From the President . . .

Andy Karlson is now the Rev. Andy Karlson. He was ordained on Sunday, September 18, 2011 by the Mt. Diablo Unitarian Universalist congregation in Walnut Creek, CA. Andy is a hospital chaplain, and he is taking the saving message of Unitarian Universalism everyday to patients, their families, and hospital staff in Walnut Creek.

Back in the 1980s, when I was on the UUA Extension Staff in Boston, the Rev. Jody Shipley came to see me. She had a vision she was working on and she wanted to talk about it. She believed our Unitarian Universalist message needed to be embodied and proclaimed beyond the walls of our congregations. She wanted a new wave of Unitarian Universalist ministers to flood the streets and organizations of our cities and towns to help in the transformation of our communities. And she wanted these “community ministers” to be recognized and appreciated.

On November 12, 1988, Jody and 36 others signed the Proclamation and Covenant that formed the Society for the Larger Ministry, the precursor to the Unitarian Universalist Society for Community Ministries. Jody is no longer with us, but if she were still alive I’d be glad to tell her that the Berkeley church has five Community Ministers formally affiliated.

Her vision has become a reality. Our UU ministry reaches into hospitals and hospices, prisons and schools, counseling, therapy, and spiritual direction rooms, and so much more.

The UUMA has done a better job of serving parish-based ministers. Our vision grows as our ministry changes. We are committed to helping realize Jody’s vision because, as she said it, the world will be a better place when UU values are more widely lived.

Watching Andy receive ordination, participating in laying my hands upon him, I realized how far we have come. Heartfelt thanks go to all of you who have worked to make Community Ministry a vital part of Unitarian Universalism. And, as you know, there is more work to do!

There is much excitement and effort in the UUMA this fall. Our newly-formed Guidelines Committee, co-chaired by Helen Carroll and Fred Muir has already met and is taking on the challenge of developing language to guide our discussion of professional sexual ethics. CENTER is hard at work developing materials for our new coaching program, Beyond the Call - Preaching and Worship Arts and Who Are Our Neighbors?, our next UUMA wide conversation. And they continue to plan for our Institute for Excellence in Ministry in January 2013.

Executive Director Don Southworth will keep us informed of these new initiatives through his regular emails.

Your Exec Committee will meet October 24-28, in Phoenix. We look forward to meeting with our colleagues there and planning UUMA Days leading into the UUA Justice GA. In Phoenix we will have the assistance of the Rev. Clark Olsen as we review and update our UUMA Strategic Plan. We expect to be proposing to you bylaw changes to reconfigure the Exec in line with our mission and the changes brought by having a fulltime Executive Director.

It’s an exciting time to be involved with the UUMA. It is an honor to serve you.

May you have a rewarding and renewing autumn.

Blessings,

Bill Hamilton-Holway, President
In September I offered my first “official” right hand of fellowship at a colleague’s ordination. I also spent an afternoon at the Andover Library on the Harvard Divinity School campus looking through 45 years of UUMA archives. I was surprised by the similarity of the experiences.

The right hand of fellowship is a centuries old ritual. It is a symbolic connection to our ministerial ancestors as well as our present and future colleagues. It is a reminder that we ministers are part of a vocation and a role that is much bigger than us as individuals. I find it to be both humbling and empowering.

I was surprised by how humbling and empowering it was to review our UUMA artifacts from the past. There were boxes and boxes of minutes from annual meetings and committees; there were training programs and strategic plans and recommendations; there were orders of service and letters. Lots of letters. (I forgot there was a time we wrote letters!)

I was moved by the hard work that so many have done over the years to serve the UUMA. I was encouraged and disappointed to see that the challenges and issues of ministry have not changed much over the decades. I was humbled to see that many of the ideas and programs I sometimes think are “new” are not new at all. I was honored to be surrounded by the names of people, some departed, who have helped create the UUMA we have today.

On October 1 I will celebrate my two year anniversary as UUMA Executive Director. In my first two years we have worked hard to create programs, collaborations and possibilities to show we could be a stronger professional association. In year three I am hoping that more and more UUMA members will get involved in our new programs (i.e. coaching, Beyond the Call, Who Are Our Neighbors?) so we can continue to live out our mission to nurture excellence in ministry through continuing education and collegiality.

We are fortunate to be part of a living tradition that has inspired our lives and has been passed down for generations. On those days when we feel the sometimes heavy burdens of our roles, when we feel more loneliness than joy in our callings, may we remember that we are not alone. An ordination reminds us of this, so can rummaging through boxes of musty handwritten/typewritten mementos from long ago. May each of us offer our hands to each other and create lives and artifacts worthy of our best aspirations. Who knows what sermon, what note, what newsletter article someone might find in a box and read 40 years from today!

Don Southworth
Executive Director
Engaging the Unexpected

“We need one another when we could accomplish some great purpose and cannot do it alone.”

The first night, the twenty-five of us gathered in a large circle. After preliminary introductions, we broke into small groups for more in-depth check in. The evening ended with informal groupings of colleagues sharing wine and stories. For the next two days, the sharing continued, embedded in a program on congregational conflict resolution.

Sound familiar? No, this wasn’t my own Chapter’s fall retreat. This time, I was representing the UUMA in Great Hucklow, England with the “Unitarian Fellowship” – our British counterpart. I attended as part of our continued efforts to support our international colleagues, who are equally called to deliver the saving message of liberal religion.

These twenty-five ministers represented most of the ministers for the entire United Kingdom. In England, a ‘large church’ has an average Sunday attendance of about 60 people. Most ministers serve congregations of 15 – 20 people, in historic buildings built shortly after the radical reformation. While the passion for liberal religion thrives amongst these colleagues, the fear of its demise is ever-present.

Although the sense of collegiality was strong, due to both their size and their resources, British Unitarian ministers have a skeleton of an organization compared to the UUMA. I returned to this country both inspired by the tenacity of our British colleagues, and grateful for the professional association we have built.

What a privilege we have here with the resources of the UUMA! This newsletter is full of opportunities for collegiality and professional development. Avail yourself of them. Find a way to learn something through the UUMA, and to give something back as well. So that together, we might better serve the great purpose of liberal religion in the world.

All our lives we are in need, and others are in need of us. - George E. Odell

Lydia Ferrante-Roseberry, Vice President

From the Treasurer . . .

We closed the books on fiscal year 2010-2011 with a surplus! The net surplus was about $46,000 in total. You may recall in the Treasurer’s report in Charlotte last June, it was reported that dues would go to 1% a year from now rather than this fiscal year. The surplus is what allowed us to make that increase more gradually than at first expected. The reason we have this surplus is that we are still refining our method of anticipating dues income given our new structure. While we always want to err a little bit on the side of being conservative with income, it seems we were more conservative than we thought. The other reason for the surplus is the excellent fiscal management done by our UUMA staff in keeping expenses under control. The surplus allows us to have a reserve equal to three month's operating expenses which strengthens our financial health.

