unitarian Universalist Ministry: An Introduction for Aspirants* was also updated. Both documents are available online at uua.org/leaders/leaderslibrary/ministerialcredentialing/index.shtml.

One of the more perplexing aspects of working with candidates who desire to interview with the Ministerial Fellowship Committee is the ongoing challenge of making sure that all the available interview slots get filled for the September, December, and March/April MFC meetings. Over the last five years, there has not been one MFC meeting where all 24 interview slots were filled. In December 2007, despite our efforts to have a complete roster, the MFC interviewed only 17 candidates even after the Ministerial Credentialing Office contacted every person on the waiting list.

Consequently, the MFC decided that for the September 2008, December 2008, and March/April 2009 MFC meetings, they will only interview 20 candidates per meeting. The Committee will reassess how this change has been working in the

spring. The implication of this change means candidates need to plan more carefully when they want to see the MFC. We now encourage to request an MFC interview at least a year in advance. Candidates are eligible to request an interview when three things are in place: candidate status has been granted by an RSCC; either a CPE unit or an internship has been completed and all the evaluations have been sent to the Ministerial Credentialing Office; and the candidate has received congregational sponsorship, and we have this confirmation. If you are uncertain about what we do have, please give Chris May a call or send her an email.

A common concern noted by candidates as they think about scheduling an MFC interview involves the effect of interview timing upon getting cleared to enter into the search process. In the Pre-GA 2007 issue of *The Religious Leader*, this process was detailed at uua.org/documents/mp1/070501_religiousleader.pdf. Candidates should know that the September MFC meeting each year is the most highly prized for those hoping to enter the search process. A good outcome makes the timing of entering search less pressured. However, a December MFC interview will not set a candidate back in the search process as long as they have completed their online ministerial record. To get a password to do this (and all candidates are welcome to begin working on their ministerial record), please contact the Transitions Office directly. Candidates who interview with the MFC in March/April will likely have little chance to secure a settlement through the search process that will commence the following September.

Finally, when I put this column together three times a year, I do so with hope that there is information in it that will be useful and valuable to aspirants and candidates. I would be happy to take suggestions for topics that might be of interest, so please don't hesitate to contact me

directly with ideas. And as always, the folks in the Ministerial Credentialing Office are happy to answer emails and/or take calls about any topic or concern related to the ministerial credentialing process! ●

In the faith,
David Pettee, Ministerial
Credentialing Director

Internship Clearinghouse News

First, a General Assembly (GA) follow up: the third annual Internship Gathering was well attended and, I'm told, much appreciated. A panel-style Internship Clearinghouse Committee (ICC) workshop focusing on Internship Committees featured committee chairs, former interns, and supervisors, who shared some great ideas for best practices and creative approaches for internship committee work.

This summer's project was to update and revise the *Internship Manual*. The result is a document that incorporates the MFC's latest rules and policies in a clear, concise,

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and organized format. Best of all, the new version is ten pages shorter, making for a much easier read. It can be downloaded from the Internship Clearinghouse (IC) web page. The manual will be updated annually from this point forward.

Two new policies for this internship cycle have been implemented smoothly. They are: mandatory UUMA membership for all UU supervisors and an internship length of nine months full-time (formerly six months) or 18 months part-time.

There are currently about 60 interns who have been in touch with me. That number is expected to rise as a few stragglers make contact over the next couple of

months. If you are one of those (nudge, nudge), do let me know who and where you are! A reminder: Ministerial Fellowship Committee policies require that all interns submit a Learning/Service Agreement (LSA) to me for review within the first two months of the internship. Interns submitting LSAs that meet all MFC requirements will receive an email or letter of approval. A copy of your LSA will go into your file in the Ministerial Credentialing Office.

If you serve a congregation that would like to become an internship site, I encourage you to consider applying for a UUA Internship Stipend Matching Grant! The application form is now available on

the Internship Clearinghouse web page at uua.org/leaders/leaders_library/ministerialcredentialing/internships/index.shtml. The deadline for submission (for internships beginning in the fall of 2009) is November 1.

