

# The Communicator

Volume 23, Issue 2

the newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation

April 15, 2005

## First Grants to Be Given This Year

At the board of trustees meeting in early March, \$15,000 was earmarked for distribution during the first cycle of the UUWF Grants Program and they will launch this new effort by distributing an additional \$4,000 at GA 2005.

"We felt it was crucial to begin this new work by taking action rather than by talking about process," said President Nancy W. Van Dyke. "We want the UU community to be as excited about the Grants Program as we are, and it's hard to get excited about something that hasn't happened yet!"

Nancy emphasized that the GA '05 award will be selected by the board independently of the new grants program's process, although it will be made in the spirit of the program's mission: **advancing equity and justice for women and girls by funding projects that contribute to positive social change.**

The UUWF Grants Program will support **bold and innovative projects** that:

- challenge the root causes and the consequences of gender oppression
- highlight and celebrate the achievements of women
- recognize the importance of the past

To be eligible, projects must be directed by UU women, UU girls or

transgender UU women. They must be sponsored by a UU organization with 501(c)3 status or a UU fiscal sponsor. Examples would include: a congregation, a committee of a congregation, an associate, affiliate or independent organization, a district of the UUA, an identity-based UU organization, UU seminaries and campus ministry groups.

Grants will be given for one year only. They will not be given to departments of the UUA or to

support the ongoing work of an organization.

Applications are now available from the UUWF Office. **Deadline for receipt of completed applications is October 15, 2005.**

Chaired by Linda Lu Burciaga, the UUWF Grants Panel anticipates completing its selection process and announcing the first grants in December.



UUWF Grants Panel members (clockwise from top center): Linda Lu Burciaga, chair; Rev. Marjorie Bowers-Wheatley; Rev. Elizabeth McMaster; Justice Waidner; and Janet Prince

# June 2005

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- Rev. Dr. Glenda Gray, Marietta, GA
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- Kirstie Lewis, Ph.D., Bellevue, WA
- Phyllis Rickter, Arlington, MA

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# GA 2005 Offers Issues & Events

Join us at General Assembly in Fort Worth for a lively offering of issues and events designed to stimulate, inform and inspire you.



Former UUA Moderator and UUWF President Denny Davidoff will keynote the Annual Meeting on Saturday.

Friday, 6/24 – 8-9:15 a.m.\*

### Remembering May Sarton: Radical Lessons for Life

Convention Center: Room 113AB

UUWF Margaret Fuller Award recipient Beverly Anderson Forbes explores the “radical life lessons” found in Sarton’s vision of spirituality, aging, women, society, and the larger world.

Saturday, 6/25 – 11:30 a.m.-12:45 p.m.

### “Breakthrough”: Approaching Women’s Rights Through Popular Culture

Convention Center: Room 203A

Co-sponsored by the UU Holdeen India Program. Come and learn about Breakthrough, an international organization that promotes public awareness about human rights and social justice through education and popular culture: radio, music, art, and television. With Mallika Dutt, Breakthrough Founder/Executive Director.

Saturday, 6/25 – 3:45-5 pm

### UUWF Annual Meeting

Convention Center: Room 101

Former UUA Moderator and UUWF President Denny Davidoff will speak

to UUWF’s future after restructuring: ***Being risky, living the question, welcoming the challenge.*** The UUWF Board and Grants Panel members will also be on hand to answer questions and listen to your ideas.

Sunday, 6/26 – 4:45-6 pm

### Young Women of Color Dialogue With Their Parent(s)

Convention Center: Room 100

Young UU women of color often have a multitude of experiences in our congregations that are unique to their age, gender and race. In this panel, young women and their parent(s) will discuss what it means to be Unitarian Universalists with multiple identities.

Sunday, 6/26 – 6:30-8 pm

### Special Reception: Honoring Sarah Weddington and women of the First Unitarian Church in Dallas with UUWF’s Ministry to Women Award.

