



# the communicator

THE NEWSLETTER OF UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST WOMEN'S FEDERATION

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## Remembering the Reverend Marjorie Bowens-Wheatley

 by Rev. Danielle Di Bona  
 Thomaston, ME


**W**e lost a visionary and leader in our movement on December 10 when the Reverend Marjorie Bowens-Wheatley died after a struggle with cancer.

Marjorie was my colleague, my mentor and, most importantly, my friend. I was fortunate to work at the UUA at the same time that Marjorie did, and my office was right above hers at 43 Mt. Vernon in Boston. There were many days when I would run downstairs in serious need of Marjorie's input and wisdom. I called upon her for guidance on topics of great import. It could be the anti-racism program I was preparing; it could be advice on how to respond to a congregation's anxiety around the anti-racism work; or it could be what color lipstick to wear or how to better understand my spouse. We both married "late" in life, and had many discussions and belly laughs about how to learn to live with someone "in our space."

Marjorie was also my professional mentor, helping me get from preliminary to final fellowship. She was generous with her time and professional knowledge. There was a time when it seemed that she was mentoring every woman seminarian and preliminary fellowshipped minister of color.

As an officer in Diverse and Revolutionary Unitarian Universalist Multicultural Ministries

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[www.uuwf.org](http://www.uuwf.org)

## Riane Eisler Breaks New Ground in An Old Science

 by Rhoda Amon  
 Port Washington, NY

**R**iane Eisler, whose seminal work, *The Chalice and The Blade: Our History, Our Future*, challenged a whole generation of young women – and men – to seek a more equitable society, is now breaking new ground in an old science: Economics. Her newest book, due out in April, explores *The Real Wealth of Nations: Creating a Caring Economics*.

Dr. Eisler, a social scientist, lawyer, educator and women's rights activist, was an overwhelming choice to receive our 2007 Ministry to Women Award in June at the UUA General Assembly in Portland, OR. She joins an impressive list of leaders and advocates who have been honored since the award was created in 1974, including children's rights defender Marian Wright Edelman, poet May Sarton, feminist writer Tillie Olsen, and Rev. Shirley Ranck, the UU minister who wrote *Cakes for the Queen of Heaven*.

What all the recipients had in common is the basis for the Eisler books: the quest for a peaceful, non-violent, people-oriented society in which no sect or gender dominates over others and all human beings have the opportunity to achieve their potential.

As she put it in a recent phone interview: "What's good for women is good for the world."

Her first book, *The Chalice and The Blade*, based on research into 30,000 years of past societies, put a name to the aspirations of women all over the world for a partnership rather than a domination society. She defines partnership as "a way of life based on harmony with nature, nonviolence and gender, racial and economic equality."

Eisler's books are not meant to sit quietly on a shelf. They set off study groups, alliances, international conferences and sometimes master degree programs. In the 20 years since its



Dr. Riane Eisler

publication in 1987, *The Chalice and The Blade* has resulted in the formation of the Center for Partnership Studies in Pacific Grove, CA, and satellite partnership centers around the country.

Going one step further, Goddard University in Vermont introduced a master's degree in partnership education. The Montessori Foundation has its own center for partnership studies to introduce children at an early age to concepts of equality and a non-violent world.

The book presents archaeological and historic evidence that "war and the war of the sexes are neither divinely nor biologically ordained." In fact, there existed early societies in which men and women lived in peaceful partnership.

Her research into the "sacred feminine" core to Christianity is believed to be a primary source for *The DaVinci Code*, which is based on the premise that Jesus married Mary Magdalene and intended for her to succeed him as leader of his church. Author Dan Brown maintained that the idea has been suppressed by forces that want to keep women in secondary roles.

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UUWF Office  
25 Beacon Street  
Boston, MA 02108

617-948-4692 – tel  
uuwf@uaa.org – email  
www.uuwf.org – web

Ellen Spencer  
Executive Administrator  
spencer@uaa.org

# Sarton Works Among Projects Funded by Margaret Fuller Grants Program

by Phyllis Rickter, Co-chair  
Margaret Fuller Selection Committee

**T**he Margaret Fuller Grants Program is designed to encourage UU women to create projects which contribute to UU feminist transformation. Women's feminisms always arise from their life experiences, and are consequently as diverse as are the lives of women. We seek projects which explore new areas, test new ideas and honor the work of women.

