



the communicator

THE NEWSLETTER OF UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST WOMEN'S FEDERATION

September, 2006 | Vol 24, Issue 3

Welcoming Rev. Shirley Ranck and Louise Katzman Kurabi

We are pleased to announce that the Rev. Shirley Ranck, Ph.D., currently doing an interim ministry in West Vancouver, B.C., and Louise Katzman Kurabi of Bellevue, WA, have joined the UUWF's Margaret Fuller Awards Committee. The committee is responsible for selecting grant recipients for this program, which funds accessible projects in religious feminisms. Shirley and Louise join Linda Lu Burciaga, Newburyport, MA, and co-chairs Phyllis Rickter, Arlington, MA, and Rev. Tracy Sprowls Jenks, on this committee.

Clara Barton Internship Featured in Washington Post

The internship program in the UUA Washington office was featured in the religion section of the Washington Post on August 12 with a quarter page picture of Meredith Schonfeld-Hicks, the Clara Barton Intern for Women's Issues. What wonderful promotion for the internship program and Unitarian Universalism! The article is posted on Meredith's blog at www.meredithindc.blogspot.com. Our Communications Committee will be working on strengthening the connection of Meredith's work to women at the local level.

Clara Barton Sisterhood Honors UU Women

Would you like to honor a woman in your group or congregation? The Clara Barton Sisterhood is a UUWF program inspired by and named for Universalist Clara Barton, who did not begin the work for which she is best known – organizing relief work for the victims of war and disasters – until she was over 40. A special category of UUWF life membership for women aged 80 and over, the Sisterhood is a way to honor women for their contributions to church and community life. For more information, go to www.uuwf.org or contact the UUWF Office.

www.uuwf.org

General Assembly Roundup

Nearly 80 women and men joined the UUWF Board of Trustees and special guests at our first Leadership Breakfast, held on Sunday morning during the UUA General Assembly this past June in St. Louis.

President **Nancy W. Van Dyke** welcomed guests to the gathering, which featured brief remarks from **Jazmin Sadoz-Rosado**, youth observer on the UUA board; **Meredith Schonfeld Hicks**, the UUWF Clara Barton Intern for Women's Issues; and **Linda Lu Burciaga**, UUWF Grants Program Chair.

We also took this opportunity to honor two outgoing members of our Margaret Fuller Awards Committee: the **Rev. Marti Keller**, Decatur, GA, retiring chair; and **Dr. Kirstie Lewis**, committee member from Olympia, WA.

Past UUWF President and UUA Moderator **Denise T. Davidoff** offered closing remarks at the event, during which nearly \$8,000 was raised in donations and pledges.

Ministry to Women Award

Rev. Shirley Ranck, Ph.D., was also honored with UUWF's 2006 Ministry to Women Award. This award has been given at GA since 1974 to an individual or group that has ministered to women in an outstanding manner. Shirley was honored for her work as author of the groundbreaking adult religious education curriculum, *Cakes for the Queen of Heaven*, on the 20th anniversary of its publication.

Other GA Events

UUWF sponsored four other program events at last June's General Assembly. We gratefully acknowledge the invaluable help of the following people who assisted us with our GA programming:

Emily Goodstein, coordinator for the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice's program, Spiritual Youth for Reproductive Freedom; **Adele Coble**, a Spiritual Youth student organizer; and the UUWF Clara Barton Intern for



UUWF honored Rev. Marti Keller (left) and Dr. Kirstie Lewis, retiring members of the Margaret Fuller Awards Committee, at the Leadership Breakfast during the June UUA General Assembly.

Women's Issues, **Meredith Schonfeld-Hicks**, who planned and presented *Young Adult Activism for Reproductive Justice*.

Dr. Nancy Vedder-Shults, for presenting and facilitating the panel discussion *Womanspirit, Sisterspirit: Towards Right Relationship Among Ourselves*; and panelists **Dr. Sharon Welch**, **Rev. Monica L. Cummings**, and **Rev. Melanie Morel-Ensminger**.

