



The Religious Leader

NEWS FROM THE MINISTRY AND PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP STAFF GROUP • FALL 2004

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Office of the Director—David Hubner, A'Llyn Ettien

At the Beginning of the Church Year

My first year in the parish I was particularly anxious. By mid-August I had figured out sermon topics and titles through June. The church year was a looming presence and I wanted to be ready. Although my setting has changed from the parish, the sense of the flow of the church year remains very much an organic part of me.

Now, however, I find myself more expectant at this time of year than anxious. I think of all the good things that we might do and am excited by the possibilities. At the same time, I am experienced enough to know that it is more complicated than that.

Among the things I hope we can wrestle with productively this year are:

Collegueship: I hope we can continue to build bridges between UU ministers, religious educators, administrators, and musicians. We are co-workers in a religious enterprise that is both demanding and filled with opportunity. The more we can do to find ways to trust each other more, the better off we will be.

Critical Reflection about Unitarian Universalism: When I was a new minister in Central Massachusetts, Wallace Robbins was our chapter's good offices person. Each month Wally would call each minister in the district and ask us if we had read any good books. I think we all took that as both a challenge and an invitation! We UU leaders need to continue our discussions about the religious language we use and go deeper than that. It is not enough to define us by our principles or our language. We, working and leading together, need to develop deeper and more critical explorations

of what Unitarian Universalists now affirm and believe. I think we have started this conversation at GA, in small groups and in other ways. The challenge to religious leaders now is how to broaden it and make it a real and regular part of Unitarian Universalist religious practice.

Living Our Religion in Our Congregations and in Our Communities: Even if Unitarian Universalists have a fine theology, rich ethics, and great principles, if we cannot truly welcome the person who is other than who we are now or live our faith in the world, we have failed. We need to keep addressing the opportunities for good work in these areas.

Healthy Congregations and Leadership: We need to set higher and healthier standards for leadership in the congregations and the institutions. It is, I think, part of our religious duty to address a colleague when we see or sense problems in his or her professional or personal life. Usually we are too shy, too distant, or too fearful to do that. We need to set higher standards for UU leadership and demand adherence to them—not only by ourselves but also by our colleagues. We need to find ways to trust each other enough to speak to each other with more honesty and more love.

Welcome to the new church year! Thank you for your leadership, faithfulness, and various ministries. It is great to be working and serving with you. ●

Regards,
David P. Hubner,
Director of Ministry and
Professional Leadership

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Ministerial Credentialing/Internship Clearinghouse—

David Pettee, Christine May, Griffith Bell, Kim Wilson

From the Ministerial Credentialing Office

I do hope, whether you are an aspirant, candidate, or minister, that your summer was both relaxing and rejuvenating! Summer this year in the Ministerial Credentialing Office will be remembered for Chris May's sabbatical—time away from the office that she richly deserved. Her absence allowed me to step into her shoes to better appreciate how things work around here. For those of you who had to deal with me unexpectedly by phone or e-mail, I hope that I was able to be helpful, and not steer you in the wrong direction!

So, here's a little of what I learned. For those preparing to meet with the Ministerial Fellowship Committee, I've become convinced that that process can be made less stressful. Although this may seem overly simplistic, the angst involved can be mightily decreased if you plan ahead, be respectful of deadlines, and follow through on tasks you assign to others. Should you secretly harbor the temptation to let Chris worry about the minor details of your packet, please don't. She's got way too much to do as it is.

The deadlines for receipt of all materials are set for two reasons: to allow candidates to have the detailed part of MFC preparation complete, so that there can be time remaining to get fully prepared for the interview; and so that MFC members have adequate time to carefully review each packet. Nearly three-quarters of the packets for one upcoming MFC meeting were not ready by the deadline that had been set months in advance! According to Chris, this is all too commonplace.

Too many folks try to line up references and gather academic transcripts at the last minute. Please remember that all references must indicate whether they have been shared, or will be shared, with the

candidate. Without references being shared, these references can't be in your packet. Please be certain that whomever you ask for a reference is aware of this requirement. Have them return the reference to you, so you can double check before you send it to us. This is your responsibility, and an important part of your packet.

Try to avoid last minute scurrying. Everybody gets unhappy. And truthfully, it is the candidate who tends to be the most negatively affected by the chaos. I have wondered how anyone can be at his or her best if preparation takes place at the last minute.

Additionally, if you feel there is a big red flag or a problem with some aspect of your packet, do the right thing and let us know early, rather than at the last minute. Often, we can work with you to come up with a strategy to help make sense of something that may be difficult. It's no fun to try to remedy a sticky issue at the last minute, and the time lost may not allow Chris or I to be helpful.

