

the communicator

THE NEWSLETTER OF UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST WOMEN'S FEDERATION

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First Cycle of the Marjorie Bowens-Wheatley Scholarship Program Begins



"Ministry is what we do together – clergy and the laity. It flows from a religious conviction that invites people to become more of themselves, more whole, as we give witness to a vision of a world transformed by our care."

– Marjorie Bowens-Wheatley
January 2005

The UU community lost an inspiring spiritual leader with the death of Rev. Marjorie Bowens-Wheatley in late 2006. Among her many accomplishments and contributions were her service on the UUWF board and as a member of our first Equity and Justice Grants Panel.

Marjorie was also a valued mentor of women preparing for our UU ministry, especially those who identify as women of color, Latina, or Hispanic. In keeping with the spirit of this aspect of Marjorie's work, the new UUWF scholarship program named in her honor will provide financial support to this same population.

In addition to funds UUWF has budgeted for this purpose, the program will also be supported by donations made to the UUA in Marjorie's memory. We are grateful to her husband, Rev. Clyde Grubbs who, when consulted by the UUA about an appropriate use for those funds, recommended our new scholarship program. The first scholarships will be awarded early in 2009, with \$6,000 allocated for distribution this initial year.

A committee consisting of Rev. Danielle Di Bona, Rev. Rosemary Bray McNatt, and Rev. Leslie Takahashi Morris will select the scholarship recipients. Applications are available from the UUWF Office and on at www.uuwf.org. The application deadline is November 1.

www.uuwf.org

Telling a New Economic Story: Real Wealth Depends on Caring & Sharing

by Celeste M. Howard
Portland, OR

A group of Oregonians, using the name Real Wealth of Portland (RWP), are changing the economic story in their community. They are putting aside the conventional scarcity story of economics—based on empire, domination and control—and taking up the true economic story of abundance, equality and partnership which is so vital for our interconnected web of life.

Inspiration for RWP arose in 2007 at a UUWF-sponsored General Assembly workshop in Portland called "The Caring Revolution: Turning Economics Right Side Up!" Riane Eisler, who was receiving the UUWF Ministry to Women Award that year, talked to the workshop about her latest book, *The Real Wealth of Nations: Creating a Caring Economics*.

Portland UU activists had already been primed by hearing David Korten talk about "changing the stories we live by" at the two previous UUA General Assemblies, under sponsorship of Unitarian Universalists for a Just Economic Community (UUJEC). They had invited Korten to talk at Portland's First Unitarian Church about his 2005 book, *The Great Turning: From Empire to Earth Community*, which he dedicated to Eisler because of her seminal book *The Chalice and the Blade*, published in 1987.

Marcia Meyers, co-chair of UUJEC, saw the powerful connection between Korten's and Eisler's views. She and others realized the many ways in which Portland and its surrounding communities are already shifting to a new economic story based on the partnership model.

Supported by the Economic Justice Action Group of the First Unitarian Church of Portland they created RWP to recognize, strengthen and celebrate this essential caring economy. Meeting weekly, they organized study groups



The original Real Wealth of Portland planning group formed in fall 2007 included, from left to right, top row: Hafidha Acuay, Pat Osborn, Kim Ford, Andrea Drury, Diana Richardson; bottom row: Marcia Meyers, Marty McCall. Since the picture the group has doubled in size.

for *The Real Wealth of Nations*, wrote a study guide (later adopted by Eisler as a companion to the book), created their own website www.realwealthpdx.com, and invited Eisler back to Portland in October, 2007, for a forum on real-wealth initiatives in the local community.

The RWP website headlines its aim "Supporting a more caring economy" and sees its efforts as "moving to an economy that fosters social and economic justice and peace." All economies, including our current "market economy," are dependent on life-sustaining, caring activities. However, the new economic story highlights this dependence by its new name, "caring economics."

Caring economics rejects money and its derivatives (financial wealth, Gross Domestic Product, etc.) as the only indicators of wealth and success. Caring economics is based on values of a more equal society where human dependence on the earth, on one another, and on care-giving activities is acknowledged and counted. The health of the earth, of families and households, and of children and communities become the correct indicators for valuable human systems.

We need to talk more in value terms about human care-giving activities and caring for the environment. When we engage people in

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UUWF Office

25 Beacon Street
Boston, MA 02108

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

Ellen Spencer
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espencer@uua.org

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We extend a heartfelt "thank you" to all those who joined us in support of our mission with their generous donations and pledges between June 1, 2007 through May 31, 2008.

