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TYPESETTING AND EDITORIAL
BY ANNAMARIE G. KLYZUB KALMAR,
KALZUB DESIGN

things, but as the very ground of religious possibility.

I'm usually one of the first to wonder if Unitarian Universalists do in fact have a saving message. Perhaps it is in times such as these that I understand best that we do, that we have a strong and tested faith, that we can in fact change the world.

Muscular Unitarian Universalism? I doubt it. The acronym alone is too distracting.

But building a strong and faithful trust in who we are and what we believe as Unitarian Universalists, and actively living our faith, is our constant challenge and opportunity. How can we not do that? How can we not be that kind of religious people, particularly now? ●

—David Hubner,
Director of Ministry
and Professional
Leadership

LAY LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT
HARLAN LIMPERT

Harlan Limpert, the newly named Director for Lay Leadership Development, has begun his work. He's following Peter Drucker's fifth principle, "Seek first to understand, and then to be understood" in approaching his role. Conversations with district staff, headquarters staff, and lay leaders all over the country, as well as his reading of current voluminous materials dealing with lay leadership development will help ensure he doesn't "reinvent the wheel." He's determining which specific direction to move, how to prioritize, and how to measure success.

What has he learned thus far? There are some wonderful development programs available to lay leaders, but they are often difficult to find. Lay leaders are asking for a "well coordinated, effective, and user-friendly" system for lay leadership development. They'd like a system whereby lay leaders throughout the Association who want to contribute their time and effort can go to access leadership development programs (and other resources) that are:

- specific to their needs
- easy to find, discover, access
- easy to use
- available at convenient times
- of reasonable length
- affordable
- consistently high quality

His position was created to help fill that need. The mission is clear (well coordinated, effective, and user-friendly), the vision is clear (make it easy to find, register for, attend, and pay for great development programs), and the goal is clear: To develop inspired, skilled, effective lay leaders who can live out their lay ministries in our association.

Exactly *how* we'll accomplish this will be the hard part. And it certainly will take time. Still, all great tasks begin with a clear mission. Everyone knows of enthusiastic people with new challenges who have charged ahead and successfully "taken the hill," only to find out it was the *wrong hill!* Hopefully that can be avoided by learning from the past, taking the best that exists, and adding to it.

A Letter From David Pettee

Dear Students, Colleagues, and Friends,

I took advantage of the opportunity in the Fall 2002 issue of *The Religious Leader* to briefly introduce myself as the incoming Ministerial Credentialing Director. I've now been in my position for two months, and at first blush, I'm most impressed with those I've met within and beyond the Unitarian Universalist Association who share the same passion as I for our ministerial formation process. For some, I might imagine that my use of the phrase "ministerial formation" may be a little unsettling; but I really do appreciate that the process of transition from lay leadership to professional ministry is not casual and that the journey has rather intentional dimensions to it. For some reason, I feel drawn to the fanciful notion that the process toward ministerial fellowship has parallels with how, over time, through increasing heat and pressure, the mysterious essence within a lump of coal is gradually incarnated as a sparkling diamond!

I've enjoyed meeting with: students preparing for their interview with the Ministerial Fellowship Committee or their Regional Subcommittee on Candidacy; students who've just arrived at theological school; career counselors who are anxious to assist students (as well as already fellowshipped clergy) with discernment questions and concerns; and with the faculty and staff of several theological schools. I feel very privileged to be at a point of intersection of so many interested parties, all who are deeply committed to help prepare and nurture the next generation of religious leaders.

Prior to my coming to the UUA, aside from my own interview in 1993, I had the opportunity to "pinch hit" twice for an ill member of the Ministerial Fellowship Committee. I came away impressed with the sheer quantity of work for which members

of this committee were responsible, notwithstanding the interviews that were conducted at each meeting. I was particularly appreciative of the attention to fairness and transparency in all the deliberations, and found all the conversations rather compelling. I observed how MFC members work collaboratively and are held accountable to one another. Now, as a member of the staff, I will attend all MFC meetings and truly appreciate the opportunity to participate in the interviews, but will respect MFC rules and have no vote in the outcome.

As a member of the most recently recognized ministerial leadership category or specialty, community ministry, one area of keen interest for me is my desire to work with others to identify and uproot the barriers that prevent community ministers and ministers of religious education from more fully participating in the life of our common ministry and the life of our religious movement. With the assistance and wisdom of others more attuned and sensitive to these barriers—some invisible, some in plain sight—I want to join in the effort to find a way to systematically examine the elements of the credentialing process, from beginning to end, to learn how we can do better and more deeply incarnate the mission of our religious faith. This is not to say that my priorities or loyalties lie with these particular pathways of religious leadership over and above the interests of aspirants and candidates preparing for parish ministry. On the contrary, it is my unshakable belief that because we are a congregationally based religious tradition, our success as a prophetic voice will hinge upon strong and successful congregational leadership. Although I received preliminary fellowship as a community minister, I have always thought of myself more as a parish minister who

felt called to work beyond the walls of the congregation. I have been inspired by our rich tradition of service to the larger community that goes back long before the institutional establishment of the Unitarian and Universalist denominations.