Thank you to all of the UUMA members for paying your dues in a timely manner. That is the main reason we are doing so well financially. Just a reminder that the deadline for Membership dues is November 15. Please be sure to renew your membership well before that date so that we can begin this year’s projections with the most accurate number possible.

Finally, I want to thank Janette Lallier and Don Southworth for their patience in getting me up to speed with the financial processes and procedures of the UUMA. Most of all I want to thank my colleague and predecessor Marni Harmony for her excellent service during her tenure as Treasurer. The UUMA today is perhaps as financially strong as it has ever been thanks to Marni and her vision. She has made it very easy to pick up where she left off.

Collegially,

Josh Snyder, Treasurer
The first fifty are the hardest; all the rest is commentary. I think my 50-year colleagues would agree. There was little quality control fellowshipping ministers in 1961. Caught on the cusp of consolidation, we freshly minted graduates could seek timely fellowship in our respective faiths or wait to become the first Universalist-fellowshipped clergy. I chose the former; my MFC equivalent was a friendly conversation in the rear pews of our Binghamton Church between sessions of the New York State Convention of Universalists. The three committee members had known me from knee-high to a grasshopper; we had a brief chat; they were satisfied, and that was that. I hesitate to confess this to those running the MFC gauntlet today.

Despite lack of quality control, we were a good group: Rex Styzens, Chuck Gaines, Ron Marcy, Ron Knapp, Bob Thayer, Kim Beach, Farley Wheelwright, Ron Cook, Berkley Moore, Robert Fulghum, Bob Ross, Richard Kellaway and Hunter Leggitt. I have their responses to my inquiry for updates if you are interested.

Thanks be for these good and faithful colleagues and those no longer among us.

Reflecting on the nifty fifty, I recall the words of E. B. White: "It's hard to know when to respond to the seductiveness of the world and when to respond to its challenges. If the world were merely seductive, that would be easy. If it were merely challenging, that would be no problem. But I arise in the morning torn between the desire to improve the world and a desire to enjoy the world. This makes it hard to plan the day."

Or to plan a life. To enjoy the world or to improve the world – or perhaps both – even at the same time. On the one hand, I think retirees need a mission in life beyond collecting Social Security and playing with grandchildren, as necessary as is the first, and as satisfying as is the second. I think of the Gray Panther founder Maggie Kuhn who said, "To rest is to rust." There is that Puritan streak in me – you know - the Puritan who worries that someone, somewhere is having a good time.

On the other hand, it is also time to enjoy the world just a bit more, and so from time to time I practice the “shirk ethic,” counterpoint to the “work ethic” at which we are so proficient.

O God of Work and Leisure
Teach me to shirk on occasion,
Not only that I may work more effectively
But also that I may enjoy life more abundantly.
Enable me to understand that the earth
Magically continues spinning on its axis
Even when I am not tending thy vineyards.
Permit me to breathe more easily
Knowing the destiny of the race
Rests not on my shoulders alone.
Deliver me from false prophets who urge me
To "repent and shirk no more."
I pray for thy grace on me,
Thy faithful shirker.

Theologian Frederick Buechner I think has ministry about right: “The vocation for you is the one in which your deep gladness and the world’s deep need meet – something that not only makes you happy but that the world needs to have done.”

Some of my most powerful spiritual experiences have come when I try to be one of those “drum majors for justice,” as Martin Luther King, Jr., would say. I learned about pastoral care and justice when I attended the 1963 March on Washington and heard King for the first time. Upon my return to First Unitarian Church of Cleveland, I told the congregation “why we marched” and was astounded when a church pillar who had warned against my participation was first to thank me for what I had done and said.

In 1965 my path once again crossed that of Dr. King – in Selma – the memorial service for James Reeb. Unable to get into the Browns Chapel sanctuary, I stood in an ante-room where he literally brushed my arm on his way to the pulpit. That experience propelled me from my doctoral studies back into parish ministry, where the action was.

I was right. The First Unitarian Church of Ithaca and Cornell University provided a nexus for further deep experiencing. I came to befriend Dan Berrigan and worked with him through the deaths of King and Robert Kennedy, and those tumultuous years of the 60’s.

I will never forget the Cornell graduation of 1970 when the President, a member of my congregation, invited me to deliver the invocation and benediction. It was just days after Kent State and the ritual was interrupted by protesting seniors who stormed the platform. I knew them through the peace movement, but also knew the university mace-bearer, another congregant, who defended the stage with that sturdy weapon, while I tried to be peacemaker. It is a scene etched forever in my memory. I fancied myself an establishment radical – dealing with members of the establishment who sat in my congregation - bringing to them what I thought was a prophetic perspective.
That became more evident as I chaired an economic justice task force at the request of UUA president Paul Carnes. We developed a rather radical statement on the U.S. economy, and I was called on the carpet before the UUA Board to justify it. That experience left me with the question “can a prophet chair the board?” translated – can a movement which has benefited from our economic system bring to it a prophetic critique? I explored that in my book How Much Do We Deserve? I am still critiquing and still wondering. And I am still waiting for the prophetic imperative to alert and enliven our movement to the troubling times in which we live, reminding all who will hear that peace and justice work is not an extra-curricular activity.

Thanks be for experiences like these – and a movement that enabled me to be what Bill Moyer calls “a public nuisance” - and still keep my job.

These fifty nifty have also brought me some powerful personal experiences. Like the time in Cleveland, my first church, when, with no clinical pastoral education or internship, I made my first bereavement call. Red-head, brush cut, all of twenty-four, what did I know about death? Not very much, but I concluded the mere fact of my presence represented not just a rookie preacher, but a whole religious community. The ministry is not all about me – or you – but about a community we are privileged to lead and represent.

Pastoral care at time of death and memorial services that follow always conveyed a feeling that I was really doing ministry. I sat at the bedside of a World War Two conscientious objector with his wife in home hospice as he was dying by refusing nourishment. Or the time I was with my colleague Helena Chapin as she died. It was enough to be there. As was often the case, I was more ministered unto than I ministered.

More recently in Rochester, I was catapulted from retirement to do a memorial service for a former parishioner who had been strangled by her husband. I knew and loved both; they were choir members, musicians who had sung at our younger son’s wedding. We had recently been in their home and detected nothing of what was to come. I led her memorial and have been visiting him in jail and prison. Another challenge for which there is little seminary training – nothing to do but be there.

Thanks be for the hard times when we are reminded what it is to be a minister.

Those moments have been more than balanced by the joyous times of ministry: child dedications when crying – or laughing – babies steal the show – even the Christmas candlelight service when my year-old first-born sent the congregation into waves of laughter by giving a Bronx cheer as Angus Hector MacLean named him.

And, oh, yes, the weddings – trying to be the only cool head in the room, whispering to bride and groom about the importance of breathing. There were unforgettable trips to Boston with Rochester’s coming of age group, trying to excite them about Waldo’s boulder in Concord’s Sleepy Hollow Cemetery; force marching them around Thoreau’s Walden Pond; pointing out the UU statuary at the State House while they seem more interested in the Boston Garden ducklings, hoping some spiritual osmosis occurred. And the privilege of preaching – having the more or less undivided attention of a congregation for an hour – or in my case likely more – while I indulged in what I call “spiritual streaking.”