I know the internship process can be challenging 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
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kwilson@uua.org; (203) 484-5081
(voice and fax); mailing address: 766
Totoket Rd., Northford, CT 06472

Religious Education and Music Leader Credentialing & Renaissance Programs—Beth Williams, Paula Welling

What's New in the Religious Education Credentialing Program

Many congratulations to Aisha Hauser who was awarded Credentialed Religious Educator—Associate Level on May 29, 2008.

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:

Ann Harrison, TJ Sadie Kahn-Greene, MB
Sonja Lamicela, SL Leah Purcell, SL

Religious Education Credentialing Committee (RECC) News

The RECC has been in conversation with the Liberal Religious Educators Association (LREDA) Committee on Mentoring to clarify and enhance the role played by a candidate's mentor as they work through the credentialing program requirements and prepare for presentation of the portfolio and, in the case of credentialed and master's level candidates, an interview with the committee.

The RECC, via the LREDA Committee on Mentoring, is encouraging mentors to challenge their mentees to apply to their own professional practice what is learned through reading, workshops, courses, and other structured learning opportunities. Mentees are invited to

expect and welcome this challenge to grow as professional religious educators.

The LREDA Committee on Mentoring and the RECC presented a workshop at LREDA professional days in June designed to help both candidates and mentors strengthen the quality of the mentoring relationship. Additions have been made to the training workshop for new mentors that will help them to effectively challenge their mentees to apply both practical skill and theoretical knowledge to problems and situations encountered in the course of professional practice. Mentors will also be prepared to offer guidance to a candidate that helps the candidate to effectively demonstrate how he or she has used the acquired skill and knowledge in the course of her or his work in religious education. As part of the effort to strengthen the mentoring aspect of the credentialing program, previously trained mentors have been invited to participate in part of this year's mentor training in Albuquerque, NM, just ahead of the LREDA Fall Conference.

LREDA plays a vital role in supporting the Religious Education Credentialing Program through identifying, training, and supporting religious educators willing to serve as professional mentors for individuals in the program. Regular conversations between the RECC and the LREDA Committee on Mentoring have been helpful as we work together toward the goal of increasing the professional skill of religious educators that they might better serve our congregations. The RECC members are grateful for the vital contribution the LREDA Committee on Mentoring and the mentors themselves make to this important work. ●

Gail Forsyth-Vail, chair, Religious Education
Credentialing Committee

Renaissance Program News

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

Oct. 31–Nov. 2, Teacher Development, Angelus Oaks, CA, Mary Nelson, pswd@aol.com

Nov. 14–16, Worship for All Ages, Glen Rose, TX, Jennifer Nichols-Payne, jnichols@uua.org

Dec. 5–6, Teacher Development, Woodstock, CT, Deborah Levering, dlevering@uua.org

Feb. 20–22, Multicultural, Cleveland, OH, Kathy Strawser, kstrawser@wsuuc.org

March 5–7, Curriculum, Angola, IN, Amy Peterson Derrick, pestro2001@hotmail.com

March 6–8, Worship, Rancho Palos Verdes, CA, Tera Little, teral@att.net

March 24–26, Curriculum, Syracuse, NY, Jan Hutslar, janhutslar@yahoo.com

April 2–4, UU History, Fort Collins, CO, Alice Springer, dre-uucsf@qwestoffice.net

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

Kris Beliakoff, TJ	Sandy Cooper, CUC
Kathy Cronin, BC	Kathleen Dyer, CUC
Caroline Farley, CUC	Linda Haumann, PC
Meagan Henry, JP	Janice Marie Johnson, MNY
Diane Melvin, Heartland	Caroline Parry, CUC
Katie Sadler, MS	Aubree Smith, PC
Halcyon Westall, BC	Catherine Williamson, JP

Renaissance Module Leader-in-Training process:

Have you ever been so inspired by a Renaissance Module leader that you have wondered how you might serve in that role? If you would like to be on the leaders' list for a module that you have already taken, we invite you to apply for participation in our Renaissance Module Leader-in-Training process. The process includes two rounds of successful evaluation as an assistant module leader. For more information about the process and how to apply, please contact Paula Welling at pwelling@uua.org or (617) 948-6418.

