



The MidAmerica Messenger

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In this newsletter, we begin two different series of articles from the MidAmerica Board of Trustees. One series will tell the stories of congregations in our region that are engaged in justice work in the area of Anti-Racism, Anti-Oppression, Multiculturalism. The second series will help us understand "who we are" as the MidAmerica Region. The first will be included in each month's newsletter. Watch for the second series to come to you as e-postcards between the monthly newsletters. If you would like to nominate your congregation for an ARAOMC story, please send an email to midamerica@uua.org.

We always appreciate your comments and suggestions for the newsletter. Click on the "email the editor" link in the menu on the left to send us a message.

Sincerely,

Nancy Heege, Congregational Life Consultant

Our Congregations and Anti-Racism, Anti-Oppression, MultiCultural Awareness

By Charlotte Preston, Vice President and member of WBUUC

The MidAmerica Board has covenanted with each other as a group to be intentional in developing a personal and a board deepening practice regarding Anti-racism, Anti- oppression, and Multicultural Awareness and to consider ARAOMC Awareness as foundational to our governance work in the MidAmerica Region. In future newsletters, we hope to move forward stories from our congregations to let others know about what

is happening throughout the Region, to encourage those who hold this value, and to honor congregations in their social justice work. For our last face-to-face gathering at the end of 2013, each board member was invited to collect ARAOMC stories from a congregation they knew or were interested in, and to share that story during our gathering. We will have a congregation's gathered story reviewed by an appropriate spokesperson for the congregation prior to distributing it.

The following regards White Bear Unitarian Universalist Church in Mahtomedi, Minnesota, a congregation of over 700 adults and 350 children. The size of the congregation allows many hands for social justice work, but congregations and fellowships of all sizes may find possibility in WBUUC's experience. What's been happening at WBUUC regarding ARAOMC?

A. Self Education Opportunities

Our Adult Education opportunities recently have included a series by the Rev. Dr. Mark Morrison-Reed, UU Minister and Meadville Lombard affiliated faculty member, who offered both sermon and workshop, and whose involvement with us included sales of his books prior and post appearance and book discussions. Paula Cole Jones, Director for Racial and Social Justice for Joseph Priestley District, has also recently spoken here regarding the fact that our community can be most supportive of ARAOMC work by showing up as apprentices, not trying to take over or solve life experiences of others. We also offer book groups and discussions on such readings as *The New Jim Crow*, *Nickel and Dimed*, and others.



MidAmerica UUs Can Temper America's Cold Cities with Warm Hearts

by Charlotte Preston, Vice President

Given the deeply cold temperatures across much of the United States at the beginning of 2014's cold, cold winter, on January 9, 2014, weather.com featured "America's 20 Coldest Major Cities" in an article written by Jon Erdman. Comparing the 100 most populous U.S. cities, Erdman looked at data from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Climatic Data Center for the average of the past 30 year temperatures in each city and ranked those large cities which are persistently the coldest in the core winter months of December, January, and February. Of 20 cities studied, 10 are in the MidAmerica region.

One of the characteristics of the MidAmerica region is a high proportion of cold weather. As we recover from this past winter and look ahead to the next one, we have the unique opportunity as UUs to reach out to those in our area especially affected by cold due to age, homelessness, or poverty. Whether your congregation offers shelter housing, support for building or for funding long-term housing, assistance with energy bills, action toward greener energy, donations of warm clothes or food, this opportunity for social justice and social service draws MidAmerica together. **MidAmerica "Coldest Cities:"**

Illinois	Chicago
Indiana	Indianapolis, Ft. Wayne
Michigan	Detroit
Minnesota	Minneapolis-St. Paul
Missouri	Kansas City
Nebraska	Lincoln, Omaha
Wisconsin	Madison, Milwaukee



MidWest Leadership School Helps Congregations



You love your UU congregation and you're wondering how to make it stronger? Your fellowship has some eager lay leaders who wish for some professional training? Need some practical ideas for church organization, outreach and worship?



That's where the annual MidWest Leadership School comes in. This year's session will be July 13-19, 2014, on the campus of Beloit College in Beloit, Wisconsin, which is about a hundred miles northwest of Chicago. The week includes concurrent sessions for adults and youth, and the experience is widely acknowledged as a profound experience.

MWLS is an intensive week filled with instruction, small group meetings and worship. It is a time to deepen your understanding of Unitarian Universalism, to reflect and build on your own strengths and weaknesses, and to interact with UUs from across the MidAmerica Region, which encompasses 13 states from the Great Plains to the Great Lakes to Kentucky.

"At MWLS, I deepened my spirituality, connected with a beloved community and rediscovered that still, small voice that I had been ignoring for too long. I will always be thankful for the friends and lessons I discovered in Beloit," wrote one member of MWLS' class of 2011.