As much as this short column represents an opportunity for me to share my views and perspectives, I am interested in learning what would be most helpful and beneficial. Please do not hesitate to contact Chris May, the Ministerial Credentialing Office Administrator, or me with your suggestions for future topics or particular areas that might be of greater interest. ●

Faithfully Yours,
David Pettee,

Ministerial Credentialing Director

NEW HARVARD SQUARE LIBRARY

The new Harvard Square Library website (www.harvardsquarelibrary.org) illustrates Notable American Unitarian biographies and gets more than 3,000 hits a month from 28 nations. Funding for this First Parish project is from the Unitarian Universalist Funding Program, the Dana McLean Greeley Foundation, and a growing number of UU Congregations. Send, via the site, comments, criticism, and recommendations concerning other notable Unitarian women and men who contributed during the twenty-five-year Unitarian Renaissance dating from the publication of *Unitarians Face a New Age* (1936) to the beginning of our Unitarian Universalist Association (1961). The advisors are Gloria Korsman of Andover-Harvard Theological Library, Conrad Wright of Harvard Divinity School, and Conrad Edick Wright of the Massachusetts Historical Society.

Liaison to Students Report, September 2002, Boston

JOHN HICKEY

I had the good fortune to participate with the Ministerial Fellowship Committee as student liaison during its September 2002 meeting in Boston. I found the MFC members to be a talented, dedicated, and caring group of individuals who make an enormous contribution of their time and passion to our faith. They come prepared, listen attentively, value each member's contribution, probe with care and integrity each candidate's preparedness, and strive for fairness and honesty in their evaluations. In short, they practice the very qualities of ministry that they look for in the candidates that come before them.

MFC members review your packet in advance, so time is taken before the candidate arrives to discuss possible areas of concern or matters that need clarification. Regarding the competencies, in addition to knowing your "facts," I would encourage you to be prepared to articulate the broader trends and context for these facts. It may not be enough to identify Emerson as a Transcendentalist—how would you characterize that movement in our Unitarian heritage?

When an MFC member jumps in to ask a follow-up question, your antenna should go up immediately. Take the cue. Think beyond your original answer. The questioner is looking for something more, and you should demonstrate that you understand what got his or her attention.

Regarding the sermon, you will likely be in a small space, and the atmospherics for the sermon might be less than desirable. Don't be put off that MFC members seem to be a bit more impassive and expressionless during the sermon than most

congregations you have experienced. I think it is a response that comes out of respect.

I suppose the most often repeated advice to candidates is to know your packet. If you don't trust your judgment to spot your own weaknesses, get some help—preferably not someone who might be hesitant to be brutally honest with you. The first thing the MFC looks for is some recognition on your part that you understand the concern. They want you to demonstrate self-understanding. Knowing your packet also means being ready to address any cautions or recommendations you have gotten from the Regional Subcommittee. These cautions and recommendations often raise concerns about whether you have a deep understanding of what it means to be a minister. The MFC will want to see that you recognize the power and authority that comes with the role, that you have a sense of boundaries, and that you understand the difference between your own needs and those of others you are serving.

Lastly, I think the MFC deserves our gratitude for maintaining the student liaison opportunity. I encourage any of you that have the chance to take advantage of it. It is a unique experience that lends a transparency and collegiality to this all-important aspect of our fellowship process. I made delightful and interesting friends, and it was a personal honor to share in their professionalism and dedication to Unitarian Universalist ministry. To those of you preparing to see the MFC soon: Good luck with your preparations! ●

From the Internship Clearinghouse

The latest innovation in the Internship Clearinghouse is an on-line student registration that was put in place in the early fall. Through the Clearinghouse's website at www.uua.org/ministry/internship, students who are beginning to think

about internship placements can fill out an on-line form and indicate their preferences for the kind of placement that they are hoping to find. When internship sites contact me looking for candidates, this allows me to provide them with a list of students who are in search.

Even if you're only in the beginning stages of thinking about your internship, please take a couple of minutes to fill out the form. Although your plans will change and evolve, this is a great way to start solidifying your thinking and to start a conversation about the shape that the experiential component of your preparation for ministry will take.

As always, I look forward to hearing from you. Don't hesitate to call or e-mail if I can be helpful on any aspect of the internship experience. ●

Faithfully,
Ken Olliff,

Internship Clearinghouse Coordinator

LAY LEADERSHIP MIDSIZE CONGREGATION CONFERENCE

Mark your calendars! The Fifth Continental Midsize Congregation Conference is March 6–9, 2003 in Kansas City, MO. Keynote speaker will be Dr. Sharon Welch speaking on "Virtuosity in the Face of Limits: The Spiritual and Ethical Challenges of Leadership." Dr. Welch is a member of the UU congregation in Rockport, MA and is on the board of directors of Meadville Lombard Theological School. She has a Ph.D. in theology from Vanderbilt University and has written three books (including *Sweet Dreams in America: Making Ethics and Spirituality Work*), as well as numerous articles and chapters on religion, ethics, and social change. She was a member of two departments at Harvard Divinity School, has been a visiting professor at the University of Amsterdam and Uppsala University, Uppsala, Sweden, and is currently Professor of Religious Studies at the University of Missouri.