Projects funded by this year's grants range from three books that make the works of Unitarian May Sarton more accessible, to a workshop project that uses stories, old and new, to empower girls and young women. *Sources: A Unitarian Universalist Cantata* also received a grant, as did a work that will lift up the lives and voices of African-American Unitarian, Universalist and UU women.

Projects funded in 2007 are:

- **Beverly Anderson Forbes, Ed.D.**, Renton, WA, received \$2,300 for *Remembering May Sarton* (second year grant). This project is complete and has resulted in three books, each a compendium of portions of May Sarton's work that address spirituality; aging and death; and a vision for life for women.
- First Unitarian Society of Minneapolis, MN, and First UU Church in Nashville,

TN, was given \$1,000 for *Sources: A Unitarian Universalist Cantata*. A choral work based on the six sources of the Unitarian Universalist tradition, the project is also complete and will be made available for shipping charges only through the Church of the Larger Fellowship's lending library beginning in late 2007.

- **Karen Day**, Floyd, VA, received \$2,000 for *Tales of Creation and Transformation*, a program of stories and creative responses for young women, aimed at helping them develop a sense of wholeness.
- **Quiyamah Rahman**, Charlotte, NC, was given \$1,000 in support of *Testifying: Invoking the Lives and Voices of African American Universalist, Unitarian and Unitarian Universalist Women*, a book of oral histories of African-American UU women past and present.

**Rev. Tracy Sprowls Jenks** of Ridgewood, NY, co-chairs, the Selection Committee with me. Other committee members are **Louise Katzman Kurabi**, Bellevue, WA, and **Rev. Shirley Ranck**, West Vancouver, BC.

The committee welcomes proposals for projects which advance the work of religious feminisms and enrich the lives of UU women. The deadline for 2008 grant applications is October 15, 2007.

## Clara Barton Intern Featured on UUA Website

**T**he reproductive rights work of the UUWF Clara Barton Intern for Women's Issues, **Meredith Schonfeld Hicks** is currently featured on the UUA website (go to [http://uaa.org/news/2007/070117\\_roevwade.html](http://uaa.org/news/2007/070117_roevwade.html)). It accompanies an article commemorating the 30th anniversary of Roe v. Wade, which traces the history of UU involvement in the continuing struggle for reproductive freedom. Included is the important role played by the Women's Alliance of the First Unitarian Church in Dallas in supporting Roe v. Wade during its early stages in the Texas courts. UUWF honored the women of the Dallas Women's Alliance in 2005, along with Roe v. Wade lead attorney **Sarah Weddington**, with our Ministry to Women Award.



Meredith Schonfeld-Hicks, UUWF Clara Barton Intern for Women's Issues

# Creating Paths of Justice and Hope Through the Pension Protection Act

by Rev. Alison Miller, Minister  
Morristown (NJ) Unitarian Fellowship

**T**he Pension Protection Act of 2006 opens a window of opportunity to fund the important work of the UU Women's Federation. Reflecting on the disparity that often exists between traditionally male-oriented versus female-oriented institutions – such as colleges, medical research initiatives, and other non-profits – this legislation provides a chance for some of you to increase the impact of your generosity.

If you are 70½ or older, and you are required to take larger distributions from your IRA account than you would like, this is an opportunity for you to seriously consider. Until December 31, 2007, you may give up to \$100,000 directly to charities, with the amount donated excluded from your taxable income. The Pension Protection Act can result

in thousands of dollars of reductions in your tax bill this year, as well as an opportunity to give even more generously to the institutions you are passionate about.

Your donation must be transferred directly from your IRA account through its administrator to the UUWF or other qualifying 501(c)3 organization. You cannot receive the disbursement yourself and then write a check to the organization to have it qualify as non-taxable income. Both traditional IRAs and Roth IRAs are eligible; 401(k)s and other retirement plans are not. Ask your financial planner or tax consultant for specific advantages and requirements in your particular case.

The Morristown Unitarian Fellowship, where I serve as the minister, has already benefited from savvy givers who have taken advantage of this opportunity. One man gave

\$10,000 to our Endowment Fund in honor of his late wife. Another couple funded new banisters in our sanctuary, adding both beauty and safety to our building.

UUWF concentrates its efforts on funding the work of the hearts, minds and hands of our UU sisters as they create paths of justice and hope. This year offers an exceptional opportunity for some of you to help bring our resources for these efforts to a whole new level.