Dr. Azza Karam, Senior Policy Research Advisor, UN Development Programme's Regional Bureau for Arab States, speaker at our featured presentation: *There Is More Peace Somewhere*; past UUWF President and UUA Moderator **Denny Davidoff**, for connecting us with Dr. Karam and helping plan her presentation; the GA Planning Committee for awarding us both the featured presentation slot and a grant to help with the presentation's expenses.

UUWF Grants Panel: **Linda Lu Burciaga**, chair; **Rev. Marjorie Bowens-Wheatley**, **Rev. Liz McMaster**, **Janet Prince**, and **Justice Waidner**, for planning and helping present *Changing Women's Lives: UU Women's Federation Grants*; **Carla Feldhamer**, **Ann Heckes**, **Gretchen Ohmann** and **Rev. Patti Franz**, representing the projects funded this year.

The Margaret Fuller Awards Committee: **Rev. Marti Keller**, chair; **Linda Lu Burciaga**,

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UUWF 2005-06 Annual Report

“**T**oward right relations” was the theme of the 2005 General Assembly, and this simple yet important phrase guided us as we prepared our annual report for our association meeting. As we reviewed UUWF’s accomplishments over the past year, we looked at how our mission furthers right relations – by “advancing equity and justice for women” – as we work in partnership with you, our member-donors and groups throughout the UU community.

Our new funding program this year made its first awards to bold, innovative projects that affect positive social change and address the issue of gender equity. Here is a brief glimpse into the lives of the women and girls our grants – made possible by your financial support – have or will directly affect:

The Busy Bees of Kabwe, Zambia

In 2004, a group of Zambian women infected with the AIDS virus gathered on a hospice lawn to support one another away from the stigma they faced in their villages. They began to knit stuffed rabbits to sell, helping each other improve their knitting and sewing skills.

In a few short years they have evolved into a crafts collective that makes and sells a variety



Zambia’s Busy Bees craft collective was relegated to an old shipping container (above) until the Carbondale, IL Unitarian Fellowship -- and a UUWF grant -- built them their own building with room to spare (below).



of handcrafted items, with the women dividing the proceeds equally among themselves to provide for themselves, their children, and the many orphans in their care.

Sadly, the hospice’s space needs have also grown, displacing the women from the lawn into a metal shipping container now needed as a temporary morgue. Our \$5,000 grant to the Carbondale, IL, Unitarian Fellowship, has helped these women move into a permanent building of their own.

Hope Not Hell: UU Women’s Prison Ministry

In the lonely isolation of a prison cell, a woman rocks silently on the edge of her cot. Like the most of her incarcerated sisters, she is herself the victim of abuse and is a non-violent offender. Like 90 out of 100 of those sisters, she is a single mother and while imprisoned will very likely lose contact with her children, perhaps forever. The Church of the Larger Fellowship’s prison ministry already beams rays of hope into the hell of male prisoners; our \$2,500 grant will help fund a new liberal religious prison ministry focusing on women.

Mira, Mamá: PSAs on Human Trafficking

A Guatemalan mother anxiously watches her daughter board a bus for a journey she believes will end in the United States, with a green card and the steady, honest work a labor contractor has promised.

But the real journey ends in the daughter’s rape and enforced prostitution. Don’t you wish you could call out a warning to them? The Florida Migrant Interstate Program and UU Church of Fort Myers, FL aim to do just that with “Mira, Mamá” – “Look, Mother” – radio public service announcements in Spanish, Haitian-Creole, Kanjobal and Quiche that describe ways to identify human trafficking victims and where to go for help. Our \$2,500 matching grant will help with this project’s production costs.

“Cakes for the Queen of Heaven” Republication Project

A woman sends a special message to the author of a transforming religious education curriculum:

“How do I thank someone for connecting me to my spirituality?” she writes. “*Cakes for the Queen of Heaven* changed my life. Years later I’m still touched by your deeply insightful

work – it bridges the ancient religious beliefs with feminine experience supporting the journey.”