STARR KING SCHOOL FOR THE MINISTRY

This fall the school welcomed 25 new people (20 women, 5 men, and 1 transgender person). This raises our student body to 70.

In the fall of 2001, Starr King School launched a two-year, school-wide, study/action project on restorative justice. Restorative justice involves a paradigmatic shift from a mindset of punishment and retribution to one that views crime as a violation of people and relationships. It is a process whereby all parties with a stake in a particular offense—victim, offender, and community—come together to resolve collectively how to heal the harm caused by the offense and allow, when possible, the reintegration of the offender back into the community. The students, faculty, and staff of the school have been exploring ways that such a model can be used in the school, our congregations, and our communities.

Ibrahim Abdurrahman Farajajé, Dean of the Faculty at Starr King School for the Ministry, has been named the Chair of the Graduate Theological Union's (GTU) Islamic Studies Task Force, which is in the process of identifying the needs of Muslim communities. The group was charged with the immediate goal of helping the GTU faculty understand how the study of Islam is a vital part of the study of religion. The Task Force is currently planning a GTU-sponsored national symposium on Islam on March 14–15, 2003.

Summer Session News: This past summer, in association with the GTU Collaborative, Starr King School sponsored "Exploring our Spiritual Selves Through Dreamwork" with Jeremy Taylor and "Effective Public Ministry" with John Buehrens. Both courses received rave reviews. Planning for summer 2003 is underway. Through the GTU collaborative, we'll be offering Jeremy's course again in addition to "The Spirituality of the Beats" taught by Rev. Steve Edington. As an independent offering, Starr King School will host "Science and Spirit: A Mathaphorical Tour," with Dr. Sarah Voss and "Environmental Design and the Human Spirit" with Cary Dasenbrock. For more information about the Graduate Theological Union Summer Session, visit www.gtusummersession.org. For more general information about SKSM-sponsored summer courses, visit www.gtusummersession.org.

Earl Morse Wilbur History Colloquium: The Fifth Earl Morse Wilbur History Colloquium will be held January 23–25, 2003, at Starr King School for the Ministry in Berkeley, CA. The focus of this gathering will be the role of the dissenter in Western culture, from Jesus through the Reformation. Our keynote speaker, John Dominic Crossan, will be joined by other scholars during presentations on the continuing relevance of dissenting faith traditions, how various dissenting groups have survived and changed, and how patterns of cultural behavior repeat over the centuries. Scholars within faith traditions (Jewish, Islamic) that interacted with and influenced Western Christianity will also be invited to speak.

The Universalism Site: The Universalism site, sponsored by the St. Lawrence Foundation, has been greatly enhanced by a timeline developed by Darrel Richey, a Starr King student who served as the St. Lawrence Research Assistant last year. It is probably the most extensive Universalist timeline in existence, with links to other websites, pictures of individuals and locations, and more. To view it, go to <http://www.sksm.edu> and click on the Continuing Education link. From there go to the Universalism button. There you will see the button for the timeline. This year, Starr King School's St. Lawrence Research Assistant is Hannah Wells, a third-year student with a keen interest in our Universalist history.

Justice Issues for Teens (on-line): Justice Issues for Teens, a four-unit course for younger teens, is being developed by Lyn Cox in consultation with Michael Leslie (one of our technical consultants) and Alicia Forsey. The course will be available through the Church of the Larger Fellowship via Starr King School's website. Issues such as race, the prison system, peace, and the environment are going to be the first posted, but we hope this course will be so much in demand that we will have the opportunity to address additional topics, such as animal rights, economic justice, and class issues. Lyn and Michael (an ordained minister in the Presbyterian church) have experience with this age group.

The Restitution of Christianity: *The Restitution of Christianity*, by Michael Servetus (1553), is now completely translated into English from the Latin text. Published copies will be available in time for the fall 2003 commemoration of the death of Servetus in 1553, which takes place in Spain.

Information Available On-line: For inquiries into the Earl Morse Wilbur Rare Book Collection, please see <http://online.sksm.edu>. Selected articles and papers can also be found on our website.

A Letter From Beth Williams

It's autumn in Boston. The streets are carpeted with swirling leaves of brown, red, and gold. Inside the Office of Religious Education Credentialing you will see another whirlwind. It is the activity we are generating as we further develop and refine the plan for the new Religious Education Credentialing Program of the Unitarian Universalist Association. The Religious Education Credentialing Interim Advisory Committee (Laurel Amabile, Rev. Ellen Brandenburg, Pat Ellenwood, Judith Frediani, Rev. Betty Jo Middleton, and Rev. Makaanah Morriss), Rev. David Hubner (Director of the Ministry and Professional Leadership Staff Group), and I are doing our best to develop a credentialing program for lay religious education professionals that will be accessible in design, comprehensive in scope, meaningful in implication, and available in 2003.