Which brings me to spirituality – that squishy word so often pronounced and so little understood – at least by me. I grew up in a Universalist Church as a theistic Christian. My first sermon was preached at 14: “Are you a true Christian or a Christian only in name?” Returning to the church of my childhood last year I reprised that question with a slightly different sermon. But thanks be for those good people who indulged a youthful sermon and welcomed me back into the same pulpit, though it had moved from Universalist to United Church of Christ.

From my rather pious Universalist Christianity I became a seminary atheist – or perhaps agnostic. My theology has gradually evolved into a mystical religious humanism.

I have come to reject a competitive spirituality which tries to persuade others of its depth. I approach theology and spiritual experience not from an apologetic perspective – trying to demonstrate the absolute necessity of my views as central to the very survival of our movement. Rather, I take a confessional approach – confessing why I do what I do and let my life speak, as Emerson said, “so loudly that you cannot hear what I say.”

Rather than decry the theological diversity among us, as if there were one true liberal religious way, I rejoice in a rich variety in which it is possible to learn something. I once did a sermon series on UU theological perspectives – in the first half of the sermon making as good a case as I could for each, and in the second half critiquing what I had just said. It was an exercise in appreciative inquiry for me – and I like to think – the congregation.

My Building Your Own Theology was intended as a group process enriching to all who were open enough not only to expose their deepest values, meanings and convictions, but also to receive with gratitude those of their fellow pilgrims. I will never forget the night in Ithaca when we listened to one of the finest UU’s I’ve ever known, a country doctor who shared his spiritual autobiography with us one night, and died suddenly the very next day.

Thanks be for all those who build community by building their own theology.

Retirement is a mixed blessing. It is a full-time job, with no coffee breaks, no days off, no vacations, no sabbaticals and no pay checks. It is not for the faint of heart.
I probably have too many irons in the chalice, if you know what I mean. By grace I have been granted good health, a faithful companion of 50 years, two fine sons, a charming daughter-in-law and three beautiful grandchildren. I still love to preach and teach, and dread the time when there will no longer be invitations to do so. Then my Universalist theology kicks in. “What Are We Worth When Motionless?” So often we are defined by what we do. What happens when we can no longer “do,” when we must be content just to be? I conclude being there is the end game in ministry and in life.

And so, thanks be for these:

- For colleagues who know we are all just “temps,” ultimately “interim” ministers, always with a beginning – and an ending;
- For activists who are faithful to the dream of Beloved Community though it seems a receding possibility;
- For congregations who suffered sermons too long and too intellectual and who taught me the wisdom of feeling and story;
- For friends who didn’t quite know how to be friends with their minister, but who figured it out;
- For a rich history, about which we are still too ignorant, but which sustains us even to this day and beyond;
- For a future that beckons, even if forebodingly.
- For fifty nifty years and the privilege in being a minister in them.

I conclude with an excerpt from Robert Frost’s Masque of Reason in which God and Job converse about their initial encounter. God thanks Job for his performance; Job counters:

“All very splendid. I am flattered proud
To have been in on anything with You.
’Twas a great demonstration if You say so.
Though incidentally I sometimes wonder
Why it had to be at my expense.”

God responds: “It had to be at somebody's expense.
Society can never think things out:
It has to see them acted out by actors,
Devoted actors at a sacrifice –
The ablest actors I can lay my hands on.”

And after all, we are just actors in this great cosmic drama. And so, after the first fifty, the nifty fifty, I have just three words of advice for all who are actors - and that is all of us. My advice? Break a leg.

**MAKING A PATH**

– Lindi Ramsden –
Celebrating 25 years in Ministry
June 22, 2011 – Charlotte, NC

Because Rev. Ramsden talk was given from notes rather than text what follows is an edited transcription.

To listen to the talk visit [http://www.uuma.org/page/2011_25audio](http://www.uuma.org/page/2011_25audio)

Isn’t Cathy (Rion) great? When I was informed that I needed to invite someone to introduce me, at first I thought about asking Rob Eller-Isaacs because he’s the minister that jump-started me into all of this; however, he’s not available, because of a family wedding. Then I realized, “No, it actually needs to be Cathy.” When celebrating 25 years, I should ask someone coming on up into our ministry, someone who has taught me so much going forward. So here I am at age 57, celebrating 25 years of ministry, being introduced by Cathy in the same service with Dick Gilbert, on the 50th Anniversary of the merger.... I mean, how much better does it get than that?

So, let me begin by congratulating you all on making it here after another year of ministry!

I was remembering my first General Assembly after my first year in the parish. That first year in the parish looked very long. I looked at all those Sundays stretched out for months ahead, then I looked at how many sermons I already had in the bag from my internship, and I figured out... I could dole out one a month from the already written pile so I wouldn’t totally crash along the way. When I got to General Assembly, I could quite believe I had arrived. I had made it through a whole year! To witness colleagues talking about 25 and 50 years of ministry seemed like... well, I don’t know what it seemed like, but it didn’t seem like me.

When you get ordained, it’s not like they give you a roadmap. They ask you to enter into a promise, and they ask you to be thoughtful about who your guides are along the way. I haven’t really had much of a roadmap on this journey of ministry, but I have had some great guides.

I’ve also had a lot of those, “So now what am I supposed to do?” moments. Moments when I’m really not sure which way to go.
In church we sing the song “Never Turning Back”; the song’s message is true in that we are committed to moving forward. However, having spent a lot of my time back-packing in the Sierras (I am fatefully drawn to cross-country travel), I know that there are times when forward movement appears blocked, and while you are still trying to get to a certain goal, you are definitely not going in a... “straight” line. ….. Yes, that was intentional.

My spouse Mary Helen has been essential to that journey. She has always tried to maintain her own pulpit. Not that she’s another minister, but that she has her own calling. I found that her having her own calling to be an essential component of a collaborative family life over the years.

And then there is our son, Ben, who’s now 26, almost 27 and who was nine months old when I started this journey. To be able to grow up with your son as you grow up in ministry, and as he grows up into Unitarian Universalism has also been an incredible window into what it means to be family inside our Unitarian Universalist faith. My ministry has also been blessed by incredible lay leaders and so many colleagues.

People have been important to the journey and so has my sense of Spirit. Each morning, when I am trying to figure out “OK, what do I do now?”, a simple prayer comes to me “Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace.” It does help to feel connected to reality that is bigger than my own will. Although when I am really in a bad place, it is less like a prayer and more like a moan, “Make me an instrument of thy peeeeeease!”

I remember April of 1986, very early in my ministry, when Reagan decided to bomb Muammar Gaddafi’s compound in Libya and killed Gaddafi’s adopted baby daughter. I thought, “OK, I’m the minister of the church, Sunday’s coming up… this is the first heart breaking US bombing during my young ministry, what am I supposed to say?” I remember later in my parish career in 1995 when the church burned down. “What am I supposed to do now?”