Moving on to another matter, my concern about money is increasingly getting more of my attention. Due to less than stellar financial market conditions, scholarship assistance has decreased and theological schools have less aid to offer. Applications for scholarship aid and financial assistance have been increasing. Debt relief funds available to newly minted ministers in preliminary fellowship are limited. Using standards developed by the Alban Institute to measure the likelihood of ministerial financial crisis, a sizable number of those who applied for financial aid from the UUA this past spring were at high risk.

I cannot stress strongly enough the necessity to try to avoid accumulating significant student loan debt,

or worse, credit card debt. As of July 1, the RSCCs will be asking to see a financial plan, which eliminates the option to have aspirants simply sign off. This is not for the purpose of determining candidacy status, but to make sure that at least once during formation, an honest and frank conversation about money, debt, and the plan to pay off loans takes place. If you don't have money management and budgeting skills, for your own benefit as well as for the institutions you will serve, make it a priority to take a class. For questions about your financial health, contact Joyce Stewart, Retirement Plan Specialist, in the Office of Church Staff Finance at jstewart@uaa.org, or reach her at 617-948-6421.

The members of the Ministerial Credentialing Office, Chris May, Kim Wilson, Griff Bell, and myself welcome your questions and concerns, and are anxious to be helpful! ●

In the Faith,
David Pettee,
Ministerial Credentialing Director

From the Internship Clearinghouse

For those of you who attended General Assembly in Long Beach, CA, it was great to meet many of you with whom I had previously communicated only via e-mail and/or by phone! For those of you who brought your concerns, experiences, and ideas regarding how to improve the internship process, I thank each of you for your willingness to do that. If you weren't able to attend GA and are interested in exploring the idea of having your congregation become a teaching site, please contact me.

The Internship Clearinghouse is working well, although I hope to do a little tweaking to make it even better. I'd like all interns and congregations to make contact with the Internship Clearinghouse so that I can be supportive as necessary and keep track of who's doing internships and which congregations and agencies are serving as teaching sites.

Moving forward into the next internship cycle, we will continue to use the same **internship schedule**, except that we have now added date ranges. It is recommended that internship sites and potential interns use the same schedule:

September 1–November 1, 2004:

Congregations list their profiles on-line with the Internship Clearinghouse

November 1–December 1, 2004:

Potential interns make application to site

January 1, 2004–February 1, 2005:

Site selects candidate for position

February 1–February 15, 2005:

Candidate accepts internship position

The application deadline for the **Internship Stipend Grant Program is October 1, 2004**. Go to www.uaa.org/programs/ministry/credentialing/internship and click on the link for more information about this program. Please contact me if you have any questions about it or are planning to apply.

Potential interns: Please don't hesitate to get in touch with me if you have any questions about the process of finding or designing an internship. Be sure to list yourselves and your internship preferences on-line with the Internship Clearinghouse before you begin contacting sites. Check the website for instructions on how to do this. Starting this fall there will be a confidential password system that will enable only potential supervisors and intern committee chairs to view your profiles. This way, congregations or community sites looking for interns can more easily contact you.

When you have accepted an internship: Please send a copy of your Learning/Serving Agreement to Chris May in the Ministerial Credentialing Office at the UUA and one copy to me (see my e-mail and mailing addresses below). A copy of your L/SA is a required part of your MFC packet. If you need help creating a L/SA, please contact me.

Intern supervisors: I'm also available to support you, whether your congregation is in the planning stage of becoming a teaching site, or is currently hosting an intern.

Lastly, we are now able to list upcoming **Summer Ministry Opportunities**. If you're interested in working as a summer minister, or you're representing a congregation that's offering a **Summer 2005** ministry position, please see the new link on the Internship Clearinghouse website. As this is a brand new option, I'd appreciate all of your help in publicizing it. As always, please feel free to contact me for further information! ●

Yours in Faith,
Kim D. Wilson,
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Registration for these classes is available on-line at www.meadville.edu. Questions can be forwarded to Deborah L. Griffin, Registrar, dgriffin@meadville.edu, 773-265-3000, ext.234.

January Intensives 2005

Week of January 10–14, 2005

M365INT The Contemporary Context of Ministry: Arts of Ministry, *Rev. David Bumbaugh, Faculty*

TS431/531INT Anthropology & Religious Expression, *Donald Brennis, Ph.D., Adjunct Faculty*

Week of January 17–21, 2005

I300INT Spiritual Journey Workshop, *Rev. Dr. Neil Gerdes, Faculty*

M309/509INT Formative Figures in Religious Education, *Rev. Dr. M. Susan Harlow, Faculty*

M414/514INT Human and Faith Development, *Leslie Westbrook, Ph.D., Adjunct Faculty*

M423/523INT Music as the Doorway, *Ed Thompson, Ph.D.*

Week of January 24–28, 2005

M360/560INT The Visual and Kinesthetic in Ministry: Arts and Aesthetics, *Rev. Dr. John Tolley, Faculty*

