



the communicator

THE NEWSLETTER OF UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST WOMEN'S FEDERATION

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Veatch Mini-Grant to Fund "UUWF in a Box"

The Veatch Program of the UU Congregation at Shelter Rock has awarded UUWF a \$5,000 mini-grant in support of the project "UUWF in a Box." This portable "tool kit" will contain display materials, literature, and talking points promoting UUWF and its programs for use by local volunteers at district, regional, congregational and other UU meetings.

Board Supports UUA Decision to Keep GA in Fort Lauderdale

The UUWF board has passed a motion in support of the UUA's decision to keep the 2008 General Assembly in Fort Lauderdale. These actions come in response to objections some UUs have had to the fact that the Fort Lauderdale convention center, which lies within the Port of Fort Lauderdale, is subject to Homeland Security regulations requiring those who enter the facility to produce government-issued identification. The UUWF board's letter of support read, in part, "We ... do not wish to add to the pain of those who decide to stay away. But, we Unitarian Universalist need to be together to have our thousands of voices heard, particularly at this time in our country's history."

Mango Thoughts in a Meatloaf Town

Going to General Assembly? By Friday you may find yourself feeling a bit depleted from the hustle and bustle of plenary sessions and workshops. If so, take a break with Rev. Meg Barnhouse, whose delicious mix of songs and stories – described by the above title – is guaranteed to put a smile on your face and spring into your soul, leaving you challenged, refreshed and ready to carry on. Meg will appear with special guest Kiya Heartwood at a UUWF-sponsored performance on Friday, June 27 at 1:30 p.m. Check your program book for the location. We look forward to seeing you there!

UUWF Grants Program is Renamed; Funding Programs Announce 2008 Grant Recipients

To enhance and clearly identify the UUWF Grants Program's purpose – funding bold, innovative projects that effect positive social change in the lives of women and girls – the UUWF board has changed its name. Now to be known as the Equity and Justice Grants Program, it has just completed its third funding cycle by selecting the following recipients of 2008 grants:



See page 3 to learn why long-time member Phyllis Fairman (center) recently made UUWF a beneficiary of a charitable annuity. Phyllis is pictured here with women from the AUW of the First UU Church of Minneapolis, which in 2006 honored her by enrolling her in the Clara Barton Sisterhood: (l-r) Carol Johnson, Betsy Allis, Sara McMullen and Jody Beresford.

Helping Women in Prison & Their Families, a lay-led social justice ministry of The Unitarian Church of Harrisburg, PA, \$4,780 in support of "Enhancing Communication to Empower Women: Website Redesign for the PROGRAM." The grant will help fund improvements to the website of the PROGRAM, which serves women and children involved with the criminal justice system to promote productive, crime-free lives. Website improvements will include features to facilitate volunteer recruitment and on-line financial contributions.

Jericho Road Ministries, Inc., \$4,000 in support of "The Priscilla Project," plus an additional \$2,000 in additional funds as a match to funds raised by new sources. This grant will support a health mentoring program which connects medically at-risk, vulnerable refugee and low-income women with stable volunteer mentors.

Margaret Fuller Grants

Originally founded in 1989 as the Feminist Theology Awards, this UUWF program funds accessible projects focusing on UU religious feminisms or other theological issues that impact UU women. The 2008 grant recipients are:

Celeste DeRoche, Ph.D. / Rev. Gail Geisenhainer, \$2,000 in support of "Singing For Our Lives: A History of the Pioneer Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual, and Transgendered Unitarian Universalist Ministers."

The Church of the Larger Fellowship and Rev. Elizabeth Lerner, \$3,000 in support of "Ancient Roots: The Feminine Face of Western Religion," an online adult religious education course.