That is not all that happens in this office. We are also exploring design possibilities for an expanded on-line settlement system that would include a listing of directors of religious education. We are strengthening institutional supports to enhance the development of religious education as a viable profession for persons at every level.

The Religious Leader will be a primary vehicle for communicating how the Unitarian Universalist Association and others are providing these supports for lay religious education professionals. We need your help in determining the kinds of information that would be useful to you and should appear in these pages. Please contact me with your suggestions at bethwilliams@uua.org or call me at 617-948-6417.

Here is a listing of events and tools that can be useful as you further your professional development:

Meadville Lombard Winter

Institute; Dr. Parker Palmer; Spirituality and Education within the Faith Community; February 20–22, 2003; Madison, WI; more information: www.meadville.edu.

A Spiritual Praxis at First Unitarian Society of Madison (M/L Winter Add-on Option); The Courage to Teach, Winter Reflection: Exploring Your Inner Landscape; February 22, 2003, Madison, WI; more information: call First Unitarian Society at 608-233-9774.

Religious Education Week at The Mountain; July 6–11, 2003; The Mountain, Highlands, NC; more information: e-mail Susan Smith at susan.smith@mountaincenters.org.

Religious Education Conference at Star Island Religious and Educational Conference Center; July 12–19, 2003; Star Island, Isle of Shoals, NH; more information: www.starisland.org.

Religious Education Week at Ferry Beach Camp and Conference Center; July 19–25, 2003; Ferry Beach, Saco, ME; more information: www.ferrybeach.org.

The Mountain Retreat and Learning Center—Leadership School for Religious Educators; August 3–7, 2003; Walker Creek Ranch, Petaluma, CA; more information: www.mountaincenters.org.

Leadership Matters, a quarterly newsletter from Dr. Helen Bishop and The Mountain's Learning Center for Leadership on transformational leadership; more information: www.mountaincenters.org.

The Mountain's Learning Center for Leadership plans to offer an on-line course on volunteer management, beginning in January. It is designed for anyone who develops and manages volunteer programs in congregations, including religious educators; more information: contact Laurel Amabile at Laurelamabile@aol.com or 828-231-0960. ●

—Beth Williams, Religious Education Credentialing Director

SETTLEMENT

The “Professional” in “Professional Religious Leadership”

I'm well into my fifth year in the Settlement office, long enough, now, to have witnessed several dismantlings of ministerial edifices where I had attended the laying of the foundation, often sharing the early enthusiasm. Ministry and professional religious leadership—mine, and very likely yours—can be humbling work.

In the fall issue of *The Religious Leader*, I reported in connection with

the full-time positions filled during the past settlement year that ministers earlier departing those positions had been in place for a median duration of 8 years. Looking back a decade, that's pretty good. Over the past ten years, the average of the median durations of ministries in our congregations is 10% less: 7.2 years. (The average duration of the ministries themselves is 9.1 years; the

difference reflects the effect of a comparatively few, very long ministries.) As I said, I'm in my fifth year. If the numbers hold, fully half the settlements that came into being under my aegis by the end of my first year will have ended by the time another four years pass.

In my fifth year my ministry is changing underneath me. No longer am I an almost entrepreneurial

change agent, replacing one settlement system with another. I have become a gardener, in a patch of perennials. The new things that crop up are less new by the year. But the reappearance of familiar things, though often in new forms, is no less wonderful. The intimacy that comes with the passage of time and shared experience—sometimes painful experience—brings wonders of its own.

So I received an interview in a recent *Christian Century* (March 13–20, 2002, pp. 18–25) with Lutheran pastor and theologian Eugene Peterson as a great gift. Peterson reveled in intimacy. “I always preferred to go to people’s homes,” he says. “I did a lot of home and work-site visitation because I wanted to be their pastor—and I couldn’t be their pastor if they encountered me on my turf, in the place where I was the authority.”

The interviewer pushes back. “You’re describing a pastoral life that doesn’t fit squarely into the round hole we have come to call ‘the professional life,’ which is premised on the division between public and private, work and family, the personal and the social. There is a definite ‘boundary ambigu-

ty’ to the way of life you are describing [which for many pastors] . . . constitutes the unambiguous downside of the pastoral life.”

Here is Peterson’s response, worth reprinting at some length:

“I grew up in a small town and my dad was a butcher with a shop in the middle of town. Between that shop and our home, in a sense, there was no boundary. So I had modeled for me a way of life in which work and home were not distinct things. My dad addressed everyone who came into our shop by name. At one point I realized that I’m doing as a pastor just what my dad [did] as a butcher.”

Peterson goes on, “I also remember early in my ministry listening to colleagues who often seemed irritating and angry with their congregations, as if the congregation was the enemy. I remember making a conscious decision to not adopt that view. The congregation is not the enemy. They are my friends. I am their friend. We are in this together, even when we don’t like each other very much.”

And one last word from Peterson—get this! “If there was any substitute for having boundaries, it

was knowing when and how to ask for help.”