M431/531INT From Faith Communities to Virtuous Institutions, *Susann Pangerl, Ph.D., Faculty*

TS338/538INT Their Minds Shall Set Them Free: Foundations and Critical Study of Liberal Theology II, *Rev. Dr. Thandeka, Faculty*

Religious Education Credentialing—Beth Williams, Gina Ruvido

What's New in the Religious Education Credentialing Program

Say hello to our new Religious Education Credentialing Assistant, Gina Ruvido. Gina currently lives in Pembroke, MA. She is a native of the Boston area but spent most of her professional career in San Diego, CA. Gina has experience in career counseling and program administration. She has a BA in Italian Language from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, and an M. Ed in Education/Counseling from the University of San Diego. Gina has assumed all of Emily Farbman's responsibilities, and also provides administrative assistance to the Renaissance program. Emily recently left the UUA to begin student teaching, a requirement for her M. Ed. in Art degree. Gina will work with us part-time at 28 hours per week. Gina can be contacted at recassistant@uua.org or 617-948-6418.

Many congratulations to Julie Malm who was recently transitioned from Credentialed Religious Educator status in the old Religious Education Leadership Landscape Options program to Credentialed Religious Educator—Masters Level in the Religious Education Credentialing Program.

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:

Kathleen Carpenter

Beth Casebolt

Carolyn Freud

Karen LoBracco

Stephanie Raphael

Be on the lookout for an RE Credentialing opportunity at LREDA Fall Conference: "Small Group Process for Reflection on Learnings from Fall Conference Presentations". During the 3:30 to 5:00 p.m. free-time conference slot on Saturday we will be presenting a method for a small group to reflect on our learnings from this year's theme presentations, and to provide a mechanism for peer feedback on these reflections. The results from this exercise could then be included in a Religious Education Credentialing Portfolio as a structured learning experience in order to demonstrate competency in religious education administration, philosophy, or faith development competency categories. The group will be limited to twenty participants; sign-up at the conference is required. Beth Williams will be the group's facilitator. Those interested should read in advance *Essex Conversations: Visions for Lifespan Religious Education* (UUA, 2001) and one of the following works by Conference theme speaker, Vivian Gussin Paley: *A Child's*

Work: The Importance of Fantasy Play (2004); *The Kindness of Children* (1999); *The Girl with the Brown Crayon: How Children Use Stories to Shape Their Lives* (1997); *You Can't Say You Can't Play* (1992).

RECC News from Liz Jones, RECC Chair

General Assembly this past June in Long Beach was a very special time for Religious Educators and for the Religious Education Credentialing Program. On Friday night, lay religious educators participated in the Service of the Living Tradition for the first time in over twenty years. Those individuals who had received the Credentialed Religious Educator—Masters Level were recognized for their achievement. On Sunday, during the plenary session, the General Assembly voted to amend the UUA bylaws to include the Religious Education Credentialing Program. A description of the Service of the Living Tradition can be found at www.uua.org/ga/ga04/2108.html. The text of the bylaws amendments can be read in the GA Agenda that can be found at www.uua.org/ga/Agenda%202004.pdf.

Beginning in October 2004, the UUA Religious Education Credentialing Committee will hold a “time for comment” on the last day of its meeting. The first “time for comment” will take place on the morning of Friday, October 22, 2004 (before the start of the LREDA Fall Conference) at the Sheraton Gateway Suites O’Hare, Chicago, IL. Requests to speak may be for no more than three minutes and must be scheduled with Beth Williams, Religious Education Credentialing Director via bethwilliams@uua.org at least one month in advance. No more than ten people will be permitted to speak per meeting. Speaking times will be assigned. A written component of up to one page may accompany your comment. Please note that all comments will be received for consideration only. The “time for comment” is considered a public meeting; all speakers and observers are expected to attend the meeting in its entire duration.

Also beginning in October, the Committee will have an Observer at its meetings. The Observer will be someone who has completed the Religious Education

Credentialing program at the Credentialed Religious Educator or Credentialed Religious Educator—Masters Level. The role of the Observer will be to observe our entire meeting and provide feedback to us about our process. As a new committee, we are looking forward to this next step in developing our processes and procedures.

Renaissance Program News

This is a reminder that the Renaissance Program is back in its original home at the Unitarian Universalist Association. Although the contact people have changed, the process is much the same. If your district or organization would like to host a Renaissance module, contact Beth Williams at recdirector@uua.org to determine whether the date and module is available. Once you receive an affirmative response, quickly follow up with a Renaissance Program Request. This request can be initiated from www.uua.org/re/landscp/request.html. Contact Beth if you have any questions about hosting a module; contact Judith Frediani at jfrediani@uua.org if you have questions about module content; contact Gina Ruvido at recassistant@uua.org if you have questions about the logistics of sending and receiving Renaissance program resources.