Offsite: *Etta’s Place, 200 W. 3<sup>rd</sup> St., Fort Worth*

Monday, 6/27 – 8:30-9:45 am

### What Exactly Are Liberal Religious Feminisms?

Convention Center: Room 200

Come and hear presentations on the latest remarkable projects funded by UUWF’s Margaret Fuller Awards program. Learn how to apply for these grants; obtain information and materials from previous projects (curriculum, videos, workshop outlines, articles.). With the Rev. Marti Keller.

*\*Check the final GA Program listings to confirm times and locations*

# Seeds of the Past Enrich the Future

*By the Rev. Elinor Artman, UUWF Board, 1971-75; 1991-95 and Phyllis Rickter, UUWF Board and President, 1983-1991*

For almost 140 years, Universalist and Unitarian women looked to the future and refocused their organizations to meet the challenges of their day. They brought to this work years of experience in activism, commitment to change, and effective work for women and girls.

As the world changed, they changed their ways of working. They created new programs, made new alliances, and forged new collaborations with like-minded women.

Universalist women ran schools for African-American children in the segregated South years before the 1960s civil rights movement. They did missionary work all over the world. In 1932, they founded the Clara Barton Camp for Girls with Diabetes, where each summer girls with diabetes still gather to have fun and be empowered to live fully. Leaders in their own congregations, Universalist women built and supported strong churches and women's groups.

Unitarian women met similar challenges. In Boston they were elected to the school committee years before women had the vote, and schools there named for Unitarians Margaret Fuller and Emily Fifield still exist. They funded scholarships for Unitarian women and raised money for theological schools and ministers' widows and daughters.

Their groups in our churches supported their congregations with willing hands and necessary funds.

## The UUWF is Formed

Then, in 1963, the Association of Universalist Women (founded in 1869), joined with the Alliance of Unitarian Women (1890) to form the Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation. They brought with them the tradition of adapting to change.



*UUWF responded to another challenge by founding the UUWF Clara Barton Internship for Women's Issues, a program of the UUA's Washington Office for Advocacy. Pictured are Barton (left) and Kierstin Homblette, the first intern to serve in her honor.*



As interest in UU feminist theology grew, we published the first essays by women on the subject. Using funds that Southwest District women raised and donated to UUWF, and with the assistance of a matching grant from the UU Congregation at Shelter Rock's Veatch Program, we raised an endowment to support annual Feminist Theology Awards. Renamed the Margaret Fuller Awards for Religious Feminisms, these awards continue to inspire.

When violence against women became a burning issue, our members sent over 500 newspaper clippings from all over the continent telling

about women injured and murdered. These stories were shared at General Assembly and resulted in the creation of UUs Acting to Stop Violence Against Women, a grass-roots organization across the continent.

Responding to the crisis of clergy misconduct, UUWF and the UUA's Women and Religion Committee issued a call to action. They gathered a group of individuals and organizations to respond to the problem. This group met for ten years, studied the subject and made recommendations to the UUA.

## New Internship Honors Clara Barton

In 2004, we completed a project honoring a noted Universalist foremother. Our \$200,000 donation founded a restricted endowment to support the UUWF Clara Barton Internship for Women's Issues. In collaboration with the UUA, we raised a matching amount to complete the endowment. This program is based in the UUA's Washington Office, where each year a young woman learns to effectively advocate for women's issues.

The call for change continued into the new millennium. A professional survey of our members and other UU women showed us the issues which inspire our interest and support. Reproductive choice, peace, women's health, young adult empowerment, lesbian and gay rights are issues for which we seek collaborative partners to extend our influence in the world.

Last June, UUWF members voted to change the way we carry out our continuing mission. We adopted new bylaws and set in place a plan for an effective program of advocacy as a grant-making organization. The Board and Grants Panel are working hard to set new structures and procedures in place. We are grate-

*(Continued on page 6)*

# 2005 Margaret Fuller Awards Recipients Write About Their Projects



## Seasons of Survival: Rituals for Women with Breast Cancer

A dear friend called to tell us that she had breast cancer and was starting chemotherapy. She wanted a ritual to help. We had nothing specific to offer.