UU Women's Federation Funding Programs

Equity and Justice Grants
Funding bold, innovative projects that effect positive social change

Margaret Fuller Grants
Funding accessible projects exploring UU religious feminisms

Grants ranging from \$1,000 to \$10,000

2009 Grant Application Deadline for both programs: October 1, 2008
Applications available at uuwf.org or call the UUWF Office at 617-948-4692

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UUWF Co-Signs Amicus Brief Supporting Access to Contraception Prescriptions

Imagine handing a prescription for birth control pills or emergency contraception to a pharmacy employee, only to be told that because of moral, ethical or religious objections, he or she will not fill it. When you ask if there is another pharmacist on duty who will fill it, you are told “no,” leaving you no option except to go elsewhere – if other pharmacies are available to you.

This is the situation UUWF and other organizations are trying to prevent in endorsing a friend-of-the court brief supporting a patient's right of access to all physician prescriptions.

The case involves a suit that seeks to reverse Washington state regulations requiring pharmacies to dispense all prescription medications. Under its provisions, pharmacies are responsible for maintaining plans covering instances where pharmacists have personal objections to certain medications. The Seattle firm of Perkins Coie LLP submitted the amicus brief supporting the regulations on behalf of the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice (RCRC) and the endorsing organizations and individuals.

The Washington State Board of Pharmacy adopted the regulations after several pharmacists refused to fill prescriptions for birth control pills, emergency contraception and other medications. In its brief, RCRC notes that the regulations accommodate pharmacists' personal religious beliefs to the greatest extent possible while protecting patients' individual beliefs and timely access to health care. A pharmacist can, for example, pass a prescription along to a colleague at the same store.

Pointing out the diversity of religious views about health care, RCRC notes that the pharmacists who object to filling certain prescriptions demand protection of their religious convictions but do not seek “the same protection for the convictions of other members of the population, most notably patients.”

RCRC filed its friend-of-the-court brief March 11, 2008, in the groundbreaking *Stor- mans, Inc. v. Selecky* case in conjunction with Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, interfaith and secular organizations and individual religious leaders. The case is believed to be the first to challenge the contention that pharmacists have a right to refuse to fill prescriptions based on personal religious views.

UUWF is a founding member of RCRC – a national coalition of religious and religiously affiliated organizations from 15 denominations. Other organizations endorsing the brief are: Americans for Religious Liberty, Catholics for Choice, Disciples for Choice, Disciples Justice Action Network, Episcopal Women's Caucus, Faith Trust Institute, Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization of America, Justice and Witness Ministries, United Church of Christ, Methodist Federation for Social Action, Multifaith Works, National Council of Jewish Women, National Council of Jewish Women - Seattle Section, Religious Coalition for Equality, Religious Institute on Sexuality Morality, Justice and Healing, The Planned Parenthood Federation of America Clergy Advisory Board, Washington Coalition of Rabbis, and Women of Reform Judaism.

International Convocation of
Unitarian Universalist

Save the Date! **Women**

February 26 - March 1, 2009 • Houston, Texas, USA

*Weaving Global Partnerships
to Enrich Women's Lives*

Go to www.icuuw.com

Become Part of an Equity & Justice Grant Project



Rev. Patty Franz oversees CLF's Prison Ministry. "Chaplain Pat" is a fellowshipped Unitarian Universalist minister with a specialization in Community Ministry. Prior to coming to the CLF, she worked as a chaplain with hospice patients and families and served as a chaplain intern at several hospitals and two county jails.

Would you like to become directly involved with a project supported by a UUWF Equity and Justice grant? Consider participating in the Church of the Larger Fellowship's letter-writing ministry, an integral part of CLF's work with people incarcerated in U.S. prisons.

Contributions from UUWF members and friends helped support start-up costs for expansion of CLF's prison work to include ministry to women in prison, so your dollars are already making a difference the lives of many incarcerated women. Here's an opportunity to become more directly involved.

Most of the CLF's prisoner-members are 'brand-new' to Unitarian Universalism. With no access to the web or UU Sunday services, they can only learn about Unitarian Universalism by reading the publications they receive from the CLF (the *UU World* magazine and the CLF's *Quest*) and through letters they exchange with the CLF staff and other UUs.