In addition to some of hard realities for which I did not always feel adequately prepared by seminary classes, there were also great opportunities – such as our Salvadoran janitor Edgar asked us, “Why don’t we have services in Spanish like they do across the street at the Episcopal Church?” Or when a homeless teenager asked if he could become our foster son and move in and live with us. The decisions in both cases launched us on incredible journeys.

Ministry is kind of like hiking cross-country. You just never really know how you’re going to get there. Along the way, I have walked into dead ends. I’ve gotten lost. I’ve been confused.

But.. You do start to make a path by walking it.

I feel very fortunate to have begun my ministry in Silicon Valley where the culture values entrepreneurial risk-taking. Just go try out an idea! Failure is really not such a sin, rather, it’s a way to learn and prepare for the next step along the way.

Currently, I’m serving in a community ministry with the UU Legislative Ministry of California, and I find that those, “Now what?” moments continue to challenge me, even more strongly. (At least in the parish ministry there are a lot of us, and we can figure it out together.) In starting a statewide advocacy network, we not only lack maps, there are not many guides, nor colleagues nor blueprints from which to build.

Recently, we’ve been working on a ‘Human Right to Water’ bill package. We’re so excited about this collaborative effort with UUSC, which has sent their lobbyist out to California to help. They know that what happens in California, in contrast to Las Vegas, doesn’t stay in California; it rolls out beyond our borders.

While most of the bills in our human right to water bill package are attracting bi-partisan support, I just found from a text I received in the airport while arriving here, that our main Human Right to Water bill is stuck in committee. The text message reads, “The bill is stuck in rules committee. If it doesn’t get out by today it’s done.”

So let’s see: 916-651-4006, that’s Senator Darryl Steinburg’s number, and those of you in California, please talk to me afterwards, we do need to call today!

Twenty-five years is a lot of ministry. Some of my 25 year colleagues are here and many others who are not able to be here wrote back when I sent them an inquiry asking about what they have learned and seen over the years. All have done incredible service.

Our 25 year class includes ministers who have been serving in solo parish ministries, in teams, consulting, as interims and on the UUMA Exec. Our folks are writing books, offering spiritual life coaching, wedding ministries, interfaith and multi-cultural ministries. They’ve served in Canada, Wyoming, Georgia, Wisconsin, Arizona, Colorado, Oregon, Florida, Maryland, New Hampshire, Minnesota, and North Carolina... and that information only represents the colleagues I was able to reach.

Over those 25 years, our class reports serving in some satisfying, growing, healthy congregations as well as experiencing moments of being totally burned out. There have been negotiated resignations and a pained wonderment about how such dis-ease can be allowed to flourish in some of our congregations.
Since 1986 we’ve seen a kind of tipping point as more and more women came into our ministry. Sexual ethics was brought to the fore, and LGBT clergy now have a much easier time finding work.

In remembering these couple decades of ministry, I flash back on General Assemblies early in my career where the LGBT clergy would have to meet secretly, gathering at 10 or 11 pm late in some room in the convention center when the hallways were empty. We’d pass around little notes to each other to spread the word of where the meeting was. I believe we were called the Lambda Ministers Guild. Closeted ministers serving congregations had to show enormous courage just to walk down the hall and enter the room.

But look what we’ve done over the years. Look what you’ve done. Look what we’ve all done!

I know that my own role in this change has been to just show up and be myself; other people actually did the hard work of praying open those doors. I thank Bill Hamilton-Holway for essentially assigning me to San Jose as an Extension Minister. Having been in the search process, I know that when search committees have so many different clergy that they can look at, they’re a little bit intimidated to go back to their congregation and report, “Well, the best we could do was a 30 year old lesbian with no experience!” I’m very grateful to be an affirmative action girl!

In hearing from my 25 year colleagues, one of the most helpful comments that I got back was from Ruth Gibson, who served in our ministry of religious education. She commented how when she was growing up in our faith that there was an assumption that children should be free, “to choose a religion for themselves when they grow up, and that it really didn’t matter at all which church we chose to belong to. There was nothing to invite us or welcome us into membership, and in nearly every gathering in UUs, 80-90% of us were ‘come-outers.’”

Ruth went on to write about how excited she is about the advent of Coming of Age programs, and a shift in our culture. She says, “I believe that we now have an intention to raise children in our faith tradition, with a clearly expressed invitation and hope they will stay with us. It reflects a change in our assumptions about ourself and our faith. It’s not so unusual now to find people in our congregations who grew up UU, and 25 years from now, I trust it will be even less so.”

Let’s say, “Hooray!” to that!

I personally care about youth engagement because that’s how I got into ministry. In 1970 I was 16. I was on a bus and we were riding back from Tijuana. It was 9 hour ride on the bus, and I was trying to write my first sermon for Sunday morning on a napkin with a flashlight. (Some things haven’t changed. Maybe the napkin and the flashlight, but I still write on Saturday night and early Sunday morning. You can see a lot that way. One morning I got up, there were four raccoons in my kitchen. If I hadn’t been a writer, I never would have noticed!)

In any case, our church youth group had gone to the Christian Hacienda in Tijuana. We had done a weeklong service project. We were two busses of high school kids, coming back full of faith, full of spirit, full of ourselves, full of each other. Really, what more could you ask for? The minister had asked me to be the co-chair of that trip. In his own quiet, humble way, he modeled and guided me into a servant leadership ministry.

And so I went to college to study with Dr. Robert McAfee-Brown. I thought I was going to be a UCC minister; however, the more I studied theology, the more I realized that I didn’t exactly believe in the theory of atonement, even though I am a fan of Jesus and his teachings. Not long after, I figured out I was a lesbian and I knew there wasn’t a big line for lesbian ministers who didn’t exactly believe all the Christian doctrine in the UCC church.

I started thinking about Plan B and graduated in Human Biology.

Along the way I started meeting UU seminary students, including Anne Heller, whom I first met when I was 18 while working in a Girl Scout Camp. Actually, it was Girl Scouts that, in many ways, lead me to Unitarian Universalism. I met Mark Belletini at Girl Scout camp, I met Barbara Pescan at camp, and they started saying, “Well maybe you ought to think again about seminary. You could come to the UU seminary; we’ll take you.”

And so I went to seminary, never having been to a UU church in my life. I was not, however, initially planning to be a UU minister. I kept my day job. I knew there wasn’t a big line for lesbian ministers, even though there were others ahead of me who had been opening those doors.

It really was through the encouragement of Rob Eller-Isaacs saying, “Come on, come do an internship with me” that I got a chance to work with him and the amazing First Unitarian Church of Oakland. They helped me fall in love with congregational life all over again. Bill Hamilton-Holway helped me to gain access to ministry in San Jose, and as they say, the rest is 25 years of history.