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

- Oct. 1–3, Worship Module, Rochester, NY, contact Jan Weinstein at janw@rochesterunitarian.org
- Oct 1–3, Youth Ministry Module, Rockford, IL, contact Dori Davenport at doriduure@aol.com
- Oct. 8–10, Administration Module, Austin, TX, contact Jennifer Nichols-Payne at jnichols-payne@msn.com
- Nov. 5–6, Administration Module, Yarmouth, ME, contact Helen Zidowecki at hzmre@hzmre.com
- Nov. 5–7, Multicultural RE Module, Scottsdale, AZ, contact Tera Little at tlittle@uua.org
- Nov. 11–18, Administration Module, Rochester, MN, contact Janet Hansen at jhhwbl@msn.com

Beth Williams,
Religious Education Credentialing Director

Starr King School for the Ministry

On-line: This fall, we will offer on-line “World Religions” (Rev. Tawna Cooley) and “Our Theological House” (Rev. Roy Phillips). Coming on-line in the spring of 2005 are “UU History” (Dr. Alicia Forsey), “UU Polity” (Rev. Mark Harris), and two new courses, “Religious Education through Children’s Literature” (Rev. Keith Kron) and “Community Ministry” (Rev. Tawna Cooley). For the latest information concerning on-line courses, visit our website at <http://online.sksm.edu>, or contact Cathleen at cyoung@sksm.edu. You may also contact Rev. Alicia McNary Forsey, Ph.D., Professor of Church History, Starr King School for the Ministry, 2441 LeConte Ave., Berkeley, CA 94709 or 510-845-6232.

2003 Wilbur History Colloquium Publication: *The Role of the Dissenter in Western Christianity: From Jesus through the Radical Reformation* is now available. Copies may be obtained by writing to Cathleen at the address above. Cost is \$67 plus shipping (and plus tax if applicable).

Fair Compensation Guidelines for Ministers

Settlement Office Practice for Ministries Beginning On or After January 1, 2005

Introduction: The time is ripe to convert from the current Total Cost of Ministry model of ministerial compensation to a standard salary plus benefits approach. Because the compensation recommendations effective January 2004 have been widely accepted, and because the Office of Church Staff Finance plans to make future recommendations more frequently than every three years, we are entering a period where the conversion, unaffected by large increases, can be accomplished amidst relative calm.

TCM model: Heretofore, clergy compensation in UUA-affiliated congregations has been described in terms of the Total Cost of Ministry (TCM) and its components: salary, clergy housing allowance, retirement plan contributions, insurance premiums (life, health, dental, long-term disability), and professional expense allowance. The implied question to which the TCM model provides the answer is: “Our congregation doesn’t have a minister; how much would it cost us to call one?”

Standard salary plus benefits approach: Under this new approach, clergy compensation will be described in terms very close to those used to describe the compensation received by employed persons: as salary (including clergy housing allowance) plus a standard array of benefits and professional expenses recommended by the UUA Church Staff Finance Office. The implied question to which the salary plus benefits approach provides the answer is: “How much are we paying our minister, and how does that compare to what other people get paid?”

Problems Offered by the Total Cost of Ministry (TCM) Model

- a. **Complexity:** UUA Compensation Consultants tell us that TCM is a stumbling block: for the consultants difficult to explain, for lay leaders difficult to comprehend.
- b. **Resistance:** The Compensation Consultants also report that the resulting puzzlement is liable to generate resistance on its own, as well as to increase the resistance otherwise to be expected around money matters.
- c. **Complications in professional relations:** With the Department of Ministry having become the MPL Staff Group, adding to its charge the personnel-related functions for religious educators and, soon,

administrators and church musicians, the maintenance of two different languages of compensation compounds the existing complications in the relations among the professions.

Advantages to a Standard Salary Plus Benefits Approach

- a. **Transparency:** The good work that has been done over the past several years to change the culture of UUA congregations around money is not complete. Description of clergy compensation in terms that everyone can understand is a further step in undoing the obfuscations behind which parsimony seeks to hide.
- b. **Justice:** Fair compensation is a justice issue. Justice is a work of the heart as well as the head. The heart will only engage on issues of felt understanding. Congregations are thus much more likely to compensate their clergy fairly when they can clearly understand the issues than is now often the case.
- c. **Responsibility:** As one thoughtful minister has written, “In my view, every congregation should tell its minister(s) (and, in a perfect world, every full-time staff member), ‘We offer a comprehensive benefits program to our staff. This includes health insurance, pension, life insurance, and disability insurance. We are prepared to pay whatever it takes to fund these items, because we know that is what fairness requires, even if the prevailing ethic in the business world is to shift more of these costs to employees.’”