CLF's Letter-Writing Ministry matches CLF prisoner-members with non-incarcerated UUs for an exchange of friendly letters on topics of mutual interest. Because prisoners have no access to email, all mail to/from prisoners must be "old-style" letters (on paper, mailed in envelopes with stamps). All letter-writers (prisoners and 'free-world') agree to the same set of guidelines, which emphasize that the program is not intended for romantic, legal-aid or financial/gift interactions.

Prisoners send their letters to the CLF to be forwarded (un-opened) to the non-incarcerated UU they've been matched with (prisoners are told only the first name of their 'match' and are given no other contact information by CLF). CLF hopes participants will exchange letters for at least six months, although many matches last longer. The CLF staff remains available to all letter-writers for advice and support by mail, phone or email.

If you are either a member of CLF or any other UU congregation (and have been for six months or more), you are eligible to become part of the CLF's Letter-Writing Ministry. UUs who are not members of CLF, and who are matched to exchange letters with prisoner-members, will be asked for a modest annual donation (\$20/year) to help support the prison programs, and may read CLF's *Quest* online (free) or receive *Quest* in the mail each month (\$22/year).

For more information, go to <http://clf.uua.org/penpals.html> or write to CLF Prison Ministry, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, MA 02108.

The Story Behind One Member's Gift

"You know, I just think that the UU Women's Federation will go on forever," said Phyllis Fairman, talking about why she has included UUWF as a beneficiary of a charitable annuity she recently established. "And I'm also very excited about the UUWF Grants Program."

A member of the UU Fellowship of Bloomington, MN, and its Women's Alliance, Phyllis has also drawn inspiration and support from the UUWF Clara Barton Legislative Assistant/Intern for Women's Issues. As an ardent reproductive rights activist, she particularly recalls the role of the first Clara Barton Intern, Kierstin Homblette, in helping organize the UU presence at the 2004 March for Women's Lives. "Hardly a week went by when she wasn't in touch with us," Phyllis remembered. "Letting us know about the latest plans."

Phyllis traces her long-time involvement and support of UUWF to a number of women active in our organization. Among them were the late Mary Lou Gibbons, a member of the Women's Alliance of Chicago's Third Unitarian Church. She also has strong ties to the women of the Association of Universalist Women at First Universalist Unitarian Church in Minneapolis, where she lived before moving to Bloomington. In 2006, the AUW enrolled Phyllis in our Clara Barton Sisterhood, honoring her with the following citation:

... Her life has been characterized by active involvement in reproductive choice and compassion for others ... Phyllis has been an essential part of the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice (RCRC) since 1989. She has been a regular presence in the Minnesota affiliate, putting her UU principles into ac-

tion. She has been recognized with the Faith and Freedom Award of RCRC, the Susan B. Anthony Roll of Recognition Award, and Prairie Star District Unsung UU Award. Most recently, she has been an essential part of the development of the Reproductive Rights: Sacred Choices, Social Justice Campaign of the Association of Universalist Women.

It's not surprising that Phyllis is currently engaged in organizing an archive of photographs, event programs and other mementoes of RCRC's Minnesota chapter.

Phyllis arranged for the annuity through the UUA, which has the resources and expertise to help UUs support the future of our faith. For more information, contact the Office of Legacy Gifts at the UUA Stewardship and Development Office, 1-888-792-5885 or go to www.uua.org/giving and click on Planned Giving.

M. Fuller Conversation Raises \$1,000 for UUWF

Over 200 women from the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Atlanta and sister UU congregations in North Georgia gathered for a formal Margaret Fuller Tea and Conversation during March, Women's History Month. In addition to a bountiful array of sweets and savories (think chocolate dipped strawberries, lemon bars, and cucumber sandwiches), those who attended had a chance to socialize and, in the words of 19th century Transcendentalist and feminist Margaret Fuller, to do their "minding, not their mending."