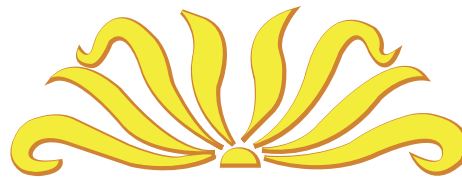
Perpetuate your values by making a difference in the lives of women and girls. Please consider making a gift to the UUWF in your will. For the language to share with your attorney, contact Ellen Spencer, UUWF Executive Administrator, at [espencer@uua.org](mailto:espencer@uua.org) or 617-948-4692.

## New Directions for UU Women & Religion

by Rev. Dr. Dorothy Emerson  
Co-Convener

**I**t is the 30th anniversary of the Women & Religion Resolution, passed unanimously at the 1977 UUA General Assembly. The changes brought about by this single resolution are so much a part of our UU movement today that we scarcely realize things were not always the way they are now. The resolution called upon all UUs and UU organizations “to make every effort to: (a) put traditional assumptions and language in perspective, and (b) avoid sexist assumptions and language in the future.” Among the many changes inspired by this resolution were a new set of principles, a new hymnbook, and affirmative action for women in ministry.

Some might say our work is over, but given the continued existence – perhaps persistence – of sexism and related oppressions in society at large, as well as the continuing struggles women worldwide face in accessing their rights and preserving their dignity, UU Women & Religion believes that we still have plenty of work to do.



### Unitarian Universalist Women and Religion

UU Women & Religion, a UUA affiliate organization, currently serves as a continental umbrella to facilitate feminist coalition work at home and abroad. Through our website ([www.uuwr.org](http://www.uuwr.org)), our seasonal newsletter (Womunweb), our booth and programs at General Assembly, and our special projects, we provide a means for UU women to connect and share ideas and programs.

One of our projects is providing support for **Rev. Shirley Ranck, PhD.**, in re-visioning and republishing *Cakes for the Queen of Heaven*. This work has been funded by grants from the UU Women's Federation and the Fund for Unitarian Universalism and by generous donations from women for

whom the first *Cakes* was a life-changing experience. The first segment of the new feminist theology curriculum will be ready for purchase at GA this June. We hope the new *Cakes* will contribute significantly to building new connections among women both spiritually and in terms of activism.

Among our other goals is supporting existing and new programs that bring women together. In some UUA districts, women have been meeting continuously since the 1980s for solidarity, affirmation, action and celebration. In other areas, new women's conferences and retreats have been launched more recently. As more women become aware of the new UU Women & Religion, we hope you will link your group with us.

At GA this year, we are co-sponsoring with the UU Buddhists a special program called “What the Buddha Really Said about Gender,” with **Rita Gross**. We are designing a worship service that can be replicated in your congregations and women's groups to tell the amazing story of the Women & Religion Resolution. Our

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## Eisler, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Eisler began her quest at an early age. Born in Vienna in the 1930s, she experienced first hand the destructive effects of the ultimate male-dominated society during the Nazi takeover of Austria. She fled with her parents first to Cuba and finally to the United States. At age 6, she began to ask unanswerable questions, such as why would people want to kill you because you happened to be born to Jewish parents?

She asks and tries to answer these questions in *The Chalice and The Blade*. “Why do we hunt and persecute each other? Why is our world so full of men’s infamous inhumanity to man – and to woman? What is it that chronically tilts us toward cruelty rather than kindness, toward war rather than peace, toward destruction rather than actualization?”

Many years after her flight from Nazi terror, she was invited to Bonn to an event introduced by Professor Rita Sussmuth,

then president of the German Bundestag, who greeted her warmly and expressed strong interest in her work. It was a healing experience, Eisler wrote. It caused her to reflect “how different my life and entire course of world history would have been if in the 1930s and 1940s there had been more women and men such as Professor Sussmuth with the courage to take a strong stand.”

Another tragic event, the terrorist attacks of 9/11, inspired her to write *The Power of Partnership*, a guidebook to personal and social transformation. She also wrote *Tomorrow’s Children*, which offers a new integrated approach to education that, she promises, will “put the joy back into education for teachers and students alike.”

“If we prepare today’s children to meet the unprecedented challenges they face, if we help them begin to lay the foundations for a partnership world,” she writes, “then tomorrow’s children will have the potential to create a new era of evolution.”

Her newest book, with its recipe for caring economics, proposes to also put joy back into what has been called “the dismal science.” In Eisler’s hands, economics is anything but dismal. Her views are not unlike Martin Luther King’s plea for a shift from a “thing-oriented” society to a “person-oriented” society.

While his “I Have a Dream” speech is most widely known, King also warned in other talks that “when machines and computers, profit motives and property rights are considered more important than people, the giant triplets of racism, materialism and militarism are incapable of being conquered.”