Potential Disadvantages of the Change from the TCM Model to a Standard Salary Plus Benefits Approach

- a. **For congregations:** The only disadvantage lies in the loss of the annual cap on mid-year increases in the minister’s medical insurance premiums. Under the TCM model the minister is exposed; under the salary plus benefits approach the exposure shifts to the congregation. While this is no small matter when premiums can jump 25 percent in a year, we are willing to wager that forcing the minister to bear the full increase in any mid-year medical insurance premium is seldom celebrated in the annual meeting as a congregational virtue.
- b. **For ministers:** The only disadvantage lies in the apparent loss of flexibility afforded to them under the TCM model. With the same TCM, one minister can buy a larger house for a larger family, another can sock away many thousands of dollars per year for retirement, and a third, a resident in Iroquois country, can attend lengthy January clergy

conferences in Santa Barbara. **This loss is, however, only apparent** (see “Restoring Ministers’ Flexibility” below).

The Standard Salary Plus Benefits Plan in Practice

- a. **Standard array of benefits and professional expenses:** The UUA Church Staff Finance Office will publish Fair Compensation Guidelines: the benefits and professional expenses that every participating congregation will agree to provide its minister(s) in addition to salary plus housing allowance. Congregations adopting the Guidelines will thus decide on the amount of cash compensation to provide, in the awareness that the other items come along with it.
- b. **During the search for a minister:** The congregation will publish its offer of cash compensation (salary plus housing allowance) and its agreement to abide by the Fair Compensation Guidelines. Congregations with a parsonage will frame their offers as the total of salary plus the value of the parsonage, including utilities. While the total cost to the congregation of having a minister will consist of the total of several components, as ever, the only item to be negotiated will be, as is so often the case in the secular world, cash compensation, including clergy housing allowance.
- c. **During annual compensation review:** The congregation will decide on new levels of salary plus housing allowance, with the costs to the congregation of benefits and professional expenses changing either as a function of salary (e.g., pension and professional expense allowance) or according to their cost in the local marketplace (e.g., insurance premiums).

Proposed Benefits and Expenses

The benefits and professional expenses that we propose as meeting Fair Compensation Guidelines are as follows. They have been discussed in depth with the UUMA Exec. As is always the case, they are subject to later change and variation.

- a. **In lieu of employer’s FICA:** 7.65 percent of salary plus housing, paid (and taxable) to the minister in cash, reflecting the fact that the congregation pays no FICA taxes of 7.65 percent on the minister’s compensation, while the minister pays SECA taxes at 15.3 percent on salary plus housing.
- b. **Pension:** at least 10 percent of salary plus housing to the UUA Retirement Plan (or comparable plan), thus permitting additional voluntary pre-tax contributions by the minister.

c. Insurance premiums

- (1) 80 percent of the premium for comprehensive medical insurance for minister, spouse or partner, and children, with 20 percent paid by the minister by salary reduction; mid-year premium increases are born in this 80/20 ratio; where the minister is covered under the plan of a spouse or partner, the congregation will reimburse the minister for the actual amount deducted from the spouse’s paycheck for the minister’s coverage
- (2) 100 percent of the premium for life insurance equal to two times salary plus housing, available through the UUA insurance plan (or comparable plan)
- (3) 100 percent of the premium for disability income insurance equal to 60 percent of salary plus housing, available through the UUA insurance plan (or comparable plan); the minister is encouraged to take this premium as taxable income, so that benefits, in the event of disability, will be received tax-free
- (4) 100 percent of the premium for dental insurance for the minister available through the UUA insurance plan (or comparable plan), with the minister paying for coverage for other family members

- d. **Professional expense allowance:** at least 10 percent of salary plus housing, reimbursable monthly by means of a professional expense reimbursement plan.

Restoring Ministers’ Flexibility

In order to restore the flexibility ministers had under the TCM model, we recommend that the following paragraph be included in all ministry agreements:

The salary plus housing amount agreed to brings in its train the following additional benefits and professional expenses, for a total cost of ministry to the congregation of \$_____. With the approval of the governing board the Minister may reallocate funds among the various categories. Funds not expended within one category may be allocated to others upon mutual agreement of the Minister and the Board. The Minister must, however, elect pension, health, and disability insurance coverage or provide the Board with adequate rationale for not doing so.

In sum: As congregations adopt the Fair Compensation Guidelines, congregations and ministers will both benefit. It is to be expected that transparency, justice, and responsibility will continue to thrive, to the benefit of our Association. ●

News from Professional Development

Just that fast, the summer has come and gone. The warmth of summer felt so good, the sun's glory soaking and baking and forcing me to take some time off. Lord knows I needed it. Lord knows we all needed it.

I write this column on the eleventh day of August from my Chicago office. Outside it looks and feels like autumn. I love autumn with its change of pace, times of ingathering, and how it accentuates the goodness of life, but I'm not ready for the summer's end.