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The Goals and Promise of the International Convocation of U*U Women

by Laura Nagel, *Administrator International Convocation of U*U Women*

*(Editor's Note: U*U is the international symbol used to designate the half million Unitarians, Universalists and Unitarian Universalists located around the world in 22 countries.)*



partnerships will grow, offering ways for our respective communities to work together.

There are already successful programs underway in which U*U communities and congregations work to enrich women's lives. By highlighting elements of their success, we extend the work throughout our movement.

The dedicated planners of the International Convocation of U*U Women is focused on these questions: what are the goals of the Convocation, what outcomes do we hope for and what do we want to accomplish? The answers depend on women attending from around the world, speakers and planners staying attuned to the issues, and fundraising efforts coming together to ensure diverse representation at the Convocation.

A convocation is different from a conference. "Convocation" comes from the Latin, *convocare*, meaning to call forth or summon together, and *vox*, or voice. Unlike a conference where the agenda is known, a convocation calls forth the collective voice.

We all ask, "What can I do?" Can we have a significant impact on the world? In this age, we can fly the globe, Skype friends 8,000 miles away, or send a text message by clicking a button, and yet we feel powerless in the face of world issues and the vast institutions that seem to run our lives. At our Convocation, dedicated individuals will fly off to connect us with their visions, shape our world, and inspire us.

Join Us!

Join us for the first international gathering of U*U women and progressive women of faith.

When: February 26-March 1, 2009

Where: Houston, Texas
Hilton of the Americas

Registration: \$350 (incl. several meals).
Scholarships are available.

Visit www.icuuw.com for scholarship applications, the registration form and other up-to-date information.

New programs make use of telecommunication and the Internet to allow individuals to have a direct impact. Kiva is one such Internet-based tool that allows individuals to make loans for as little as \$25, which are channeled to individuals through local, established micro-finance banks. Lenders have a direct impact upon individual lives by applying techniques developed by Mohammed Yunus, winner of the 2006 Nobel Peace Prize for his ground-breaking work in micro-lending through the Grameen Bank.

Women constitute 70% of the world population in extreme poverty, defined by the United Nations as living on less than \$1 a day. Women produce 75-90% of global food crops, though seldom controlling land or resources. Women around the world lack basic human rights when they cannot hold a job, own land, go to school or vote. They and their children are at risk.

The astounding rate at which women die each year from relatively simple and treatable complications from childbirth is a rallying cry. As New York Times columnist Nicholas D. Kristof wrote this past June, "In some African countries, a woman has more than a 1-in-10 lifetime risk of dying in childbirth. If men were dying at such a rate for fathering children, the G-8 would be holding emergency summits."

Convocation participants will learn the positive message of the Millennium Development Goals crafted at the turn of this century when apocalyptic messages were everywhere. This assembly, the largest ever of world leaders, imparted a message of hope. They determined that eliminating extreme poverty was an achievable goal for the world community. Convocation planners are hopeful that new friendships and

The Convocation recently received its third grant from the UU Funding Program to build an online community for the Convocation, including a database of model programs and partnerships. This will allow those unable to travel to the Convocation to participate. Papers and other materials from the Convocation will be published online.

This online community will extend our Global Sisters Groups, small group meetings planned for the Convocation, to be available to all. The database will highlight model U*U programs and partnerships around the world. What do we mean by successful programs and partnerships? This is part of what we hope to learn through research conducted with the help of Rice University's Center for the Study of Women, Gender and Sexuality.

An earlier grant from the UU Funding Program was used to develop the Global Literacy Project (GLP), a program helping U.S. congregations prepare for the Convocation. It focuses on conditions in America, as well as abroad, and asks participants to examine their own culture while striving to learn about others.

This year Southwest UU Women will celebrate our 22nd annual gathering. Recently I learned that the Northeast District women's group has just celebrated its 100th bi-annual gathering. UU women are out there, meeting in district organizations across the country, through the UU Women's Federation, in UU Women and Religion, in Women's Alliances and in small covenant groups in our congregations. We need to work together to address the issues facing women. We need to reach out to help

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UUWF in a Box

*A portable publicity kit for volunteers
to use at district and other meetings*



Would you like to help bring a UU Women's Federation presence to a district, local, or congregational meeting? Thanks in part to a \$5,000 mini-grant from the Veatch Program of the UU Congregation at Shelter Rock, Manhasset, NY, UUWF will soon have a tool to help you.