“Professionalism” and “firm boundaries” have become the controlling concepts of our practice. The uniform and uncritical application of these concepts to a complex state of affairs tends to deprive reality of its richness. As the duration of your own service as minister or religious educator in your congregation or non-religious community increases, you may find your self-conceptualization as a firm-boundaried professional to be increasingly impoverishing, putting you at a greater distance from your folks than you would wish to be. If that is so, play with some new metaphors of pastoral relationship. You could do worse than to start with “gardener” and “friend.”

If you want to know more from Peterson on asking for help, but can’t lay hands on the interview, send me a self-addressed stamped envelope and we’ll exchange information hand to hand, as friends do. ●

—John Weston,
Settlement Director

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Sanctuary

Over the Columbus holiday weekend my partner and I took a road trip from Chicago to New York City. We left Friday after work and arrived home late Sunday evening, a whirlwind of a journey.

Traveling southeast we left the familiar sights of home and soon could no longer see Chicago’s beautiful skyline and lakefront. At the Illinois–Indiana border our noses were bombarded with the stench from the toxic waste dumps and smells from the industrial steel town of Hammond. We then passed through the one-time bustling but now almost desolate city of Gary, and finally passed one of our favorite

sites of the Midwest, the restored and well-maintained Indiana Dunes. Oh, the magnificent Great Lake, industrial corridors, miles and miles of flatlands and corn, and the Sand Dunes of Illinois and Indiana.

“Look at the foliage,” we whispered as we entered the Ohio Valley. We were hoping that the leaves were starting to turn but the sights we saw made our mouths drop open and we became quiet, very quiet, as we witnessed the colors and wondered what mysteries were yet to come.

“My God!” we cried when we arrived at the doors of the Pocono Mountains and beheld the beautiful sanctuary! On my many trips to

family gatherings in Philadelphia, I had never traveled this route (through lower Pennsylvania). We felt we’d found Nirvana, what a wonderful discovery. Ray and I took our time traveling this holy passage. For five hours we drove the turnpike that is carved through the mountains, escorted by 350 miles of trees in every stage of life and death and color combination and species. At every turn and curve each new sight was more spectacular than the last, each tree arrangement and species was magnificent.

As wonderful as this was, there was danger along the way. From Chicago to New York danger signs

loomed large warning travelers to stay alert and watch out: falling rocks, deer and other animals, workers on the highway, tailgating and speeding, fire, cliffs and steep curves, and icy bridges (of which there were many). The warning of danger signs alerted us to be aware of possible death.

We made our way down from the mountains, through the suburbs of New Jersey and arrived at our destination—New York City. We were tired but exhilarated by the sanctuary. We took care of our business, fed our bodies, slept, and headed for home.

RENAISSANCE PROGRAM

More than thirty of our movement's best and most promising religious educators participated this summer in a five-day intensive training for Renaissance Leaders. Rev. Dr. Larry Peers, Alban Institute Consultant, began the program with a day of leadership development training that included personal spiritual grounding, the mentoring community, group dynamics, and adult learning theory. Each trainee then received a day of training in each of two of the nine modules available, led by the Renaissance Advisory Committee and other experienced Renaissance Leaders. Plans are now underway to maintain and expand the community of practice developed at the training through an e-mail list for module leaders and other means. This workshop, which offered the most comprehensive and intensive training in the history of the Renaissance Program, was supported by a generous grant from the Fund for Unitarian Universalism and by contributions from many district religious education committees.

—Rev. Frances Manly, Meadville
Lombard Theological School, 5701 S.
Woodlawn Avenue, Chicago, IL 60637,
Chicago office: 773-256-1655,
Buffalo office: 716-837-9230
—Jackie McGhee, Program Assistant,
773-256-3000, ext. 235,
RenProgram@meadville.edu

Heading for home my body remembered all that we had seen: memories of 9/11 (New York City, Ground Zero, Newark Airport); the carcasses of dead animals along the highway; patches of charred and leafless trees caused by fires; and abandoned cars from highway accidents. I read the danger signs when coming in but I had not noticed the death. Further fears also resurfaced: Congress' alarming vote in support of President Bush's war proposal for Iraq, and how the United States helped create Saddam; and the sniper serial killer terrorizing the citizens of the Washington, D.C., Virginia, and Maryland area. The terrorism at home and abroad all resurfaced, as did the deep concern for the lives of all the friends and family known and unknown who are affected by these events.

As we traveled through this part of the country, names and faces of colleagues who pastor in these towns flooded my mind. On the way, I thought how lucky they are to work in such beautiful parts of the country, on the return side I was reminded of the fears they and their congregants living so close to these dangerous events must be experiencing. I wondered what they preached this Sunday morning.

I thought, "Thank goodness" when we entered the Mountains again! Returning to the sanctuary of trees is such a welcome relief. Thank you Universe for helping us understand that the real journey of discovery or of healing consists not in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes.

The memories and experiences that we as a nation are currently experiencing can cause the body to shut down, become immobile, even paralyzed. We must stay alert and pay attention. Dear colleagues in such times, please:

Call, write, visit colleagues and let them know you care about what they are going through and that they are in your thoughts and hearts and prayers.

Offer help. Protest and/or write your elected officials (congregants also) and let them know what you think about issues of war and peace, life and death.