Scholarship Assistance: A reminder that modest amounts of financial aid are available 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, Religious

Education Credentialing Assistant, at recassistant@uua.org or (617) 948-6418. ●

Music Leadership Credentialing

As the Unitarian Universalist Musicians Network (UUMN) Certification program enters the third year of operation of credentialing for music leaders, and completes another UUMN conference with cutting edge credentialing courses and other professional development opportunities, we welcome the following new candidates to the program:

Gail Carey—Melrose Unitarian Universalist Church, Melrose, MA

Annie Haymaker—Unitarian Universalist Community of the Mountains, Grass Valley, CA

John Herrick—Unitarian Universalist Church of Charlotte, NC

Mary Neumann—Melrose Unitarian Universalist Church, Melrose, MA

We encourage those of you who are interested in becoming a candidate for this credentialing program to write for an application form from Paula Welling, Music Leader Credentialing Assistant, at pwelling@uua.org. A candidate must be a member of UUMN as well as a professional musician in a congregation he or she 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 as music leaders in our Unitarian Universalist congregations.

The tuition for each candidate is \$350 per year, in addition to the UUMN conference fees and other applicable workshop fees outside of the UUMN conferences. It is our expectation that your congregation, understanding the significance of this accreditation program, will affirm your participation in the accreditation 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, Music Leader Credentialing Director at bethwilliams@uua.org or Paula Welling, Music Leader Credentialing assistant, at pwelling@uua.org. ●

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

Search Season Coming

Colleagues considering search this year should be aware that congregations are being encouraged to post their Congregational Record no later than October 31, and to request access to the Records of interested ministers no later than November 30. Now is the time to familiarize yourself with the 2008 edition of the *Settlement Handbook*, to compose your MR, and to get your packet in order! ●

The Year in Ministerial Settlement

The 2007–2008 search year produced 48 ministerial settlements—down fifteen from the previous year and down seven from the annual average of the preceding five years. Twenty-nine women and nineteen men were called to positions new to them, whether their first or fifth. Their median age was 49—four years older than the ministers coming into new positions in the early 90s. The average length of tenure of the ministers departing those positions was 8.7 years, and the median tenure six years.

The financial terms of the new settlements will be reported upon in our next report. An early accounting suggests that compensation in these ministries is quite strong. On the other hand, the comparatively small number of calls suggests that the deteriorated national economic scene has led to conservative behavior—many colleagues hunkering down.

One hundred interim and consulting ministries are in being this year, ten more than the last five years' average. Filling all the congregational applications has become an annual struggle.

Over the past several years positions in ministry have come open by virtue of (voluntary) resignation (55 percent), pressured termination (22 percent), or retirement (20 percent) of the settled predecessor, with disability and death together amounting to 2–3 percent. ●

Reflection

The question of when to depart—to seek a new ministry or to retire—is experienced as a considerable challenge by most of us. It can be helpful to keep in mind that for the institution we serve, responding to a vacancy in a significant position offers an infrequent and precious opportunity for transformation. For this reason, I have let Beth Miller and the UUA know well ahead of time that I

will depart this Transitions Director position in mid-2010. My hope is that Beth, the Leadership Council, and the existing and new administrations will make use of the lead time to think creatively about what future staff configuration might best serve our congregations and our ministry.

My motives for departure boil down to two. One is that I have no doubt of my ability to continue to bring energy and initiative to my present work for the next couple of years. But even now, if the prospect ahead of me were one of unending labor, chained to the oar (“Alone, alone, all, all alone,/Alone on a wide wide sea!”), I believe I might sometimes get just the least bit tetchy. So I have created a measurably nearing horizon for myself.

My second essential motive for planning my retirement recalls James Luther Adams’ dual injunction: “to save the world and savor it.” I believe that the work I do, I do in service of a valuable, yes, even a salvific, cause. But I also believe that life is too sweet not to be savored intensely, without distraction. This summer, as I walked across New Hampshire, over its mountains and among its forests on the Appalachian Trail, I savored the contours of the land, the heft and the loft and the smell and shade of the differing forests, and the exertion that was called forth from me. I want more of it.