There was a short lecture about the new book *Well-Behaved Women Seldom Make History*, which points to reasons why women have been largely absent from the historical record. In addition, there were readings from the works of Unitarian Elizabeth Cady Stanton on the need for a broader role for women in society, and Virginia Woolf, on the paradoxical plethora of women characters in fiction and the lack of published works by women.

Also part of the program were the first annual awards for women in the congregation



After attending to "their minding, not their mending," UU women enjoyed chocolate dipped strawberries, lemon bars, cucumber sandwiches and other delicacies at a Margaret Fuller Tea and Conversation at the UU Congregation of Atlanta during Women's History Month.

who had been willing to be "less than well-behaved in the interest of positive change," says Rev. Marti Keller, UUWF board member and creator of the Fuller event, which began in the Georgia Mountain UU Church she had previously served. The women selected had been pioneers in the civil rights movement, the ERA, homelessness, and other justice and peace issues.

Besides being educational and great fun for the women present, bedecked as many were, in hats and gloves, the Tea raised more than \$1,000 for the UUWF.

For more information on how to put on a Margaret Fuller Tea and Conversation, contact Rev. Marti Keller at mkeller@uuca.org.

Working on the International Violence Against Women Act



By Grace Garner
UUWF
Clara Barton
Legislative
Assistant for
Women's
Issues

work on a variety of issues at the Washington Office for Advocacy, everything from reproductive health to Bisexual, Lesbian, Gay and Transgender rights. Lately, I have been working on the International Violence Against Women Act with other members of the faith community. Issues of violence against women have brought members of many different faith communi-

ties together to end violence against women and girls worldwide.

The International Violence Against Women Act is similar to the Violence Against Women Act passed in 1994, which improved criminal justice and community-based responses to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking in the United States.

This issue crosses racial and economic lines and international boundaries. The new act would commit the United States to addressing acts of violence against women worldwide, including human trafficking, genital mutilation, rape, domestic violence and economic conditions that are oppressive to women. The legislation would integrate anti-violence work in U.S. foreign assistance programs.

The Interfaith Domestic Violence Coalition, of which the UUA is a part, is led by a diverse group of women who have taken charge on this issue. Their focus is on how faith-based communities can work together to advance domestic violence laws. Through events such as a briefing held in February on Capital Hill, the coalition communicates the importance of this issue in the faith community to members of Congress.

You can contact Grace Garner directly at ggarner@uua.org. The UUWF founded the Clara Barton Legislative Assistant for Women's Issues in 2002 with its \$250,000 donation to the UUA; it assisted the UUA in raising a similar sum to complete the endowment that will support the position in perpetuity.

Remembering May Sarton: A Five-Year Journey from Inspiration to Reality



by Beverly
Anderson
Forbes
Margaret
Fuller Grants
Recipient

My “Remembering May Sarton” project, the result of a Margaret Fuller Grant through the UUWF, is complete. I appreciate the invitation to share a few of my experiences during this exhilarating and challenging journey, describe the resulting three books now available, and indicate how I envision they might be used.

My journey began on January 5, 2002, in the middle of the night. For several days I had been contemplating whether to apply for a grant because of the passion I felt regarding May Sarton’s inspiring, healing, and prophetic words, and their potential to help individuals. I awoke at three that January morning to find that the essence of proposal was clear in my mind. Amazed and grateful, I got out of bed, made my way to my study, and sat down at my computer. The first draft of my Margaret Fuller Grant proposal flowed effortlessly onto the page.

First Two Years

My proposal was accepted and I began what I thought was a relatively simple and straightforward project that would take about two years. My goal was to compile Sarton’s writing into three resource booklets, each about 60 pages in length. Each booklet would focus on a major theme of her work—spirituality, aging, and her vision.