Though not in bookstores until April, Eisler’s *The Real Wealth of Nations* has already garnered some impressive endorsements:

“Riane Eisler shows us how to value economically what is valuable humanly – and what could be more revolutionary than that?” asks feminist Gloria Steinem. “To imagine money not as the root of all evil, but the measure of all good, read *The Real Wealth of Nations*.”

Male voices are no less enthusiastic. “Her perspectives and insights have enriched my life immeasurably,” writes John Robbins, author of *Diet for a New America*. Eisler, “gives us the vision and understanding – and the tools we can use – to shift our economics to a path where greed and violence no longer prevail, but are replaced by creativity and generosity. If you want to be part of the solution, read this magnificent book.”

Eisler focuses on “the potential for economics to reflect what we truly value, quality of life, and quality of the environment,” writes Daniel Kammen, co-director of the Berkeley Institute of the environment in California.

With her husband and partner, David Loye, a systems scientist and futurist, Eisler also co-authored *Women, Men and the Global Quality of Life* and *The Partnership Way*. She’s also written *The Equal Rights Handbook*, *Sacred Pleasure*, and more than 200 published articles.

Listed as one of the world’s 100 most important social visionaries, she frequently addresses conventions, conferences and universities in the U.S. and abroad.

At 75, she says “I’ve been blessed” with marriage to a true partner, two daughters, a granddaughter and a chance to create blueprints for a better world. “But nothing is going to happen unless we make it happen.”

*UUWF member Rhoda Amon is a reporter for Newsday and a member of the UU Congregation at Shelter Rock, Manhasset, NY.*

## UUW&R

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Annual Gathering will be a brunch meeting on Wednesday, June 20, before the official start of GA. And we’ll have a special ritual Friday night at 10 p.m. to celebrate the next 30 years of Women & Religion.

Other goals include launching a herstory project to gather and publish stories and documents of this important and highly successful movement for social change and participating in the coalition that is working towards an International Convocation of UU Women in 2009.

We hope you will be as excited as we are about these new directions for UU Women & Religion. We are grateful to UUWF for our new partnership in sharing space in each other’s publications so that we might all better communicate with women throughout the UU world. Together we can build a strong women’s movement to carry Unitarian Universalism forward in significant ways for the next 30 years and beyond.

*Co-Conveners are Dorothy Emerson, Medford, MA, RevEmerson@aol.com and Laura Nagel, Houston, TX, lauranagel@sbcglobal.net.*

## E-Mail Addresses Wanted

As part of our efforts to expand our capacity for immediate communication with members, UUWF is collecting e-mail addresses. To place your address on our growing list, send an e-mail to [espencher@uua.org](mailto:espencher@uua.org). In the subject line, put “Email Address.” In the message, type your full name, complete address and phone number and, on a line by itself, your e-mail address.

Please be advised that we will not sell or release your e-mail address to advertisers. Thank you for your help with this.

# UUWF Grants Program Announces 2007 Funding Recipients

by Linda Lu Burciaga  
UUWF Grants Panel Chair

**T**he UUWF Grants Panel approached our second year of funding with great excitement, tinged with sadness due to the illness and subsequent death of our beloved partner on the panel, **Rev. Marjorie Bowens-Wheatley**. Her presence and commitment was much missed during our deliberations, and they will not be matched. We hold her and her family in our hearts.

When Marjorie informed us that she needed to resign from the panel, we invited **Luz Bravo-Gleicher** to join us. Luz has now become an integral part of our team. Given her expertise, she was a “quick study” and ably assisted in this year’s selection process.

We received a total of ten proposals, each one worthy in its own right. Please know that our panel carefully reads and reviews every grant application we receive. Here are the results of this year’s selection process:

- Center for Women & Enterprise, Boston, MA, received \$5,000 in support of “Renewal House Financial Literacy & Visioning Project.” Our grant will help provide training in financial literacy and goal-setting for residents of Renewal House, a UU Urban Ministry program for women in crisis.
- East Fort Worth (TX) Montessori School and the African Descent Caucus of Diverse & Revolutionary UU Multicultural Ministries (DRUUMM), received \$3,000 for “Early Childhood Education and Advocacy in Sierra Leone.” Our grant will support the Mother’s Union of Sierra Leone in establishing a model early childhood education and support program for girls at risk.
- Mujeres Iniciando en las Americas, Costa Mesa, CA, was given \$5,500 to support “Sexual Harassment Commercial #1,” radio spots in Spanish and Qui’che providing information about sexual harassment and domestic violence, as well as information about where those affected can obtain help.
- Unitarian Universalist Church of the Philippines, was given \$5,845 in support of set-up costs for “Buhata Pinay (Do It, Filipina!),”

an organization providing services and livelihood projects aimed at empowering and educating Filipino women.