So here we are, looking forward. For those of you starting out, and for those of us continuing, I’d say we are finding ourselves in an even more “mapless” era. Climate change is enormous! It’s stunning! It throws everything into question! Communication systems are breaking everything open. This is a moment in which we really must make a path.
As we move forward I believe we need to focus on two things:

1) continuing to invest in our young leaders, because this is a multi-generational endeavor

2) training, education, and collaboration in our justice ministries, because the issues are far too big and complex to be left to lone congregations or separate UU institutions to solve.

In order to be more effective, I’d also like to see us expand our concept of congregation. Having served both in parish and community ministry, I know that our congregations are our vital gems, at the core of our faith. However, if it is true that five out of every six people who say they’re Unitarian Universalists are not currently in congregations, perhaps our concept of congregational memberships and dues is a little off. Perhaps we need to find a way to measure our mission and our ministry.

As to money, let’s think about how each of us can invest in our shared ministries.

First, we must invest in your young people. That seems obvious.

Second, whether or not you are a member, do invest in a congregation. If you’re not currently active in a congregation, find one to support financially. You can give to Ricky Hoyt’s congregation in LA, they are an historic justice oriented congregation on the mend and they need the money! Find a congregation which you feel you can support, even if you’re not personally there.

And lastly, it is critical to donate to that which will build the collaborative infrastructure that can connect and sustain us. We cannot do this alone.

As the poet Adrianne Rich writes:

XIII
The rules break like a thermometer,
quicksilver spills across the charted systems,
we’re out in a country that has no language
no laws, we’re chasing the raven and the wren
through gorges unexplored since dawn
whatever we do together is pure invention
the maps they gave us were out of date
by years…. *

When we enter ministry, we are not given maps into the unknown future. But we can be faithful guides and companions to one another as we make a path.

Thank you for such a gift.

Amen.

* The quote from Adrienne Rich is from Twenty-One Love Poems in Dream of a Common Language

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**A New Association for UU Membership Professionals!**

This new association promises networking, resource and idea sharing, professional development and collegiality to UU’s who are committed to the growth of their congregation.

Some upcoming UUAMP projects include: a mentoring program for new Membership Professionals, regular webinars and workshops to address common membership issues, and ongoing dialog about consistent standards for membership professionals across the UUA.

The UUAMP also wants to support congregations that do not have a paid staff member in this role. They maintain a comprehensive list of membership resources is available on their website: [http://www.uuamp.org/](http://www.uuamp.org/) and will offer our webinars and workshops to anyone dedicated to membership work within our congregations.

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**Gathered Here**

What if you could tap into—even grow—the passion and energy that your congregation has shown at its best? What if you could channel this energy and share it with other congregations in the area to achieve significant goals?

It can happen. Gathered Here is a UUA-wide initiative co-sponsored by the UUA administration, the UUA board, the UU Ministers Association and other UU organizations. It uses an Appreciative Inquiry approach to engage congregants in interviews and “community conversations.” Congregants reflect on their most positive experiences as a UU, along with their hopes and dreams for their congregations and the movement.

Gathered Here interviews have already begun. Now is the time to sign up to take part in this historic initiative. All of the materials are free and will be available for downloading from the UUA website. For additional information, visit the Gathered Here page on the UUA’s website, uua.org. (http://www.uua.org/uuagovernance/vision/index.shtml)
And We Remember . . .

The Rev. Dr. David H. Cole died on June 27, 2011. He was 90 years old. Rev. Cole was born in Lynn, MA, on April 5, 1921 to Milton N. and Lorena K. Cole. Rev. Cole graduated from Tufts University in 1945 and Tufts University Crane School of Theology in 1947. He received an honorary doctorate from Meadville Lombard and the University of Chicago in 2005.

He served at the UU Church in Danvers, MA, where he was ordained in 1947; the First Universalist Society of Chicago, IL; the Unitarian Universalist Church in Urbana, IL; the Unitarian Church of Rockville, MD; and the West Shore Unitarian Church in Rocky River, OH. Following retirement, he served as Interim Minister at the Benevolent Fraternity of Unitarian Universalist Churches in Boston, MA; the Pacific Unitarian Church of Rancho Palos Verdes, CA; the Southwest Unitarian Universalist Church of Strongsville, OH; Olmstead Unitarian Universalist Church in Olmstead, OH; the Unitarian Universalist Church of Surprise, AZ; the Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Shelter Rock in Manhasset, Long Island, NY. Through summers and after the family moved to Maine, Rev. Cole welcomed the invitation to preach at the Midcoast Unitarian Universalist fellowship in Edgecomb, ME, from 1963-2007 (now meeting in Damariscotta, ME). He was Minister Emeritus at West Shore Unitarian Church of Rocky River, OH.

Rev. Cole was an active and longtime member on many boards and committees within the denomination and within the greater communities in which he and his family lived. As a strong proponent of a world community, he traveled to Germany after WWII for the UU Service Committee to help set up housing for displaced children and orphans. He also was an advocate of Palestinian issues following visits to Israel. He was a delegate at conferences of the International Association for Religious Freedom in Belgium and Transylvania and traveled to Prague on aid missions to help revitalize their historic congregation. He was instrumental in the founding of the Society for Larger Ministry (now known as the Society for Community Ministries) and served as its first chair.

His hobbies included sailing on the Maine coast every summer, carpentry, gardening, tennis, golf, and playing bridge or cribbage with his friends, for whom he held great affection. He also enjoyed meeting annually in Sudbury, MA, with the clergy study group, the Fraters of the Wayside Inn.

Rev. Cole is survived by his wife of 47 years, Iska (Jurasek-Godsey) Cole along with their children (and partners); Lynda and Albert Hurt of Spokane, WA; Karen and Monte Edelstein of Newcastle, ME; Cynthia and Lyle Johanson of Spokane, WA; Kevin and Katie Godsey of Marble Hill, MO; Gloria Martin of Wrentham, MA; Victoria Staples and partner Victor of Glen Allen, VA; and Steven Cole of Cleveland, OH. He also left several grandchildren; Natalie and Sydney Martin; Justin Bickson and partner Rylee with great-granddaughter, Teagyn; and Joshua and Melissa Eager with great-grandchildren, Ryan and Jason. Notes of condolence may be sent to his wife Iska Cole, 7 Outlook Lane, Brunswick, ME 04011.

The Rev. Dorothy W. Kimble died on July 1, 2011. She was 69 years old. Rev. Kimble was born in Natick, MA, on May 27, 1942, to Joseph and Edith (Carter) Wilson. Rev. Kimble received her RN from the Beth Israel School of Nursing in 1963, her BA from Framingham State College in 1976, and her Master of Divinity from Andover Newton Theological School in 1981.

Rev. Kimble was ordained on May 3, 1981, at the First Congregational Unitarian Church in Northborough, MA. She was called to serve as minister at the Unitarian Church of Marlborough and Hudson in Hudson, MA; the Unitarian Universalist Church of Augusta, ME; and the First Parish Church of Groton, MA. She also served as interim minister at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Waterville, ME, and the Hopedale Unitarian Parish in Hopedale, MA.