And to top it off, when I came out of the woods I found this:

But although it is indeed a finely tuned ecosystem, the maturing forest can run down with age as nutrients are gradually depleted, sequestered for decades, even centuries, in the woody tissues of old trees, or leached out of the soil and carried downstream to other environments. In this aging condition a forest may eventually succumb to widespread outbreaks of insects or to wildfires; and such a fate may be considered of benefit in the long run, for disturbance of this nature releases locked-up nutrients and returns the forest to the young and vigorous. (Peter J. Marchand, *North Woods: An Inside Look at the Nature of Forests in the Northeast*, Boston, Appalachian Mountain Club, 1987)

Moving on seems the natural thing to do. ●

—John Weston, Transitions Director

Ministerial Development—Jory Agate, Margaret Montore

Ministerial Development News

As a new church year begins, the Ministerial Development Office has restructured a number of its procedures.

Continuing Education Grants—If you would like to apply for a continuing education grant for this year, you will be asked to fill out a grant application form. Forms are available by email from our office. Be sure to apply early! We expect to run out of funds early this fiscal year.

Ministers in Preliminary Fellowship—All ministers in preliminary fellowship are being asked to fill out an annual registration form. This will enable our office to keep track of your current whereabouts and location of your ministry. Forms are available via email from our office.

Crafting a Culminating Chapter on Ministry—Join 40 UU ministers for a five-day retreat April 13–17 in Jacksonville, FL to discern how you would like to shape the final chapter of your professional ministerial career. This retreat is being led by UU minister and Alban consultant Larry Peers and staff from MPL. Cost is \$575. Contact our office for more information and a registration form.

Natalie Gulbrandsen Scholarship Fund for International Studies—Congratulations to Duane Fickeisen who was the first recipient of the Gulbrandsen scholarship. Duane will be participating in an interfaith, social justice mission trip to construct homes in the mountain village near Copan Ruinas, Honduras this winter. 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 that their ministry may be informed by 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 with our office. ●

In faith,
Jory Agate, Ministerial Development Director,
Margaret Montore, Ministerial Development Assistant

Worship and Music Resources—Erik Walker Wikstrom

Worship in Our Congregations

In its ongoing effort to provide real services to our congregations the Unitarian Universalist Association, with the help of a private donor, has created a new position within the Ministry and Professional Leadership group: Worship and Music Resources Director. And I couldn't be more excited to be the first WAMR.

In truth, though, this is not an entirely new position. In many ways it continues the work of the Worship Arts Clearing House and the Religious Arts Guild; it also builds on the vision of a department of worship arts that was proposed at the time of the merger. And yet, in some ways, it is entirely new—a staff position dedicated to discovering, developing, and disseminating resources that can help to deepen the quality of worship experienced in congregations.

One of my favorite readings in *Singing the Living Tradition* says of a congregation, “this house is the cradle of our dreams, the workshop of our common endeavor.” All too often, however, these workshops—these liturgical laboratories—work in isolation from one another. A local congregation may have no idea what even close neighbors are doing because the demands of attending to the worship needs of their own congregation week after week can make it hard to look too far beyond their walls. But imagine if our congregations could be better connected with others that are trying similar things, or are already doing things you long to try, or are doing things you've

never even imagined. Imagine being able to network with the lay and professional leaders in congregations that exemplify the best of our myriad approaches to worship, and with congregations that need precisely what you have to offer!

That's where my new position comes in. One of its purposes is to help facilitate such connections. So if one of the following is true for you, please be in touch with me (ewikstrom@uua.org):

- if you or someone you know is especially good at some aspect of worship—be it innovative or traditional;
- if you are (or have been) trying something creative;
- if you have resources to share;
- if you have identified resources that you need; or
- if you've done some deep thinking about the theory and practice of worship.

Perhaps your congregation has focused on developing intellectually stimulating sermons and emotionally moving music and you have something to share about that with congregations that are more “touchy-feely.” Or maybe you've found a place for dance in your services, or new kinds of music. Maybe you're doing something interesting with the visual arts, or your space, or perhaps your whole order of worship is atypical for our movement. Or perhaps your staff collaborates exceptionally well, or has developed a real system of planning worship in the context of a “liturgical year,” or integrates lay people deeply and authentically. One of the

functions of the Worship and Music Resources Director is to help take what you've gleaned from the work you're doing in your own local "workshop" and put it into the hands and sanctuaries of congregations that could benefit.