I returned home from Professional Days and GA in a discerning spirit, in a dark night of the soul. With the agenda of the Association and the Nation, I found myself asking once again the ultimate question: Who am I in the context of the debates going on all around: same-sex marriage, possible U.S. Constitution changes, a woman's right to choose, affirmative action, Iraq, the November National elections? Issues of ultimate concern that seem so clear to me, yet leave my head swirling because there's so much to be done.

On top of these issues our neighbors' sixteen-year-old son, my son's close friend, has just been diagnosed with inoperable third stage brain cancer. Yesterday he returned home from his treatment with all his beautiful Afro/braids/hair gone.

Psychotherapist and once monk Thomas Moore writes in his 2004 latest best seller on human suffering *Dark Nights Of The Soul* "See dark nights . . . as times of transition, a time of forced thinking, occasions to restore one self and transforming rites of passage . . . a spirituality of the deep . . . emotional night . . . purifying society." Some people speak of this dark night journey as though it was a challenge to deal with and overcome fast, but the whole purpose is the promise of new life. "The whole point of a dark night of the soul is for a deeper soul life and an increase in spirituality. . . ."

This book held me this summer because it gave me permission to take my time in the dark night of my soul as a time of transition in order to be restored and transformed. I'm still there.

As we all know, our nights and our days are intimately connected with what is going on in the culture. In this important election year with so much at stake for our parishioners, clients, patients, parents, children, partners, and selves and feeling the stresses of war and life, remember to:

- Help get the vote out!
- Take your time working through life's ordeals don't rush it!
- Discover in the darkness where we may have gone wrong.

- The dark night of the soul is a time for cleansing and reforming.

The work of the 2004–2005 church year promises to be full. What are your Personal Development needs and priorities? What continuing education course or event would help you on your journey or help you meet your goals and objectives? Below are some topics that might ignite your planning.

- First Year Ministry Seminar
- Sabbatical Planning
- D. Min.
- The Worship Arts
- Co-ministry
- Religious Education
- UU History
- Pastoral Care
- CPE Supervisor
- Hospice Training
- Spiritual Practice
- Congregational Life: Interpersonal/Organizational
- Public Ministry and Prophetic Witness
- Family Dynamics
- Anti-oppression, Anti-racism, Multiculturalism
- Conflict Resolution
- Soul Work
- Public Witness Training
- Retirement Planning
- Financial Planning
- Remember the Borden Sermon Award

Last year there was \$50,000 in the Continuing Education budget and it was almost depleted by the end of May. So, make your grant requests early. Please see CE Resources/grant guidelines at the following address: www.uua.org/programs/ministry/development, section 4.

The summer has come and gone, and the discerning spirit lives on. Hello autumn. ●

Michelle Bentley,
Professional Development Director

Continuing Education Opportunities

Practical suggestions for continued learning, sabbatical planning, life and skill enhancement may be found in the listing posted on the Ministry web page (www.uua.org/ministry/). There you will find the basic information of workshops, conferences, and seminars.

Some offerings by our colleagues include:

Professional Chaplains, contact: Timothy Madison at 618-549-0721, ext. 65243 or tim.madison@sih.net

Lifelong Learning@Oates.Org, published by the Wayne E. Oates Institute, contact: info@oates.org or call 501-459-2370

Alban In Progress on the web, contact: albaninprogress@alban.org

Meadville Lombard Winter Institute, "Stardust and Sustainability: The Great Story of Science and Religion," Michael Dowd and Connie Barlow, Madison, WI, February 17–20, 2005, contact: Joan McDougall, 773-256-3000, ext. 222

Alban Institute Seminars, for more information call the Education Dept. at 800-486-1318, ext. 247 or e-mail education@alban.org

"Emotional Intelligence & Clergy Leadership," Oct. 11–14, 2004 in Mundelein (Chicago), IL

"Leading Change in the Congregation," October 18–21, 2004 in Colorado Springs, CO

"Leading Change on the New Religious Frontier: Building Racially and Culturally Diverse Communities," October 25–27, 2004 in San Antonio, TX

"Raising the Roof: The Pastoral-to Program-Size Transition," October 26–29, 2004 in Norcross (Atlanta), GA

"Spirituality and Leadership: Leading from Within," November 1–4, 2004 in Jacksonville, FL

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

UUA Health Insurance?

Please read these words. As you know, we have been unable to find any health insurance company willing to insure the staffs of our 1,045 congregations across the U.S. If we are to have an affordable and realistic health insurance plan for those who work for our congregations, the UUA will have to create one. And that can't take place until we know the potential universe of enrollees and employer-congregations.

All UU congregations in the United States are strongly urged to participate in the on-line survey on staff health insurance at www.uua.org/programs/ministry/finances/insurance.

The survey will be on-line as of September 15, 2004, with a completion deadline of October 15, 2004.