The key display elements of "UUWF in a Box" are pictured at left. The table throw is suitable for a standard 6 or 8 foot display table, or even a card table in a pinch. The standing sign is actually retractable: retracted it's a compact tube, extended it stands on its own.

The kit will also contain:

- A supply of UUWF Equity and Justice, Margaret Fuller and Membership brochures, complete with a three-decked acrylic display holder
- Recent issues of *the Communicator*
- Business cards with contact information for our office & website, with a holder of its own (for people who don't want to accumulate paper)
- Grant applications for both UUWF funding programs and for our Marjorie Bowers-Wheatley Scholarship Program

The "Box" comes with a binder containing set-up instructions (including suggested layouts for the display table; a script/talking points for a mini-presentation on UUWF; other background information and an evaluation form). The kit will reach volunteers in a box within a box. The inner container will be equipped with a pre-paid shipping sticker for ease of return.

Also in the works is a tote bag of informational materials on UUWF for meetings with no display area. If you are interested in representing UUWF at a meeting of any size, please contact Ellen Spencer at espencer@uaa.org or 617-948-4692.

Real Wealth, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

such talk, we increase their awareness of our dependence on nature, on parents, volunteers, teachers, first responders – caregivers, paid or unpaid – and in so doing, we help to make visible the part of our socioeconomic system that is now largely unverballed and invisible. RWP has been finding ways to create new economic language that supports partnership and fosters social/environmental responsibility. One of these ways has been "Community Commons: Ideas into Action," a series of monthly gatherings facilitated by RWP.

These gatherings use an "open space" model to provide a safe, supportive environment for people to share their identities, ideas, hopes and dreams. Interactions have emerged here that strengthen our common values and inspire new, creative ways of working together. For example, one attendee made contact with women that she was later able to feature on her local community radio broadcast, "Worldwide Women's Day Celebration." A community farm project advocate connected others with opportunities to share their skills and available time in raising food locally. A young woman with a strong background in community organizing, grant writing, and international NGOs connected with a local group focusing on labor rights.

Through its partnership with Riane Eisler's Center for Partnership Studies, RWP developed a set of economic indicators appropriate for the new economic story. Sarah Noyes, a Center graduate student interning with RWP, collaborated with Alan Rosenblith to develop indicators now available on the Community Prosper website www.communityprosper.org. Although these indicators were designed for use by businesses and non-profit organizations in assessing their own progress toward ecological sustainability, community support and employee support, they can also be useful in reframing our talk about values in a new system of caring economics.

RWP has also partnered with Community Prosper to develop Community Way, an innovative social networking program that connects local businesses, charitable organizations, and individuals in a mutually beneficial three-way partnership. Community Way helps local businesses attract the loyalty of people who support charitable organizations, provides those organizations with a powerful fund-raising tool, and makes it easy for citizens to support such organizations without losing any of their buying power.

RWP and its partners continue to develop resources for making the way we think and talk about economics reflect our true human priorities. All human communities are profoundly dependent on caring and sharing activities, most of which remain unacknowledged and thus largely invisible. RWP looks forward to sharing its experience and resources with other communities that want to change how they tell the economic story.

Convocation

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our sisters whose basic human rights are being violated. And we need to act now!

We hope to take action as a Convocation – the first-ever international gathering of U*U women. A 2005 survey of UU congregations published in *Faith Communities Today* indicated that the majority (60-80%) of a congregation's active participants are female. What woman power! If we work together is there anything we could not do? Revising our world to unleash the power of women to heal the world and help their families is not only a laudable goal but I believe an achievable goal for this Convocation.

www.uuwf.org



*Advancing justice for women
through education and advocacy*

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*For other late-breaking news,
visit us online at www.uuwf.org.*



Among the guests at our Leadership Breakfast at this year's UUA General Assembly were all three of the women who have served as the UUWF Clara Barton Legislative Assistant/Intern for Women's Issues, a position UUWF founded in the UUA's Washington Office. Pictured (left to right) are UUWF President Linda Lu Burciaga; Meredith Schonfeld-Hicks (2006-07); Kierstin Homblette (2004-06); and Grace Garner, who currently holds the position.