One form this will take will be a greatly expanded Worship Web. Beyond offering readings and sermons it will offer archived materials from the past as well as the most up-to-date resources on topics such as church architecture, dance, drama, intergenerational worship, the internet, lay worship, music, symbols, technology, podcasting, preaching, video, and the visual arts. This new Worship Web will not merely be a repository of what has been created; it can also be a laboratory for the creation of new resources. I imagine that we will explore using open-source internet technologies to collaboratively co-create new Unitarian Universalist worship, as well as possibly create new listserves to allow people involved with movement ministries, or the arts in worship, or the integration of video into services to communicate with

each other. Additionally, look for the creation of a regular electronic newsletter examining issues related to worship.

Another possible venture is the creation of "mentorships" through which ministers, music directors, and lay leaders with experience and expertise in particular areas of the worship arts can assist those just beginning to move into those areas. We're also looking to create several pilot projects in which my office—drawing on all of these resources—will support congregations that wish to make a serious and systematic effort to improve and deepen their weekly worship experiences.

More information about these and other initiatives will be forthcoming. The first step will be to begin amassing a database of resources. So please contact me at (617) 948-6428 and let's see where this experiment might lead! ●

Erik Walker Wikstrom,
Worship and Music Resources Director

Office of Church Staff Finances/UU Health Plan Office—Richard Nugent, Joyce Stewart, Tracy Withy-Browne, Jim Sargent, Kati MacDonald

By Faith Made Strong, the Rafters Will Withstand . . .

In *Singing the Living Tradition*, Hymn One is one of my favorites. It speaks to the hope that our community of faith and love will shelter us through the storms that inevitably will challenge us. Louis Untermeyer, who would later weather the unimaginable storms of the McCarthy era, wrote the lyrics in the aftermath of the First World War.

Whether providing quality health insurance, a financial safety-net through long-term disability insurance, retirement security through a well-managed pension plan, recommended salary ranges and benefit packages that recognize the professionalism of the individuals who serve our congregations, scholarship support for our children, emergency financial assistance in the form of grants and loans, or financial security to our loved ones, the Office of Church Staff Finances (OCSF) and the UUA Health Plan Office strive to be the hearth that keeps ministers, congregational staff, and loved ones warm when the world grows chill.

So I am honored to follow Ralph Mero as heading up the OCSF/Health Plan staff team. Ralph assembled an outstanding staff team—as anyone who has used the services of our office knows quite well. I know that I benefited greatly from their work and caring attention during my 11 years of interim ministry to seven congregations. If you have a question, but not sure where to direct it or if I can be of assistance to you in any way, please don't hesitate to contact me at (617) 948-6456 or rnugent@uua.org. ●

2009 Salary Recommendations

The Compensation, Benefits, and Pension Committee will vote on the 2009 Salary Recommendations at its meeting on October 2. Pending the Committee's approval, the new recommendations will be available on the UUA website at uua.org/leaders/leaderslibrary/compensation/index.shtml.

The 2009 salary recommendations are based largely on the results garnered from the salary survey that was distributed to all UU congregations in May 2008. The Compensation Committee also used as guidelines the salary data provided by the Economic Research Institute that was gathered from other comparable non-profit organizations.

Those congregations who participated in the salary survey will receive the results of the survey. Those congregations who did not participate in the survey may contact their District Compensation Consultant for more information.

The Geo Indices have been updated and will also be available at the same website. The Geo Indices have been revised based on the salary survey, advice from our District Compensation Consultants, and from the Economic Research Institute information. ●

Request for Proposal—UU Organizations Retirement Plan

The Compensation, Benefits, and Pension Committee has requested that a Request for Proposal (RFP) for the UU Organizations Retirement Plan be completed this fall. The

RFP has been sent to Fidelity, our current provider, and to two other eligible providers. The RFP is being completed because we have not done one for ten years, and it is time. It is important to know that the RFP does not necessarily represent any substantial dissatisfaction with the current provider. It is merely time to do this again.