Prior to, and during, her ministry Rev. Kimble held positions as an operating room nurse, a psychiatric nurse on a hospital psychiatric unit, a mental health nurse providing in home care, and as the care coordinator in both an assisted living facility and a residential home for mentally ill teenagers. She decided to make the move to ministry because, although she loved taking care of people on a physical level, she felt "something was decidedly missing…of course, it turned out to be the spiritual dimension." Rev. Kimble once stated that she didn’t feel she had left nursing, but "only that (she’d) changed (her) focus in regards to how (she) want(ed) to help others to help themselves."

After retirement, she continued this mission as she took on what she referred to as the best job she ever had - homeschooling her eldest grandson.

Rev. Kimble is survived by her husband of 47 years, Stanley Kimble; her daughters, Diane Kimble Willcutts and Laurie Kimble of West Hartford, CT; and her grandchildren, Ty Kimble Padula, Pandora Kimble Willcutts, and Emerson Kimble Willcutts. She also leaves her brothers, Joseph Wilson of West Peterboro, NH and Clifford Wilson of Ashland, MA, and her sister, Terri Hendy of Nipomo, CA. Notes of condolence may be sent to her husband Stanley Kimble, 22 Duffield Dr., West Hartford, CT 06107.

The Rev. Lawrence M. Hamby died on August 28, 2011. He was 85 years old. Rev. Hamby was born in Atlanta, GA, on February 25, 1926, to L.M. and Ethel (Mills) Hamby. Rev. Hamby graduated with a BA from Emory University in 1948 and Tufts University's Crane Theological School in 1962 with a Bachelor of Divinity degree.

He served at the Community Church of New Orleans, where he was ordained in 1962; the Unitarian Congregational Society of Grafton, MA; the Unitarian Church of Harrisburg, PA; and the All Souls Unitarian Church of Augusta, ME. In later years, he served as a Chaplain in the Civil Air Patrol of the UA Air Force in Brunswick, GA.

Rev. Hamby served as the Membership and Growth Chair for the Unitarian Universalists of Coastal Georgia. He also served on the board of the Unitarian Universalist Retired Ministers and Partners Association. A celebration of the life of Rev. Larry Hamby was celebrated on Saturday, September 17, 2011 at 2:00 p.m. at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Athens, 780 Timothy Rd., Athens, GA.


His first ministry was raising and caring for sixteen foster children at his Plowshares Farm in Raymond, N.H. Rev. Newton trained to be an EMT for the Raymond Ambulance Service and worked as an EMT Chaplain for the local volunteer ambulance for 20 years. He became a mental health case worker at Hampstead State Hospital in Hampstead, N.H. and continued to do pastoral counseling, weddings, funerals, and baptisms for dozens of people in the wider community in what he referred to as a “parish without walls.” In 1991 Rev. Newton became Hospice Chaplain at Seacoast Hospice in Exeter, N.H. He also worked with children and teens in the “Stepping Stones” and “Bridges” grief support programs there. In 1995, he went to work for the Manchester VNA Home Health and Hospice as the Spiritual Care Coordinator, and founded "Camp Phoenix", a summer camp for grieving children and their families. He was awarded "The Good Samaritan Award" by the Manchester Counseling Center. He also worked as a hospital chaplain at the Elliot Hospital in Manchester. In 2006, he became Spiritual Care Director at Mary Immaculate Health Care in Lawrence, MA.

In addition to his extensive lifetime of work as a community minister, he was active in many other pursuits. He was Moderator of the Raymond, NH School District. He raised award-winning goats; many of which went to the Heifer Project and were shipped around the world. Rev. Newton was presented the Medal of Honor by the "Union Leader" and "New Hampshire Sunday News" for an "Outstanding Act of Heroism" in 1992. He also had a small wood business with his son, Dewitt. His passions included: the environment, writing poems and stories, collecting humorous and true life stories from various people he met, woodworking, working in the woods, and, of course, spending time with his family and friends.

Rev. Newton is survived by his wife of 15 years, The Reverend Dr. Virginia (Trask) Jones Newton of Center Sandwich; his daughter, Heather Keyamba and her husband Henry of Huntsville, Ala; a step-son, Troy Miller and his wife Julie of Harpers Ferry, W.V.; a sister, Roberta Newton Brown of Watertown; five foster children whom he raised, Janice Manley of Scarborough, Maine, Lisa Cheney of Dover, N.H., David McMillan of Franklin, N.H., David Baldasaro of Plainville, and Michael Twomey of Phoenix; five grandchildren; nieces, nephews, and longtime friends. He was predeceased by two sons, Benjamin Newton and Dewitt Newton.
Donations on behalf of Rev. Newton may be made to the Bereavement Programs, VNA of Manchester and Southern NH, 33 South Commercial St., Suite 401, Manchester, NH 03101, Attention Linda Krisch. Please send messages of condolence to Rev. Dr. Virginia Jones Newton, 36 Heritage Woods, Center Sandwich, NH 03227.

The Rev. Dr. Wayne Shuttee died on June 22, 2011. He was 93 years old. Rev. Shuttee was born in Joplin, MO, on October 7, 1917, to Harry C. and Evangeline (Canada) Shuttee. Rev. Shuttee graduated from the University of Missouri in 1940 and Meadville Theological School in 1944 with a Bachelor of Divinity degree.

He served at the First Unitarian Universalist Church in Cleveland, OH, where he was ordained in 1944; the West Shore Unitarian Universalist Church of Cleveland, OH, where he served as their first minister; and at the Unitarian Society of New Haven in Hamden, CT, where he served for thirty years from 1955 to 1985. Following his retirement he served as Interim Minister at a number of churches: the First Parish of Sudbury, MA; the First Parish in Hingham Old Ship Church, MA; the Unitarian Universalist Church of Nashua, NH; the Unitarian Society of Northampton and Florence, MA; the Unitarian Universalist Church of Greater Bridgeport, CT; the Unitarian Universalist Church of Greater Lynn, MA; the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Huntington, NY; the Unitarian Congregation of Mendon and Upton, MA; The Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Northern Westchester, NY; the North Parish of North Andover, MA; the Religious Society of Bell Street Chapel, Providence, RI; the Unitarian Universalist Congregation in Milford, NH; and the Mattatuck Unitarian Universalist Society, CT. He was Minister Emeritus at the Unitarian Society of New Haven, in Hamden, CT, where he was also a member.

Rev. Shuttee was active over the years in several community organizations in the New Haven area such as the Yale- New Haven Hospital, the New Haven Youth and Family Services Association, and New Haven Reads Community Book Bank, where he volunteered three times a week running the front desk and packing book orders. He also served on many association boards.

Rev. Shuttee is survived by his wife of almost 64 years, Patricia (Wuliger) Shuttee. He was predeceased by their son Timothy Shuttee. Contributions in his memory can be made to the Unitarian Society of New Haven, 700 Hartford Turnpike, Hamden, CT 06517. Notes of condolence may be sent to his wife Patricia Shuttee, 99 Quaker Rd., Hamden, CT 06517.