Find your Sanctuary, that place where you can return or can recall in your mind, that place which brings you welcome relief in these tough times and days ahead.

"Remember, it is forbidden to live in a town which has no garden or greenery." —Kiddushin 4:12 ●

Your Sister in the Struggle,
Michelle Bentley,
Professional Development Director

The Richard Borden Sermon Award

In an effort to promote excellence in UU sermons, Rev. William Sinkford is pleased to announce the Richard Borden Sermon Award. All UU ministers are invited to participate and submit a sermon of their choice (appropriate for UU congregations). UUA staff are ineligible.

The top three submissions will be awarded \$10,000 each. Additionally, two honorable mention awards of \$2,500 each will also be awarded.

The extraordinary generosity shown by an anonymous donor providing funds for the Richard Borden Sermon Award highlights the importance of preaching ministry in our lives. This award will recognize the theological power and diversity of sermonic excellence in the Unitarian Universalist Tradition.

UU ministers wishing to participate can find submission requirements at www.uua.org/awards or www.uua.org/ministry/bordenaward.html. Deadline for submissions is March 1, 2003 and will *only* be accepted at bordensermon@uua.org. Winners will be notified by May 1, 2003 and will be expected to present their winning sermon at the 2003 General Assembly. ●

CONTINUING EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

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

Some offerings by our colleagues include:

- Revival 2003, Feb. 27 through Mar. 2, 2003, sponsored by UUCF, Washington, D.C.; contact: <http://uucf.uua.org/revival/>.
- Meadville Lombard Winter Institute led by Rev. Parker Palmer, Feb. 20–22, 2003, Madison, WI; contact: www.meadville.edu.
- MSR Seminar led by John Weston, Mar. 5–8, 2003, Boston, MA.
- Mid Size Church Conference, sponsored by UUA Congregational Services, Mar. 6–9, 2003, Kansas City, MO.
- Accredited Interim Ministry Seminar led by John Weston, April 7–10, 2003, Santa Fe, NM.
- Basic Training for Interim Ministers led by John Weston, June 23–24, 2003, Boston, MA.
- LREDA Fall Conference with Sobonfu Some, Oct. 10–13, 2003, sponsored by LREDA, Sacramento, CA.

CHURCH STAFF FINANCES

Clergy Housing Allowance Redux

Congress and the White House have finally brought to an end the issue of whether ordained clergy can continue to receive part of their compensation free from income tax when those dollars are used to maintain a residence used in connection with one's ministry.

In the case of *Warren v. Commissioner*, the Internal Revenue Service had opened a Pandora's box of legal maneuvering that threatened to do away with the law that permits ordained ministers—like members of the US military—to avoid paying income taxes on wages used to pay for a home. After conflicting decisions by the US Tax Court and the Ninth District Court of Appeals, Congress put an end to the matter by unanimously passing the Clergy Housing Clarification Act (which President Bush eagerly signed) into law on May 20, 2002. It was estimated that failure to protect the housing allowance would result in US clergy paying an additional \$5 billion in income taxes.

Since the 1920s, ordained, licensed, or commissioned clergy have been permitted to exclude from wages subject to income tax the dollars used for mortgage payments, rent, property taxes, utilities, repairs, maintenance, improvements, homeowner's insurance, furnishings, and the other costs necessary to maintain a home. The original intent of the law was to achieve tax justice for clergy who were required to live in church-owned parsonages. It was expanded to include clergy-owned homes in 1954.

For tax year 2002 and following, the total that is excluded cannot exceed the fair market rental value of the home, plus all of the expenses listed above. The provision also applies to retired ministers who may shelter from taxes their housing expenses paid from distributions from a denominationally sponsored retirement plan, such as the one offered by the UUA.

The allowance for employed clergy should be approved by a congregation's governing board in advance and may not be increased retroactively. As in other tax matters, the allowance is reported on a calendar year basis. The allowance for retired clergy is simply the amount actually spent for this purpose during the calendar year.

Because the allowance is exempt from income tax, employers are not required to report the amount on a minister's W-2 Form, although this can be done optionally in Box 14. If a minister receives more as a housing allowance than is actually spent for that purpose, the overage must be declared as additional income on Form 1040 submitted to the IRS by April 15. The entire allowance must be reported on Schedule SE in calculating the minister's self-employment tax. We recommend that ministers receive the allowance in a separate check and not in the same check for the cash salary.

How is the fair market value of a particular home discerned? Real estate professionals can usually estimate the potential rental value of a furnished residence, and an amount can also be estimated by comparison with similar rental properties in the area. Ministers moving to new settlements should estimate the allowance needed for the first six months, and then have the board increase or decrease the amount once the actual costs of operation have been experienced.

Does the housing allowance impact the separation of church and state? Most observers feel this question is moot because the allowance is available to clergy of all faiths and does not benefit one religious body more than any other. Just as donors to religious bodies may exclude their charitable contributions from taxable income, clergy may exclude the amount expended for maintaining a residence.