By the time you read this, you should have received a brief electronic survey sent to all plan participants. It is critical that the RFP Committee has feedback from the plan participants as we make this important decision. If you have not received the survey, please contact Joyce Stewart at jstewart@uua.org or at (617) 948-6421. If you have received it, but have not responded, please do so right away.

The Committee expects to be able to make a decision on the retirement plan's service provider at the April 2009 meeting. If there were to be a change in providers, it appears at this point that the conversion would take place effective January 1, 2010. These dates are subject to change as we move through this complicated process. ●

UUA Health Plan Announces 2009 Open Enrollment

The UUA Health Plan is ready for the next Open Enrollment Period.

During the month of November, all eligible staff—everyone working 750 or more hours per year—will be able to join the plan effective January 1, 2009, even if they have not taken advantage of past enrollment opportunities.

Now is the time for congregations to take a close look at health insurance costs and policies regarding contributions to the cost of staff's health insurance and to join nearly 300 other congregations that look to the UUA Health Plan for their health insurance.

If you already participate in the UUA Health Plan, we want to thank you again for trusting us with this very important employee benefit. If you are maintaining the same plan choices, there is nothing more you need to do. If you have staff who want to switch plans, Open Enrollment is the time to do it. We will be sending 2009 plan and rating details to all subscribing employers with the November invoices.

The UUA Health Plan website is updated regularly—go to uua.org/leaders/healthplan for information. If you have any questions, you can call Health Plan Director Jim Sargent at (617) 948-6405 or jsargent@uua.org. We look forward to hearing from you. ●

Vision Benefits

A comprehensive annual vision exam is covered by the UUA

Health Plan. An eye exam is important for early detection of eye problems, certain diseases, and vision changes. To find an in-network provider, visit the Provider Directory at www.highmarkbcbs.com.

All Unitarian Universalist Group Insurance Plan (UUGIP) members with dental coverage, along with their dependents, are eligible for MetLife's Vision savings benefit. You can receive discounts on eye care services and products at national leading optical retail locations such as LensCrafters, Pearle Vision, Sears Optical, Target Optical, and JC Penney Optical. Simply call any of the participating providers to schedule an appointment and identify yourself as a VisionSavings Eyecare Program member when making an appointment. Present your identification number to verify participation at the time of service. Please visit www.eyemedvisioncare.com/metlife for information on discounts and services.

Additionally, UUA Health Plan members are entitled to a discount off products at participating retailers just by showing their member ID card. Ask the retailer for more information. For more information, contact Tracy Withy-Browne, Group Insurance Plan Administrator, at (617) 948-6401 or twithy@uua.org. ●

Resources & Possibilities

From the Chair of the Ministerial Fellowship Committee

The MFC has not met since the last deadline date for this publication. David Pettie's column in this issue updates you on the last steps taken at General Assembly to complete

the updating of the MFC's rules and the UUA bylaws that connect with those rules.

The focus of anxiety at General Assembly around these changes seemed to be around empowering the MFC to be able to conduct a Fellowship review of a minister on the grounds of "incompetence." Adding this reason for a Fellowship Review brought up similar concerns and questions that have always been

raised about the one previously defined reason for undertaking a review of fellowship: "conduct unbecoming a minister." Those similar questions include: How is this defined? How do you know it when you see it? Could the understandings change with changes in the MFC?

The answers to these good questions ultimately rest upon the trust that you place in the MFC

system, and the quality of the staff and volunteer appointees whose judgments are at the heart of the system. What is important to me about adding “incompetence” specifically as grounds for a Fellowship Review is that it reminds us once again that MFC’s primary mission is to be a credentialing body, and not a judicial body. We are here to recognize that a candidate for ministry or final fellowship has basic competency in the skills and knowledge of ministry. If a minister in final fellowship has done nothing unethical through his or her behavior (“conduct unbecoming a minister”), but demonstrates that she or he has fallen below the basic standards of competency that we require of all our ministers, then the MFC should be able to invite them in for a Fellowship Review. Some would argue that questions of competency have always fallen within the broad parameters of “conduct unbecoming a minister,” but I am pleased that this distinction between ethical violations and incompetence has now been made in our rules.