The Rev. Dr. Roger H. Smith died on August 10, 2011. He was 75 years old. Rev. Smith was born in Toppenish, WA, on February 18, 1936, to Horace J. Smith and Margie C. Smith. Rev. Smith received his BA from Washington State University in 1959 and his MS and PhD from North Carolina State University in 1963 and 1965, respectively. He went on to earn his Master of Divinity from Starr King School for the Ministry in 1978.

Rev. Smith served at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Minnetonka in Wayzata, Minnesota, where he was ordained in 1979. He later served at the Community UU Church in Pasco, WA, and the Northlake UU Church in Kirkland, WA. While in Wayzata, Rev. Smith helped found a local church coalition (Interfaith Outreach) to serve the needs of the community. Today that organization has grown and is a vibrant part of the community.

Prior to becoming a Unitarian Universalist minister, Rev. Smith was a research biologist. He worked for the NASA program in Oak Ridge, Tennessee following the completion of his doctorate. He then worked for the International Atomic Energy Association at a laboratory in Greece. Following his return from Greece, he worked briefly for Washington State University before changing careers and becoming a minister. After a two-year stint working at the Environmental Protection Agency in Olympia, WA, he returned once again to the ministry. He and his wife, Jane traveled and worked in California, New Jersey, and Japan. In later years, they had also founded a home-based business germinating orchid seeds for hobbyists, a business, which Rev. Smith maintained until his death.

Rev. Smith is survived by his wife of 39 years, Jane A. Smith, his daughter Jewell Smith and two step-sons, Brian Treber of St. Paul, MN and Kent Treber of Issaquah, WA. Notes of condolence may be sent to his wife, Jane Smith, 13206 233rd Ave., SE, Issaquah, WA 98027.

The Rev. John A. “Jack” Taylor died on July 29, 2011. He was 79 years old. Rev. Taylor was born in Tulsa, Oklahoma, on August, 20, 1931, to H. Albert and Sara Ellen Townsend Taylor. Rev. Taylor received his BA from Oklahoma City University in 1953 and his Master of Divinity from Boston University School of Theology in 1956. He was ordained by the Methodist Church in Stockton, California, on June 18, 1958.
While in seminary, Rev. Taylor served as assistant to the Dean of Marsh Chapel at Boston University, Dr. Howard Thurman, who would have a profound influence on his ministerial career. Rev. Taylor served at Methodist churches on the west coast immediately following ordination before transferring to the Unitarian ministry in 1960 and being called as interim minister to the First Unitarian Society in Sacramento, CA. He went on to serve as assistant minister at the First Unitarian Society in Madison, WI before being called to serve as minister at the Amherst Unitarian Church in Amherst, MA and the Unitarian Universalist Church of Urbana, IL. In 1968 answered the call to take on the role of minister at the Church for the Fellowship of All Peoples in San Francisco, a liberal, interracial church founded by Dr. Howard Thurman. Returning to Unitarian ministry in 1971, Rev. Taylor began what would be a 25 year long ministry at the First Unitarian Society of Ithaca, NY. Following retirement he was named minister emeritus by the Ithaca congregation and chaplain emeritus by Cornell University. From 1972 until his retirement in 1996, Rev. Taylor was heard each Sunday morning on "A Word for Sunday" broadcast over radio station WHCU in Ithaca. He is the author of Notes on an Unhurried Journey, published in 1991.

Among his many community activities, Rev. Taylor was a member of the Board of Cornell United Religious Work, a member of the Board of Tompkins County (NY) Planned Parenthood, chair of the Vietnamese Welcoming Committee (resettlement of refugees), chair of the City of Ithaca Commons Advisory Board and a member of the Task Force on Downtown Ithaca. At Foxdale Village, he was a member of the Corporate Board of Directors, clerk of the Residents Marketing Advisory Committee, Vice President of the Foxdale Residents Association and a member of a variety of committees and interest groups. He was also the originator of Foxdale’s Film Festival.

Rev. Taylor is survived by his wife of 55 years, Barbara R. Taylor; his daughter, Lyn S. Kalnitz and her husband, Robert of Rochester, NY; and his son, Scot R. Taylor and his wife, Jana of Ithaca, NY along with their children, Alexander and Kaitlyn. Memorial donations may be sent to a community service organization of your choice. Notes of condolence may be sent to his wife, Barbara Taylor, 500 East Marilyn Ave. Apt. H129, State College, PA 16801.

Web Resources . . .

**New Website:**

The Unitarian Universalists for Alternatives to the Death Penalty maintains a website with resources to help congregations and individuals working to end state-sponsored killing in their states and communities (www.uuadp.org). The website includes a collection of sermons by UU ministers addressing the topic from a variety of perspectives. We’d like to add to that collection to make it more useful, so ministers who have preached on the topic are invited to us send electronic copies of their sermons (in text, audio, or video format). Please direct copies of sermons, and also questions, to UUADP’s president, Mac Goekler of Kent, Ohio, at mgoekler@neo.rr.com. Thanks for your help in improving this social justice resource.

**UUA Website Usability Testing:**

As we reorganize UUA.org, we are doing usability testing so everyone will be able to find material on the website more easily. We’d especially like to get input from UU ministers. If you would like to help make UUA.org more usable, please go to www.uua.org/uuaweb and fill out the form to volunteer to be a tester. Sometime in the next few months, we’ll email volunteers with instructions for an online task that will take no more than 15 minutes. If you can’t spare the time when we ask, that’s fine.

**Skinner House Resources:**

As Unitarian Universalist congregations begin a new year of programming, comes this reminder that Skinner House Books offers a variety of free resources online at www.uua.org/companionresources. These include discussion questions, small group ministry plans, webinars, videos, related articles, and author interviews—all designed to help you deepen your congregation’s engagement with the books we publish. They have added several new resources over the summer and plan to continue adding to the offerings, so please check back regularly.

**Online Sexuality Course:**

We are pleased to announce that there is a new online course, “Sexuality Issues for Religious Professionals,” available only to ordained UU ministers and religious professionals. This course has been developed by the Religious Institute in cooperation with the UUA. This is an ideal course for continuing education as it covers sexuality and religion, sexual development, attraction and boundaries in ministry, clergy sexual misconduct, safe congregations, preaching on sexuality issues, and many more topics. It is entirely self-directed and takes an average of 15 to 20 hours to complete.

The course will be opened for students on October 1. To register, go to this link http://www.religiousinstitute.org/course and submit the form.
Apply Now for Moderator, or Nominate Your Candidate

Gini Courter’s term as Moderator of the UUA will be up in 2013, and we need to find the best possible successor. Who do you think should be the next Chair of the UUA’s Board of Trustees? Who is the best person to preside at General Assembly? Who, using different language, is best qualified to be the Chief Governance Officer of our Association?