- Unity Church Aiding Neighbors, a program of Unity Church UU, North Easton, MA, received \$5,000 to support its “English Language Learners Program,” which will provide English language, life skills English, and citizenship courses to low income residents (mostly women) of the Greater Brockton, MA, area.

More information and photographs that will give you a better sense of the wonderful work these projects represent will appear in upcoming issues of the Communicator and on our website. I am certain that you will be as impressed as the panel members. We

also hope to have representatives from many of these projects at this year’s General Assembly, so those of you who join us in Portland in June will have an opportunity to meet them in person.

For those interested in applying for grants, the deadline for the 2008 funding cycle is October 15, 2007. The application is available on our website – [www.uuwf.org](http://www.uuwf.org) – or from the UUWF Office. It’s never too early to start thinking of the wonderful project you might want to submit.

In addition to myself, the Grants Panel consisted of: **Luz Bravo-Gleicher**, Providence, RI; **Rev. Liz McMaster**, Albuquerque, NM; **Janet Prince**, New Castle, NH; **Justice Waidner**, Tulsa, OK

## News of Note

### Redesigned Website Debuts

UUWF’s website – [www.uuwf.org](http://www.uuwf.org) – has been redesigned and the results were published online during the first week in January. The new design incorporates the graphic elements of UUWF’s “new look,” and represents a first step in making our site more relevant to our new direction and more useful to site visitors. Don’t just take one look: plans include regular updates to keep it fresh and up-to-date.

### New Grants Panelist Appointed

**Luz Bravo-Gleicher**, Providence, RI, has been appointed to the UUWF Grants Panel to fill the vacancy left by the late Rev. Marjorie Bowens-Wheatley (see page 1). Luz brings to her work eight years of experience with the UU Funding Program’s Fund for a Just Society, which she served as both a panel member and chair. Luz is a member of the First Unitarian Church in Providence.

## Marjorie Bowens-Wheatley

*CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1*

(DRUUMM), I went to Marjorie many times to ask her to call “just one more” woman of color who was entering our ministry. She never refused. There are many of us who owe our successful ministries to the guidance and love that Marjorie provided.

So many of us have been blessed by Marjorie Bowens Wheatley. She offered her love, knowledge and expertise to individuals and Unitarian Universalist organizations. Marjorie served on the UUWF board and, when she died, was a member of the UUWF

Grants Panel. She was also a member of the UU Service Committee Ministerial Advisory Committee. Marjorie’s scholarship, art and writing inspired, comforted and challenged me and many other UUs to be who we claim to be and to work for the realization of the Beloved Community within our faith and in the world.

I will miss my beloved friend and I, for one, will be changed forever by her presence in my life.

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**UU**Women

*Advancing justice for women  
through education and advocacy*

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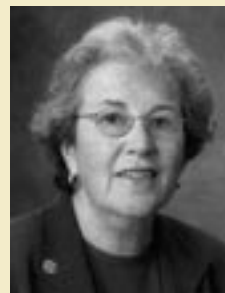
### UUWF Workshops, Breakfast at GA

**A** workshop featuring **Dr. Riane Eisler**, this year's Ministry to Women award recipient, will highlight UUWF activities at the UUA General Assembly in Portland, OR, this June.

Dr. Eisler's presentation, "The Caring Revolution: Turning Economics Right Side Up!" will focus on her forthcoming book *The Real Wealth of Nations: Creating a Caring Economics* (article on p. 1). She will also be the special guest at a UUWF reception during GA.

A second workshop, "Supporting Justice for Women," will focus on our UUWF Grants and Margaret Fuller Grants programs, and include appearances by recipients of grants from both programs.

"Keep the Chalice Lit" will explore ways to build on the legacy of our foremothers through planned giving. It will feature former



Denny Davidoff



Barb Brown

UUWF president and UUA moderator **Denny Davidoff**; UUA's deputy director of Stewardship and Development **Marcy Bailey-Adams**; and **Barb Brown**, UUWF life member and General Chair of the UUA's Annual Program Fund.

We will also host our second annual Leadership Breakfast. More information to follow in the May issue of *the Communicator*.