This curriculum’s influence remains a powerful presence in our UU religious practices 20 years after its original publication. Our \$5,000 grant to UU Women & Religion’s “*Cakes for the Queen of Heaven* Republication Project” will help make it available to a new generation.

Ministry to Women Award

UUWF is also privileged this year to honor the Cakes curriculum’s author, the Reverend Shirley Ranck, with our Ministry to Women Award. Shirley joins an illustrious company of award recipients who have ministered to women in an outstanding manner and taught us much about moving toward right relations – individuals like May Sarton and Marian Wright Edelman, and organizations like the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence.



Margaret Fuller Awards Program

We are also proud to announce that, this fall, Shirley will add to her ongoing ministry with service on our Margaret Fuller Awards Committee, which funds accessible projects in UU religious feminisms.

At the heart of this funding program resides the word “accessible” – meaning that the projects we fund result in products that congregations and others can use to further their understanding of UU religious feminisms.

The trend here is away from individual spiritual journeys toward religious community, as evidenced by the projects that received funding this year. They include a small group ministry demonstration project to increase awareness of feminist theologies within congregations and second-year funding for continued development of rituals for women with breast cancer.

Gulf Coast Relief

Images of Hurricane Katrina’s horror and the unspeakable losses suffered by Gulf Coast residents are still too much with us. In April, our UUA Moderator returned from a visit to



The UUWF Clara Barton Intern’s work includes social witness, such as last year’s demonstration on the federal budget – a moral document that should speak to our priorities as a nation. Demonstrators, including clergy, seminarians and people of faith, protested the lack of adequate funding for education, social services and health care.

the area, highly impressed with a community group called H.O.P.E. Believing that this nascent, viable organization could benefit from a boost – possibly technical assistance – in moving to the next level, she asked UUWF if we would help.

The board has responded by enthusiastically endorsing a partnership with H.O.P.E. and those congregations already involved from Winchester, MA, South Nassau, NY and others. We are networking to discern appropriate next steps and ways to connect UUWF members to this vital relief effort.

Advocacy and Education

The advocacy component of our mission includes the UUWF Clara Barton Intern for Women’s Issues, a position in the UUA’s Washington Office, founded by our \$200,000 donation and assistance in raising the balance of its permanent endowment.

Meredith Schonfeld-Hicks, the second intern, pursues her legislative work with passionate dedication and has more than lived up to the promise of her predecessor. Her legislative activities this year have included work on access to emergency contraception, on the Violence Against Women Act and on the Focus On Family Health Worldwide Act, which provides increased funding for international family planning programs.

Meredith also helped host the Washington Office’s second annual Sexuality Education Advocacy Training. This partnership effort between the Unitarian Universalist Association, the United Church of Christ and

Advocates for Youth brought together 30 UU and UCC youth, young adults, and adult allies to learn how to be effective religious advocates for comprehensive sexuality education.

Our mission’s education component was represented at GA ’06 by Dr. Azza Karam, whom we invited to St. Louis to share insights yielded by her expertise in the fields of multi-religious collaboration, international gender issues, democratization and political Islam. In this effort, we are grateful to the GA Planning Committee for awarding us a featured presentation slot and partially funding the costs of bringing Dr. Karam to the meeting.

We are also most grateful to the Veatch Program of the UU Congregation at Shelter Rock which, last spring, recognized UUWF’s role in furthering and strengthening the goals of Unitarian Universalism by awarding us a \$20,000 grant in support of our work.

We would like to thank all of you whose continued support with your money, time and, most importantly, encouragement means so much to us.

We also invite you to participate directly in this exciting work. If you have a passion for social justice and feminist issues, we need you: for an hour, three hours, a one-time assignment or a longer commitment. Contact our office for information on volunteer opportunities, which will be posted on our website soon.

We appreciate your ongoing support as we continue making great strides toward right relations.

Thanking Our Contributors

We extend a heartfelt “thank you” to all who joined us in support of our mission with their generous donations and pledges from June 1, 2005 through May 31, 2006.