Another beloved friend needed a bone scan to determine if her breast cancer had metastasized. We could look up all the scientific reports and statistics, but there were few resources we could share to help her and her community find comfort and meaning in the difficult news. We decided it was time to create such resources. The Margaret Fuller Award from the UUWF is part of the financial help and moral support we need to do just that.

Feminist work in religion is as successful as it is useful in women's lives. Many of us have friends or relatives who are breast cancer survivors. Some of us are survivors, or will be. It is time for feminist theologians, liturgists, and pastoral counselors to put their talents to the task of creating appropriate resources.

Women suffer other diseases, but this one is so widespread and devastating on many levels, including self-image and spirituality. As women age, the chances of getting breast cancer increase. For young women the results are very difficult, as they can impact on reproductive choices.

How do we pray in the midst of this?  
How do our friends offer support?

How do we celebrate the women who survive, and those who do not? Traditional prayers and healing services simply do not suffice. Thanks to the UUWF's Margaret Fuller, and in conjunction with colleagues at the River Road UU Church in Bethesda, MD, WATER is creating some that will.

For more information, contact:  
Mary E. Hunt, Diann L. Neu  
Women's Alliance for Theology,  
Ethics and Ritual (WATER)  
301-589-2509, fax 301-589-3150  
water@hers.com  
www.hers.com/water

## "Pray for Peace" Day

The UU Congregation of Little Rock, AR, is truly honored to be a 2005 Margaret Fuller Award recipient. The opportunity to execute a creative concept designed to raise the voices of prophetic female peacemakers is a wonderfully energizing experience for our congregation. Our "Pray for Peace" event builds on continued efforts by our Religious Education Committee to sponsor solid intergenerational activities that offer congregants a platform to enjoy living out their faith principles with others in our community.

Because we live in a socially conservative community, we sometimes face special challenges in efforts to gain wider community acceptance of our faith and church sponsored activities. The questing, "Footprints for Peace" component of this event is a unique opportunity to engage with children and families who might

otherwise be unaware of our faith community or are hesitant to participate due to religious preferences.

This event is also an opportunity to continue building interfaith alliances and strengthen relationships with organizations focused on building peace in our world, such as the Arkansas Coalition for Peace and Justice.

And, while the individual voices of many UUCLR members collectively represent a strong social presence in our community, there exists an desire among several members of the congregation to sponsor a signature community project that enhances community awareness of our faith. Certainly this project holds promise for such an event and fits well with the already-strong presence of religious feminism in our congregation.

Due to the inspiration of our Director of Religious Education, Jolinda Stephens, for the past year our church children have enjoyed a leading-edge design for Sunday gatherings and learning experiences. We hope to continue offering supplementary activities such as our "Pray for Peace" event that complement Sunday morning goals and offer children meaningful ways to explore religious theologies.

To be awarded funds to design a template others can use to replicate a project celebrating women peacemakers and illuminating a UU perspective of feminist theology is stimulating to say the least! We are grateful for this opportunity and exhilarated to begin the work.

Janet Hanson  
Chair, UUCLR Religious Education  
Committee

# Thanking Our Contributors

We gratefully acknowledge all those individuals and groups who contributed to UUWF's Annual Program Fund from January 1, through December 31, 2004.

## Individuals

### Gifts of \$1,000 or More

- Nancy Van Dyke, Sea Cliff, NY

### Gifts from \$250 to \$999

- Marie Buckey, San Diego, CA
- Arlene Johnson, Tulsa, OK
- Janet Prince, New Castle, NH
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*(Continued on page 6)*



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- Unitarian Alliance of Birmingham Unitarian Church, Bloomfield Hills, MI

- Women's Parish Association of the First Parish, Concord, MA
- Central Midwest District UUWF to the Margaret Fuller Awards Program

UUWF also gratefully acknowledges generous bequests from the estates of Matilda M. Cobb and Frances Ambursen, which were received in 2004.

## **Seeds of the Past, cont. from p. 3**

ful for the support and enthusiasm of our members and friends as we chart this new direction.

As Seth Godin writes in his book, *Survival Is Not Enough*, "Change is the new normal." As we change our organizational direction in the coming months, we look forward to the future with excitement, energy and hope.