I settled into a year of reading and note taking. I devoured nearly 50 books by Sarton and read a dozen other books by scholars describing her work. At the end of the year I had

over 300 pages of notes organized within topics such as creativity, solitude, religion, benefits of aging, Sarton’s thoughts on death, women’s self-identity, UU principles, and an ideal society, to name just a few.

Challenges Begin

As the second year began I was “on a roll,” reveling in the joy of being involved in a purposeful endeavor that matched my introverted personality and my desire to study something in depth. Then reality set in! The immensity of the project became clear. The booklets morphed into full-blown books due to the huge amount of material. Still, I continued to make good progress and by the end of that year, two of the books were done—at least I thought they were!

In the third year, copyright issues unexpectedly surfaced. Experts had assured me that the permission I had obtained at the beginning of the project was sufficient. Instead, I was now asked to remove twenty percent of the material in all three of my nearly completed books in order to gain approval from Sarton’s publisher.

Over several months I systematically determined which quotes I wished to keep, developed a huge appreciation for my computer’s word count tool, and prepared necessary documentation, all with the support and cooperation of the publisher. Once this daunting task was finished I could admit that an unexpected consequence was the improved quality of the books. The Sarton citations remaining within each topic were the “best of the best.”

I faced health issues as well as technical and editing problems in the fourth and fifth years. A hip replacement, computer problems, and the need to find a different copy editor extended the journey. Fortunately all along the way, I had the understanding and support of the Margaret Fuller Committee and the UUWF.

The challenges I encountered throughout this journey were completely out-weighted by the joy of working on the project, the

chance to spend in-depth time with May Sarton’s inspiring and instructive words, and my belief that others would benefit from the words of this sage and prophet. I was buoyed as well by contact with other Sarton scholars and by the emotional responses of so many women to my seminars—the development of which was a secondary goal of the project. Many women spoke movingly of how Sarton’s words had changed their lives and how she had served as a spiritual advisor, mentor, and healer to them.

I envision the books being used by individuals seeking inspiration, by book groups and covenant circles, by adult education leaders, and by those preparing retreats, sermons, or other presentations. Through the use of these books, it is my hope that feminist and Unitarian Universalist values will be fostered and a more peaceful, compassionate, just, interdependent, and sustainable world will result.

I want to thank once more the Women’s Federation and the Margaret Fuller Committee for their tremendous support. Even with the rich professional career I have had, my “Remembering May Sarton” project has been the most personally inspiring and meaningful endeavor I’ve undertaken.

For more details about the books, including a summary of each, the several resource materials included in them, and endorsements please email me at bforbes@seanet.com.

How to Order the Sarton Compendia

*Bev is happy to report that the books are now available from the UUA Bookstore at bookstore@uua.org. The price is \$20 each. The three titles are: *Remembering May Sarton: A Compendium of Her Work on Spirituality* (115 pages); *Remembering May Sarton: A Compendium of Her Work on Aging and Death* (148 pages); and *Remembering May Sarton: A Compendium of Her Work on Her Vision of Life, Her Vision for Women, and for Our Society and World* (194 pages).*

For excerpts from Beverly’s compendia, see page 6.

www.uuwf.org



UUWomen

*Advancing justice for women
through education and advocacy*

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Excerpts from Beverly Anderson Forbes' May Sarton Compendia

On page 5 of this issue, read about Beverly Anderson Forbes' experiences during her "Remembering May Sarton" project. The three books in her compendia are available from the UUA Bookstore at bookstore@uua.org for \$20 each.

On Spirituality

But the critical message is always there—we must become what we were meant to be if we are going to have our lives and give back to society.

On Aging

In Sarton's words, "There is no doubt that old age is a journey into a foreign country, so that one is constantly being astonished by what is not possible, or by what is different from anything that has gone before."

On Vision

All of the visions [her vision of life, for women, and for our society and world] and the "good citizen" listings may be seen as Sarton's legacy—wisdom for us to consider as we live our life.