A minister may claim all of the expenses of maintaining the home,

even if there are other wage earners in the household, and whether they are married or domestic partners. The clergy housing allowance expires at the death of the minister and is not inherited by survivors. Many clergy serving small congregations or working part-time may find that the allowance consumes virtually 100 percent of their wages from ministry. This provision was approved by the US Tax Court in the *Warren* case.

It is important that employed clergy be actively engaged in ministerial work in order for the allowance to be valid. Ordained persons employed in secular work forego this opportunity. However, the allowance is available to ordained chaplains, pastoral counselors, religious educators, and others engaged in community ministry. It is not necessary that the minister be employed by a con-

gregation or other religious organization to utilize this provision.

Many feel that the tax advantage of the housing allowance is offset by the self-employment social security tax that ministers pay. Unlike secular taxpayers whose employers pay one-half of the 15.3 percent social security tax, clergy pay the entire tax themselves, thus bear a double burden in this regard.

More information about the housing allowance and other clergy finance issues can be found on the website www.uua.org/ministry/ocsf. ●

2003 Compensation Survey

Clergy and laity will be interested in the 2003 survey of compensation patterns of UU

congregations that will be rolled out electronically in January. In December, congregations will receive a set of worksheets with which to organize the data they will submit electronically via the UUA website after the first of the year.

The UUA Committee on Compensation, Benefits, and Pension will add that information to cost of living and other economic data in determining the basic salary amounts that will be recommended to congregations in June. The Committee's 2003 report and recommendations will be available at the UUA General Assembly in Boston. ●

—Ralph Mero,
Church Staff
Finances Director

RESOURCES & POSSIBILITIES

Margaret Fuller Awards Program

UUWF's Margaret Fuller Awards Program provides grant funds to UUs working on projects that focus on any of the many thematic strands of UU feminist theology. The program seeks to fund accessible projects—meaning products that can be used by local congregations or other groups to further an understanding of this subject area.

Applications for the 2003 awards are due on or before February 3, 2003. Application guidelines are available from the UUWF Office, 25 Beacon St., Boston, MA 02108, 617-948-4692 (phone), or uuwf@uua.org (e-mail). ●

Meadville Lombard Presidential Search

The Board of Trustees of Meadville Lombard Theological School announces the search for a president.

Meadville Lombard engages in liberal religious scholarship and prepares persons to serve a diverse and complex world community through Unitarian Universalist ministries and other forms of liberal religious leadership.

The successful candidate will provide collaborative leadership, have a passion for liberal religion, and articulate a compelling vision and mission for the school. Especially important is the ability to lead fund development efforts as the school embarks on a campus renovation.

Meadville Lombard Theological School currently enrolls 100 students in programs of study leading to the Master of Divinity and Doctor of Ministry degrees.

Information about Meadville Lombard, the search, and the qualities expected of successful candidates can be found at www.meadville.edu/.

Nominations, applications, and expressions of interest should be sent in confidence to:

Presidential Search Committee
c/o Mary Jane Wochinger

89 Luyster Street
Huntington Station, NY 11746

Applications should consist of a letter addressing the presidential attributes listed on the website, a curriculum vitae, and the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of five professional references. The application review process will begin on January 15, 2003 with the goal of filling the position by July 2003.

Meadville Lombard Theological School is an equal opportunity, affirmative action employer and encourages the nomination and candidacy of women, persons of color, and members of other under-represented groups. ●

UU Partner Church Council

Partnership Changes Lives was the theme of the UU Partner Church Council booth at General Assembly last June, and it's not idle talk. We hear stories over and over from North

Americans involved in international partnership about the meaningful, life-changing experiences they have had.

There are Unitarian churches in Hungary and Romania (Transylvania) waiting for partners. If you think that your church is ready for international involvement, write or call us today to borrow our video *Partnership in Faith* or to receive the Exploring Partnership packet.

We want you to be involved in what former president John Buehrens called “the most important grassroots movement in our denominational history since the Civil Rights movement.” Contact us at uupcc@uaa.org or call Cathy Cordes, UUPCC Executive Director at 781-275-1710. ●

A Note of Thanks to Our Ministers

Member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association fund the Unitarian Universalist movement through the Annual Program Fund. In fiscal year 2001–2002, congregations (U.S. and overseas) contributed over \$5.5 million, 8% more than in the preceding fiscal year. This strong financial support enabled the Association to provide a multitude of services and programs to our congregations throughout the continent.

The new initiatives made possible in 2001–2002 through this increased giving include:

- an on-line clearinghouse for campus-based worship and other program ideas, at www.uaa.org/ya-cm/worship/index.html;
- an updated resource for congregations beginning or expanding their RE programs, *Starting from Scratch: How to Begin Your Own RE Program for Children and Youth*;
- “Changing Congregations, Changing Cultures,” the fifth continental conference for large congregations (the one for mid-size congregations is scheduled

for March 6–9, 2003 in Kansas City, MO);

- a social justice internship program for young adults at the UUA Washington Office for Advocacy; and
- *A Guide to Preserving Historic UU Churches* by Elaine Stiles, available on the website at www.uaa.org/info/preserving.pdf.