Maybe that person is you. Or maybe you know of someone else who would be great in the role. In either case, let us know. We are the Moderator Nominating Committee, appointed by your Board of Trustees to recommend candidates for this all-important position. We are ready to receive applications and nominations now. Visit www.uua.org/uuagovernance. There you’ll find a link to our Call for Nominations and to an electronic application form. Applications and nominations are due by October 15, 2011.

Based on the Bylaws amendment approved at GA 2010, our committee will submit a report to the Board of Trustees in late November. The Board will recommend a candidate or candidates by February 1, 2012, for a single six-year term beginning at the close of General Assembly 2013.

Does your call to serve our faith include the possibility of service as Moderator? Do you think you know someone else who might hear that call? If you are thinking of nominating another, know that you need to receive that person’s consent to be nominated before giving us the name. We will ask for a complete resume from all applicants and nominees, along with a list of references, as outlined in the electronic application form. Reach the UUA Moderator Nominating Committee by email at modnomcom@uua.org

Seeking Retirement Plan Committee Members:

The UUA Retirement Plan Committee (http://www.uua.org/uuagovernance/committees/rpc/index.shtml) will be advising the UUA Board and staff on matters pertaining to the UU Organizations Retirement Plan (UUORP). The UUORP is a self-directed, defined contribution 401(a) retirement plan with a 401(k) component covering religious professionals and other employees of UU congregations, districts, related organizations as well as the UUA staff. As of June 30, 2011, the Plan had assets of approximately $200 million and 2,800 active and retired Plan participants. Once the Committee is appointed in the fall, it will assume the advisory functions previously performed by the Compensation, Benefits, and Pension Committee (CBPC). The Committee will meet three to four times annually either in Boston or by phone. Please help to spread the news about opportunities to serve on the UUA Retirement Plan Committee. We are looking for:

1. Retirement Plan management/administration experience (e.g. serving as a fiduciary for a retirement plan, working for a mutual fund company, etc)
2. Financial/Investment management experience (e.g. employment as a financial advisor/analyst, etc)
3. A retiree, spouse, or survivor with assets in the UU Organizations Retirement Plan. This individual should take an active interest in the financial challenges of retirement;
4. A minister, religious professional, or administrative staff member who is currently working for a congregation or other UU-related organization and participating in the UU Organizations Retirement Plan.

To apply for the UUA Retirement Plan Committee, individuals should complete the Committee on Committees application form found at: http://www.uua.org/uuagovernance/board/committees/coo/8131.shtml. The Board plans to make appointments at its October meeting, so expressions of interest should be submitted immediately.

For more information or to apply for the UUA Retirement Plan Committee, individuals should contact the Rev. Richard Nugent, Director, UUA Office of Church Staff Finances. He can be reached by email at Rnugent@uua.org or by phone at: (617) 948-6456.

LREDA Fall Conference

You are warmly invited to join us at the Fall Conference of Liberal Religious Educators Association October 20-23 in beautiful Portland, Oregon. Here is the information about the conference (www.lreda.org/content/new-fall-con-information-and-forms) and the link to the online registration form (www.lreda.org/2011-fall-conference-registration-form). We hope to see many of you there!

LREDA Administrator and Board

UUMA CENTER
Institute for Excellence in Ministry
January 28-February 2, 2013
St. Pete’s Beach, FL

Put down a deposit now: www.uuma.org/eventdeposit
Call for Submissions . . .

UUA President Peter Morales has written: “Let us embrace the possibilities before us. Let us be guided by love and hope. . . . We are people who have always affirmed human diversity. We have always looked to the future and seen new possibilities. We must do so again. Let us be the people who break down the arbitrary barriers that divide us from them. We are one.”

The Office of Multicultural Growth and Witness is working on a Skinner House book to help Unitarian Universalist congregations realize this vision. We want to share the learnings of congregations that have committed themselves to becoming multicultural beloved communities. The book will present a realistic picture of the challenges, but we also want to show that the journey can be life giving. We believe one of the best ways to do that is to share stories of challenges overcome and transformative ideas implemented successfully.

Please share your stories about leadership, worship, justice work, religious education, congregational culture, relationship building with the community, membership work, and hospitality. It would be helpful to give your story a heading for one of these categories, but also let us know what connections you see to the other categories, because our vision of a multicultural congregation is holistic.

We welcome all stories, but we particularly want to make sure that the perspectives and experiences of people of color are lifted up in our book. An ideal story would incorporate feedback from others. For instance, increased attendance at worship or partners in justice work who express appreciation for your relationship-building efforts. There’s no need to write your story in polished prose. Just tell it to us as if you’re telling it to a friend.

We hope to receive so many stories that it will be impossible to reply personally to each of you, but we will let you know if your story is selected for the book. Please submit your story to mcstories@uua.org by October 15th, and thank you for your stories and your dedication to this faith matter.

New Publications:

From Zip Lines to Hosaphones: Reflections on the Search for Truth and Meaning
Jane Ramsey Rzepka

In this collection of essays Rev. Jane Rzepka, recently retired as minister of the Church of the Larger Fellowship, presents her take on UU identity, history, and theology. The book is a great source for sermons, and could be used in a variety of group settings in the congregation. Since it provides introductory material in a readable way, it would be ideal for New Member classes or as a gift for Coming of Age ceremonies. It could be a common text for adult RE classes or small-group ministry gatherings. From Zip Lines to Hosaphones gives us all a new resource for talking about our faith tradition. www.uuabookstore.org/productdetails.cfm?PC=1435

Journey Beyond God: Religious Philosophy for Our Time.
Peter T. Richardson

Religion is too important to abandon to the warfare of Theist vs. Atheist, or to fundamentalists vs. conventional church goers. Humanist Naturalist Religion is both intellectually credible and emotionally supportive. Known among the ancients, spreading its wings today, Journey Beyond God documents the emergence of the Humanist Naturalist perspective and its power for our living today. Quality Paperback. www.redbarnrockland.com

Being Alive and Having to Die: The Spiritual Odyssey of Forrest Church
Dan Cryer

To be published on Oct. 25th, this is a candid biography based on 200 interviews -- including 17 with Forrest -- that explores his development from an Idaho boyhood to his final three years as he faced death with extraordinary grace and dignity. Rebellion and reconciliation with a famous father (Sen. Frank Church), discovering a passion for religious scholarship (and only belatedly religion itself), finding a home within the UU tradition, becoming an eloquent spokesman for liberal religion and the separation of church and state, and weathering a scandal at New York City’s Unitarian Church of All Souls -- these are the book’s primary themes. Author Dan Cryer is a longtime member of All Souls, former vice president of the National Book Critics Circle, and a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize. www.dancryer.org
Ministers, seminarians, and laypersons are invited to participate in the UU’s for Justice in the Middle East’s 2012 sermon contest, described at www.uujme.org. We encourage members of congregations to pass this invitation on to the ministers and leaders of their congregations. It is important to engage as many people as possible in this challenging human rights issue.