More information on MWLS (<https://www.uua.org/midamerica/ele/mwls-sunsetted>).

Multicultural Abundance: Opportunities for UU Youth and Young Adults

by Nancy Combs-Morgan, Congregational Life Consultant

In the MidAmerica Region one of our staff team goals is to thoughtfully seek a multicultural lens in all we do. This is a shared intention, to look beyond what we know, and to lovingly look outward at the vastly changing and abundant multicultural world. What a gift to be in this place, at this time.



Education is key in the goal to heighten our multicultural UU consciousness. Knowledge of our self, and of our distinct UU tradition, are essential in broadening our multicultural conceptions. Knowing ourselves a bit better, and then hopefully realizing that social change has been an important part of what we have carried over for generations, are both essential to raising our multicultural consciousness.

Our youth and young adults are some of our most prophetic leaders in achieving a raised multicultural consciousness. I have seen firsthand the transformative impact on our UU youth and young adults when they have such opportunities.

We are blessed in Unitarian Universalism to have the good work of the UU College of Social Justice, who are creating and organizing life changing opportunities. Laura Lubin, the talented Associate Youth and Young Adult Programs Director at UUCSJ, has graciously been reaching out nationally to make sure all of our congregations know about their terrific Youth and Young Adult social justice programs.

All UUCSJ programs can be found at www.uucsj.org.

I hope that many of our MidAmerica youth and young adults step up to engage in this important work.

Chalice Sparx Family Camp

by Michelle Richards



At the center of our lives, at the center of our being, runs a narrative about who we are, where we are from, and where we are hoping to go. From our family of origin, through the many communities with which our lives are interwoven, we are so much more than a collection of stories. And yet in trying to convey who we are, what is important to us, and what we pass on to future generations, sharing our stories becomes at times the only way for us to communicate the complicated and convoluted mystery of our own existence to others. We all love a good story, whether it comes in the form of cinema, print, theater, or conversation. So how do we engage storytelling as a medium for genuine communication and growth?

During this year's series of keynote workshops at Chalice Sparx UU Family Camp, award-winning songwriter, performer, and lay-preacher Joe Jencks will lead us on a journey of exploration. There will also be programs for the children and youth which explore our natural world, afternoon workshops on spiritual practices and moving worship services - not to mention some sing-a-longs around a bonfire and roasting marshmallows.

Chalice Sparx UU Camp for families runs July 10-15, 2014 at Ronora Lodge & Retreat Center in Watervliet, Michigan only 100 miles from Chicago. Families can opt for tent camping or request overnight accommodations in one of the many lodges or semi-private buildings on the grounds of the 350 acre nature preserve that has a secluded private lake, acres of woods, wildlife, pristine pastures and miles of nature trails. Visit www.chalicesparx.org for more details and to register for this new camp for UU families in southwestern Michigan.

In Memoriam: the Reverend Edgar Child Peara (1921-2014)

We have been informed of the death of the Reverend Edgar Child Peara, who died on February 22, 2014 at the age of 92.

Rev. Peara was born in Moline, Illinois on July 22, 1921. He served the Lake Shore Unitarian Society of Wilmette, IL, from 1967 to 1976. He went on to serve the New Trier Unitarian Society, of Wilmette, IL from 1977 to 1987, and the Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Park Forest, IL, from 1987 to 1997. The Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Park Forest voted him Minister Emeritus in 1997.



Rev Edgar Peara

Rev. Peara was President of the Central Midwest District and of the UU

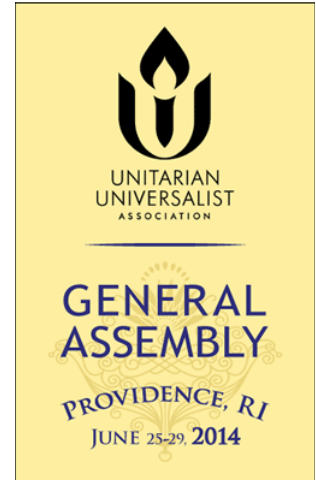
1921-2014

Ministers Association's Chicago Area Liberal Ministers' Group. He spent four years practicing as an abortion counselor for the Chicago Area Clergy Counseling Service for Problem Pregnancies and founded the North Shore Peace Initiative in Illinois.

A Celebration of Life will be held on May 17, 2014, at 2:00 p.m., at the Unitarian Universalist Church in Eugene, 1685 West 13th Avenue, Eugene, Oregon 97402.

Going to be in Providence?

Several of the staff of MidAmerica Region are going to be in Providence in June for General Assembly. If you or someone from your congregation would like to make an appointment for a conversation with one of us, please be in touch.



Central Midwest, Heartland, and Prairie Star Districts of the Unitarian Universalist Association joining together to create a new era in Unitarian Universalism as MidAmerica Region.