With an understanding of the vital role ministers play in engendering and enhancing connectedness and stewardship among congregational members, the Association wants to thank you for the support and encouragement you provided that resulted in such generosity to the “larger faith community.”

Please let me know if there is any way I can be of assistance now or in the future. E-mail me at mmiles@uaa.org or call me at 617-948-6513. ●

With deep appreciation and best wishes,
Mary L., Miles, APF Director,
Unitarian Universalist
Association of Congregations.

The UUA's Legacy Newsletter

Would you like to learn more about including the Unitarian Universalist Association in your estate plans? How about information on making a gift to the UUA, and a congregation, while also retaining some income for life? Has your financial advisor recommended that you look into creating a Charitable Remainder Trust, but you're not sure what's involved?

If you answered “yes” to any of these questions, you can find the information you are looking for in the *Legacy* newsletter. It's free, it comes out four times a year, and it features articles and information about making a planned gift to Unitarian Universalism. There are details in every issue about the various ways you can make the gift that is right for you. Plus, *Legacy* often highlights donors who have already

made their plans to support the future of our liberal religion.

To receive your free subscription to *Legacy* newsletter, simply call the UUA's Charitable Gift and Estate Planning Office toll free at 888-792-5885 or send an e-mail to giftplans@uaa.org. ●

The Religious Institute on Sexual Morality, Justice, and Healing

Available in print:

A Time to Build: Creating Sexually Healthy Faith Congregations for \$12.95 including postage and handling, from the Religious Institute, 304 Main Avenue, # 335, Norwalk, CT 06851.

There are two new resources available on our website, www.religiousinstitute.org:

“An Open Letter to Religious Leaders on Sex Education” provides a theological framework for comprehensive sexuality education.

“A Call To Action” outlines how clergy and religious educators can be involved in promoting comprehensive sexuality education and resisting abstinence-only education.

They are both available for free as pdf files. ●

Debra W. Haffner, Director,
Religious Institute for Sexual
Morality, Justice, and Healing,
304 Main Avenue, # 335,
Norwalk, CT 06851, 203-840-1148,
haffner@religiousinstitute.org

UFETA

Fifth Annual Albert Schweitzer Sermon Award

UFETA (Unitarian Universalists for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) announces the fifth annual Albert Schweitzer Sermon Award. The award, which carries an honorarium of \$400, will be given to the Unitarian Universalist presenter of a sermon that best exemplifies Schweitzer's principle of “reverence for life.”

The sermon must have been delivered before a UU congregation between April 1, 2002 and March 31, 2003. Recipients also must be planning to attend the 2003 UUA General Assembly in Boston where he or she will deliver the prize-winning sermon in a special worship service.

Please submit sermons by April 1, 2003 as a hard copy and as an e-mail attachment to Rev. LoraKim Joyner, amoloros@juno.com, 4425 Byron St., Unitarian Universalist Community of El Paso, El Paso, TX 79930. ●

WorshipWeb

Call for Worship Resources

WorshipWeb is an on-line collection of Unitarian Universalist worship resources for worship leaders, both lay and ordained. Conceived in 1999, the project was implemented in 2000 through funding from "Handing on the Future," the UUA's capital fund campaign. We gratefully acknowledge the assistance of members of the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association in providing initial resources for WorshipWeb. The Lifespan Faith Development staff

group will manage the next phase of the project's development. If you have written chalice lighting words, prayers, meditations, words to open or close a service, or other worship resources, we'd like to see them. We are interested in receiving liturgical elements or entire services for special occasions: life transitions, to comfort following a tragedy, to mark holidays and holy days, intergenerational pieces, ethnic and cultural celebrations. Send submissions for consideration to Rev. Marjorie Bowens-Wheatley, UUA, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, MA 02108, or e-mail mbowenswheatley@uua.org ●

St. Lawrence Foundation for Theological Education

The St. Lawrence Foundation for Theological Education offers two awards for students preparing to enter the Unitarian Universalist ministry. Students who are currently enrolled in theological school and who have been admitted to candidacy status with the UUA are eligible to apply.

(Last year's winners are not eligible.)

Applicants should submit a 1,000 word essay reflecting on the following questions: "As you prepare for the ministry, what historical or contemporary figure most challenges you? What aspects of this person's life, work, and thought speak most deeply to your own ministerial call? How is this person influencing your thinking, your vision, and your preparation for the role of minister?" The essay, without signature or identification, should be placed inside a separate envelope and included in the main envelope along with a separate sheet stating only your name, postal address, phone, e-mail address, and school or program affiliation. Entries must be postmarked by March 15, 2003, and sent to:

St. Lawrence Foundation Award
c/o Rev. Frances Manly
35 Tillinghast Place
Buffalo, NY 14216

Winners of the \$1,000 first place and \$500 second place awards will be announced by May 10, 2003. For more information, contact Frances Manly at the address above or via e-mail at Franly@aol.com. ●



The Religious Leader

NEWS FROM THE UUA MINISTRY & PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP STAFF GROUP

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST ASSOCIATION
25 BEACON STREET
BOSTON, MA 02108

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