The Ministerial Fellowship Committee’s membership has undergone some changes since I last wrote to you. Rev. Geoff Rimositis of San Jose, CA and Justice Waidner of Tulsa, OK have each decided, because of the press of other commitments in their lives, to complete their service on the committee. At the March meeting, Rev. Jim Zacharias of Albuquerque, NM also completed his service, and so we’ve had three positions to fill. We are deeply indebted to the ways that each of these members have brought their unique experience and insights to our work.

The UUA Board made two appointments to the MFC at its June meeting:

Rev. Debra Haffner of Norwalk, CT and Rev. Greg Stewart of San Francisco, CA joined the committee for their first meeting in September 2008. Debra brings the perspectives of a unique community ministry serving in the field of sexual health.

Greg brings years of experience as a fellowshipped Minister of Religious Education (MRE) who has served in both MRE and parish roles in large- and mid-sized congregations.

The September meeting also appreciated the participation of Davalene Cooper of the Northeast RSCC, filling the third empty chair resulting from resignations. Our two liaisons to candidates for this meeting were Rev. Erica Baron and Rev. Darrick Jackson.

You’ll hear more about the September MFC meeting in the next issue. I appreciate your interest in the MFC and am honored to serve as its chair. •

Rev. Wayne Arnason

The Association of UU Administrators (AUUA) to Review Code of Ethics

At the spring 2008 meeting of the Professional Leadership Coordinating Council (PLCC), it was decided that the Code of Conduct for each Professional Group should be read by every PLCC member to determine where intersections exist and where there are gaps.

The AUUA Board of Directors then decided that one major project for the coming year would be a review of the AUUA Code of Ethics.

The AUUA invited Rev. Wayne Arnason (West Shore UU Church, Cleveland, OH) to address the AUUA Professional Day Banquet on professional organizations and ethics.

As the former Chair of the UUMA Guidelines Committee, and current Chair of the Ministerial Fellowship Committee, Wayne told us “. . . the evolving demands on ethical and professional standards for ministers has been very much on my mind, and encourages me to think I have something to offer you tonight.”

We are tremendously grateful for the wisdom and practical suggestions that Wayne then gave us

that evening, “grist for the mill” as we continue our evolution as a professional organization.

Wayne concluded, “So the work that lies ahead of you, insofar as you are able to take it up, will involve adding to the flesh and bones of this growing, maturing professional guild. It will involve deepening your understanding of the ethics of your calling, and that is one of the most important tasks that any professional organization could aspire to.”

Is Your Administrator Coming to GA 2009?

Please make sure that your administrator has adequate funding in his or her Professional Development budget to attend the AUUA Professional Day and General Assembly. I think we are all expecting a well attended General Assembly 2009—what an opportunity to learn, network, and revive the spirit! •

Onward and Upward,
Chuck Rosene, AUUA President,
crozene@uua.org

Youth Ministry Update

As you may know, this is an interim year for the Youth Ministries Office, a dynamic time in which staff continue to provide core youth ministry services while implementing recommendations of the two-year Consultation on Ministry to and with Youth. Important updates are available at uua.org/youth, a site that provides access to numerous resources and youth leadership opportunities, such as the upcoming deadline for General Assembly Youth Caucus Staff applications. It also includes a recent letter from President Sinkford about the transition from a YRUU continental Steering Committee to a Youth Ministry Working Group.

Finally, General Assembly 2008 passed the Youth and Young Adult Empowerment Resolution, which urged the UUA, its congregations, and district structures to:

- invite ministerial support to youth and young adults through inclusive worship and intentional presence;
- invest financial support in youth and young adult leadership bodies and programs when viable;
- provide support for youth and young adult staff and volunteers to receive suitable training and resources, including self-directed anti-racism and anti-oppression trainings; and
- attend to the needs of youth and young adult constituents with marginalized identities by providing resources and opportunities within the congregation and at the district and Association levels.