We need your participation in this survey to ascertain the feasibility of a UUA self-funded health insurance program for the ministers and employees of our 1,045 congregations across the U.S. The survey asks for simple demographic and minimal health information on *all staff that work half-time or more for local churches.*

Instructions for completing the survey are located on the UUA website. Additional advice is available from the volunteer district compensation consultants listed on-line at www.uua.org/programs/ministry/finances. It should take a church secretary or administrator only a few minutes to enter the requested information. Of course, everything submitted is completely confidential, and participating in the survey is not a commitment to participate in a UUA health insurance plan if this comes to fruition.

Health Insurance Contest

All UU ministers and laypersons are invited to participate in a contest awarding prizes up to \$1,000 for sermons or presentations on the health insurance crisis in the U.S.

Funded by an anonymous donor, the Office of Church Staff Finances will administer a contest rewarding the best sermons by ministers and/or presentations by laypersons on the topic of health insurance, healthcare delivery, and the concept of universal health care in the U.S.

The sermons or presentations must have been delivered orally to a UU congregation or group between September 1, 2004 and March 1, 2005. Prizes of \$1,000, \$750, \$500, and \$250 will be awarded at the UUA General Assembly in Fort Worth, TX in June 2005.

See the website www.uua.org/programs/ministry/insurancesermoncontest or contact rmero@uua.org or jstewart@uua.org for more details.

College Scholarships

Applications for undergraduate college scholarships for the children of UU ministers are on-line at www.uua.org/programs/ministry/finances. The application deadline is September 30, 2004, but if you receive this after that date, submit it anyway with an explanation via fax at 617-742-2875. ●

Ralph Mero,
Church Staff Finances Director

RE On-line from the Church of the Larger Fellowship

The Church of the Larger Fellowship (CLF) creates religious education materials for children, adults, and UU small groups, including:

- The CLF RE Curriculum Plan: lessons and activities for kids/youth ages 3–18
- *Between Sundays*: answering questions children ask—activities organized by age and subject matter
- *Religious Education Connections*: a seasonal publication of rituals and activities for children/families
- *uu&me!* for kids ages 7–12 (also a new insert into the *UUWorld*)
- Monthly columns in *Quest* by Rev. Helen Zidowecki, our acting Minister of Religious Education
- CLF-RE: the electronic mailing list for parents and small-group RE leaders
- CLF lending library: a wealth of materials and referrals to other resources

See www.clfuu.org/re.html to learn more!

Join CLF to receive all the benefits of membership in the largest UU congregation: www.clfuu.org or contact Lorraine Dennis at 617-948-6166. ●

JUUST Change Anti-Oppression Consultancy

JUUST Change Anti-Oppression Consultancy is a UUA program designed to help congregations increase their effectiveness in anti-oppression and social justice work. The consultancy aims to meet congrega-

tions where they are, support a developmental process to build leadership, strengthen capacity, and apply anti-oppression knowledge and principles to transform congregations and the communities of which they are a part.

The UUA is accepting applications for consultants able to commit the equivalent of 10 work days consulting with two congregations per year. Consultants must be able to help congregations with a developmental process of congregation-based anti-racist, anti-oppressive multicultural transformation and social action. Consultants will help identify internal leaders, facilitate group processes in developing vision and mission, dialogue, problem-solving, team development, and goal-setting. Most important, we are seeking candidates who will view this consultancy as a ministry to congregations and their professional and lay leadership.

The UUA is committed to creative partnerships with our congregations, as we pursue living in Beloved Community. Our mutual task is to transform ourselves as congregations, so that we are vibrant, spirited, anti-oppressive, pluralistic communities. Our faith is best manifested through relationships that allow deep and honest sharing with one another about what matters most to us, including justice and standing strong against oppression. Such relationships involve active listening, the willingness to acknowledge mistakes, fears, or uncertainty, faith in one another's good intentions, and a desire for transformation that is stronger than the desire for safety and comfort.

For more information contact Rev. Dr. Tracey Robinson-Harris, Director for Congregational Services, at 617-948-6462 or trobsonharris@uua.org. ●

AUUA Invites All Administrators!

GA is now long over, the summer is drawing to a close, and the church

year is beginning. We as administrators are getting back to our routine. Now is the time to join the Association of Unitarian Universalist Administrators. The best thing about being a member of the AUUA is professional support. This support is achieved through our chapter meetings, our listserve, and our yearly Professional Day in June each year. This year proves to be another exciting leap in the UU Administrative world.

We encourage all Administrators—no matter the size of your church—to join the AUUA. For more information on the AUUA, visit our website at www.auua.org. ●

Thank you!
Sandy Leyenaar,
President, AUUA

Skinner House Books

Skinner House Books, the imprint of the Unitarian Universalist Association, invites members of UU congregations to submit meditations for a forthcoming meditation anthology similar to the 2002 publication *How We Are Called*. Past meditation manuals have included traditional meditations, prayers, and reflections on life and nature. Prose meditations should be between 200 and 650 words. Poetry meditations should be no longer than 54 lines each. Meditations can be serious or funny. They should be suitable for both private reflection and public worship.