Individual Gifts of \$1,000 and More

Julia and Arnold Bradburd, Gwynedd, PA
Dr. Barbara Brown & Linda McAffrey,
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Marcia M. Bystrom, Muscle Shoals, AL
Susan Hardinge Caravello, Glen Cove, NY

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Do You Have a Program That You'd Like to Present at the 2007 UUA General Assembly?

June 20-24, Portland, OR

UUWF is looking for program proposals that exemplify the mission and goals of our transformed organization. Several programs may be presented under UUWF sponsorship.

Programs may be a workshop, worship service, panel discussion, performance or lecture. In keeping with our principle of diverse feminist perspectives, we will consider proposals from anyone who is sympathetic to the UUWF Mission and Purposes (for a copy, go to <http://uuwf.org/about.html> or contact the UUWF Office).

Please send the following materials by November 1, 2007, to the UUWF Office:

- **Cover sheet** with name of applicant(s), organization (if applicable); title of program; contact person; address, phone and fax numbers; email address.

- **Title** (10 words) and a summary description of the program – 50 words or less (for publicity purposes if accepted).
- **A full description** of the program which speaks to:
 - How this proposal fits with the UUWF mission and purposes
 - Budget implications (some financial aid may be available for selected programs)
 - Number of individuals required to present the program
 - Type of presentation – workshop, panel, performance, etc.
 - Details of the program, including equipment needed

All requested information must be provided in order for your program to be considered. Please do not send videos or materials that cannot be photocopied. Materials should be unbound, removed from plastic sleeves, and

ready for copying. Please do not submit your application via e-mail or e-mail attachment.

Although the more we know about what your program looks like the better we are able to evaluate it, please limit your proposal to no more than six pages, including the cover page.

GA Roundup

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Rev. Tracy Sprowls Jenks, Dr. Kirstie Lewis, and **Phyllis Rickter**, for planning *Seasons for Survival: Rituals for Breast Cancer Survivors*; and ritual participants **Dr. Diane Neu**, of the Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics and Ritual; **Rev. Ginger Luke**, Minister of Religious Education and Congregational Life at the River Road Unitarian Church, Bethesda, MD.

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

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Gifts from Groups

Akron, OH: UU Women's Association, UU Church
Atlanta, GA: Northwest UU Congregation
Avon, IL: Federated Church Women
Dallas, TX: Evening Alliance of UU Women, First Unitarian Church
Honolulu, HI: Honolulu UUWF First Unitarian Church
Milwaukee, WI: Womanspirit/Emerson Guild, First Unitarian Society
Riverside, CA: Women's Federation, Universalist Unitarian Church

www.uuwf.org



UUWomen

*Advancing justice for women
through education and advocacy*

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Late Breaking News!

Dr. Riane Eisler, author of the international bestseller *The Chalice and The Blade: Our History, Our Future*, will receive our 2007 Ministry to Women Award at next year's UUA General Assembly. This eminent social scientist, attorney and activist joins a prestigious group who have previously been honored with this award, including Rev. Shirley Ranck, Ph.D., Tillie Olsen, May Sarton, Marian Wright Edelman, Dr. Jean Baker Miller, and Bernice Johnson Reagon.

Riane's newest book, *The Real Wealth of Nations: Creating a Caring Economics*, proposes a new economics that gives visibility and value to the most essential human work: caring for people and planet. Her other books include: *The Power of Partnership* and *Tomorrow's Children*, as well as *Sacred Pleasure*, a daring reexamination of sexuality and spirituality,

and *Women, Men, and the Global Quality of Life*, which statistically documents the key role of the status of women in a nation's general quality of life.

Catherine Onyemelukwe, a member of the Unitarian Church in Westport, CT, has joined the UUWF Board of Trustees as Vice President/Development and chair of our National Development Council. Catherine brings to us a wealth of executive experience in fund development, strategic planning, and budgeting and finance, and was most recently Executive Director of the College and Community Fellowship in New York. In her home congregation, she has served on the Endowment Committee, was an Annual and Capital Campaign Leader, Social Justice Council Vice Chair, and chair of the Anti-Racism Committee.