A related responsive resolution requests annual reporting from congregations, districts, and the UUA Administration on “their planning, implementation, results and recommendations on each of the four points.” The Office of Youth Ministries is happy to consult with you about ways your congregation can meet these goals. Feel free to contact us for assistance or with any questions at youth@uua.org or (617) 948-4350. ●

The Church of the Larger Fellowship (CLF)

The Church of the Larger Fellowship’s (CLF) online shop offers chalice pendants, UU-themed note cards, order of service covers for water services, winter holidays, celebrations, and more. Take a look at our UU merchandise at www.clfuu.org (click on “CLF Shop”). The CLF offers UU gifts for your new members, volunteers, your UU children and youth, and more. There is something in the shop for every age, every gender, and every occasion. Proceeds support CLF’s

work to bring Unitarian Universalism to isolated religious liberals throughout the world. Learn more about the CLF at www.clfuu.org. ●

DVD Available for 2008 Conference

A DVD of the 2008 Leading Congregations into a Multiracial, Multicultural Future—Now Is the Time Conference held in San José, CA in February 2008 is now available! Go to uua.org/leaders/leaderslibrary/araomc/index.shtml for more information and order your DVD today. ●

UU University Moves to the Center of General Assembly

GA in 2009 will offer a newly integrated UU University approach to its programming. Instead of taking place prior to General Assembly, with all the additional expense and scheduling conflicts that has created, UU University will now be nine hours of programming that will not compete with anything else at GA. This highly successful leadership development opportunity will expand to offer six tracks among which all GA participants may choose (and commit to attend). The general areas of programming will be: Congregational Governance, Stewardship, Multiculturalism, Multigenerational programming, Social Justice programming, and Theology. “Deans” will be chosen to oversee each track, and all will provide opportunities for in-depth reflection, capacity building, and tools for integrating their knowledge when they return home.

This will allow ministers to fully participate in a way that was not possible when it competed with Ministry Days.

Ideally, congregations will send teams of leaders to GA who can attend different tracks and then meet to talk about how they may bring what they learned back to the congregation. You might wish to begin now to encourage particular lay leaders to consider attending.

For more information turn to the UUA website at uua.org/events/uuuniversity/index.shtml. ●

Rev. Dr. Terasa Cooley,
Program Director, UU University

Directory of Seminarians Request

Dear Seminarians of Color,

Greetings and blessings! As we enter the fifth full year of the UUA group Seminarians of Color, we are updating our *Directory of Seminarians of Color* (inclusive of DRUUMM members). This directory is an internal resource only for those listed, it is not shared publicly, and is designed to foster relationships and the sharing of ideas. While we are united in our common identity as People of Color, Latina/o, Hispanic, and Multiracial people, we have many other connections as well as unique perspectives that enrich and empower our community. We request your response as soon as possible.

Please send the following information to wlflore@comcast.net or nagaii@hotmail.com.

- Full Name
- Theological School and expected graduation year
- Mailing Address
- Email
- Home Phone
- Mobile Phone
- Racial/Cultural Identity(s)
- Field Ed/Internship(s) (please provide site location, year, role)

-
- Expected Ministry Path (please provide a sentence or two about your vision for your ministry)

Our monthly community Teleconferences, with guest speakers and topical discussions, are being lined up as you read this letter. Walter LeFlore (Andover Newton Theological School) and myself, Chris Long (Starr King School for the Ministry) will be managing the

schedule and announcements, so look for emails and reminders from Walter LeFlore (wlelore@comcast.net) or Chris Long (nagaii@hotmail.com).

We are an amazing community of amazing people, and it is wonderful to be in relationship with all of you. May you be well, filled with the Spirit of Life, with God, in these coming days of fall! Blessings on your commitment of faith and ministerial formation.

Mark your calendars for our next gathering together, November 7–9, 2008 in St. Paul, MN for the Annual DRUUMM Conference (www.druumm.org for details when they become available). We would love to see you there. ●

With peace,
Walter LeFlore, Co-coordinator
Chris Long Co-coordinator



The Religious Leader

NEWS FROM THE UUA MINISTRY & PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP STAFF GROUP

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