Your submission should include a cover letter and no more than 5 complete pieces of original work. In your cover letter, please provide information on how to contact you, identify your affiliation with Unitarian Universalism, and provide some context for the writing in your sample, such as the purpose for which the pieces were originally written and the themes that interest you. If your work has been published, please give details.

Send your submission to Mary Benard, Unitarian Universalist Association, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, MA 02108 or submit electronically to mbenard@uua.org.

Skinner House Books is accepting meditation submissions until November 15, 2004. Please note that all meditations accepted for publication will be edited and that authors are responsible for obtaining any necessary permission to use copyrighted material in their meditations. ●

UUA Commission on Appraisal Study

The UUA's Commission on Appraisal will be releasing its current study on the impact of theological diversity on the UUA and its congregations at the 2005 General Assembly in Fort Worth, TX. The Commission is already beginning to think about possibilities for future areas of study that would be beneficial to the Association and all UU congregations. Anyone who would like to submit ideas to the Commission is invited to log on to its website, www.uua.org/coa and download a form to fill out and submit to the Commission. The deadline for submitting ideas is September 1, 2005. The Commission will decide what its next study will be following the election of three new members of the group at the 2005 GA. ●

Jesus in Twenty-First Century Spirituality

You are invited to attend the Fourth Continental Revival sponsored by the Unitarian Universalist Christian Fellowship, soon celebrating its sixtieth year, to be held Nov. 4-7, 2004 at the First Unitarian Church of Worcester, MA. Keynote Speakers will be the Rev. Bill Sinkford, UUA President, and Rev. Erik Wikstrom, author of *Teacher, Guide, Companion: Jesus in a Secular*

Age" (Skinner House Books). The theme is "Jesus in the Twenty-First Century" and there will also be dynamic worship services twice a day, communion, prayer and healing service, interfaith gospel choir, youth program, many workshops and tours, films, and small relational groups meeting throughout. Scholarships and stipends are available. To register or for more information, go to www.uua.org/uucf and click on the Revival 4 link or call 508-757-2708, ext. 130, or contact RevRonRobinson@aol.com. ●

Rev. Ron Robinson
Executive Director
UU Christian Fellowship,
www.uua.org/uucf

Request for Proposal

Skinner House Books has issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) seeking an editor for a new book about Unitarian Universalism's progress toward racial justice and multicultural diversity since the issuing of the 1992 Calgary GA resolution for racial and cultural diversity and the 1997 Journey toward Wholeness business resolution. The deadline for proposals is December 2004. The proposed publication date for this new book is December 2006. Additional information about the publication and how to apply as an editor is included in the RFP. For more information, contact: Patricia Frevert, UUA Publications Director, 617-948-4605 (phone), 617-742-7025 (fax), or www.uua.org/skinner. ●

DOs and DON'Ts of Strategic Communication

What do you do when the telephone rings and it's a reporter from the local newspaper? Or a producer from the local TV station? Is their interest in you and your work a cause for delight or distress? Do you

want to encourage their interest or dampen it?

Whatever the situation, it's important to be prepared for your encounter with the media. John Hurley, UUA Director of Information and Public Witness, and Janet Hayes, Information Officer, are available to discuss with you options and strategies. John and Janet can provide insight into what the media want from you and can work with you to hone the message you want to deliver. Even a brief consultation can make a significant difference in the quality of your interaction with the media, so please take advantage of this service provided by the UUA's Office of Information and Public Witness. You can reach John at 617-948-6131 or jhurley@uua.org, and Janet at 617-948-4386 or jhayes@uua.org. ●

UU Funding Program

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

We have two application deadlines each year: March 15 and September 15. This year our grants will total \$860,000; the range of grants made is \$1,000-\$20,000; the average grant is \$7,000.

Our Panel members are appointed by the UUA Board and all of our funding comes from the UU Veatch Program at Shelter Rock.

Please visit our website at www.uua.org/uufp for our guidelines, grant lists, and more information. ●

Journey toward Wholeness Website

BY REV. WILLIAM GARDINER

To get the latest information on the Journey toward Wholeness Anti-racism and Anti-oppression

Programs go to the UUA website. Enter through Programs and Services/Social Justice/Issues/Racism and Oppression (Journey toward Wholeness).

There you will find a wealth of information on frequently asked

questions, worship resources, and ways of doing anti-racist social justice programs. And you will find new materials on Unitarian Universalism and White Identity.

One way of determining how to do anti-racism in your congregation

is to use the “Continuum on Becoming an Anti-racist Multicultural Institution.” Useful resources are suggested for moving members of congregations through the various stages of development. ●



The Religious Leader

NEWS FROM THE UUA MINISTRY & PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP STAFF GROUP

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST ASSOCIATION
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