



the communicator

THE NEWSLETTER OF UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST WOMEN'S FEDERATION

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UUWF Receives Second Veatch Grant

The Veatch Program of the UU Church at Shelter Rock in Manhasset, NY has awarded UUWF a grant of \$25,000 to help support its efforts to enhance its fundraising capacity. This renewal grant is a follow-up to the \$20,000 Veatch awarded to UUWF last year. Both grants are in recognition of the Federation's role in furthering and strengthening the goals of Unitarian Universalism.

Third Clara Barton Intern Appointed

Grace Garner, of Palm Springs, CA, will be the third UUWF Clara Barton Intern for Women's Issues, a program founded by UUWF and based in the UUA's Washington Office for Advocacy. "We are very excited to have her, as she brings a lot of passion, confidence and experience to the position," said Meredith Schonfeld-Hicks, who is about to end her two years as Clara Barton Intern. Grace serves on the board of UU Legislative Ministry in California and has academic and personal experience with gender/feminist studies at Pitzer College. "As a UU, feminist and Mexican-American I strive to promote human rights and social action in all of my endeavors," Grace wrote in applying for the internship position. "Discussions regarding women's issues, politics and human rights are common in my day-to-day life. My main focus is the battle women of color face and improving the lives of people of color in general."

May Sarton Compendia Available

Three compendia of the works of author, poet, and diarist May Sarton have been completed and are currently available for sale. The compendia, partially funded by UUWF's Margaret Fuller Grants Program, were compiled and edited by Beverly Anderson Forbes, Ed.D. Beverly will be a featured presenter at a UUWF workshop at the upcoming UUA General Assembly in Portland, OR. For information on her compendia, email Beverly at bforbes@seanet.com.

The Transformative Power of the Women and Religion Resolution

by Rev. Wendy von Zirpelo
Minister, UU Church of Marblehead, MA

Imagine Unitarian Universalist pulpits without prophetic female voices. Imagine Unitarian Universalist board rooms without a woman in sight, except one taking notes and making coffee. Imagine singing hymns each Sunday that lacked inclusive language. Imagine congregations actively ignoring women's spirituality. Imagine your religious community silencing women or being indifferent to barriers to holy and whole involvement.

For many of us this requires imagination; others simply close their eyes and think back three decades.

This year at General Assembly we will honor the 30th anniversary of the "Women and Religion" resolution. As we do so, we take a retrospective glance at the achievements associated with the UUWF and the changing role of this organization. On this anniversary it is fitting to pay homage to the many women who paved roads not just for themselves, but for future generations of women to travel. They wanted to change the world and knew they could... and so they did.

In 1977, the General Assembly delegates called upon all Unitarian Universalists to "to examine carefully their own religious beliefs and the extent to which these beliefs influence sex-role stereotypes within their own families;" for the UUA Board to call upon administrative officers and staff, the religious leaders within societies, the Unitarian Universalist theological schools, the directors of related organizations, and the planners of seminars and conferences, to make every effort to (a) put traditional assumptions and language in perspective, and (b) avoid sexist assumptions and language in the future;" to urge other denominations to do the same,

to inform the International Association of Liberal Religious Women and the IARF of this important step and to join with others in the important struggle to "examine the relationship between religious and cultural attitudes toward women."



Participants in the third annual Sexuality Education Advocacy Training, sponsored by the UUA and the United Church of Christ. UUWF Clara Barton Intern Meredith Schonfeld-Hicks reports on the training on page 5.

Like most powerful public moments, the passing of this resolution reflects much more than the mood and tenor of gathered delegates. The resolution was neither the starting nor ending point for Unitarian Universalist women. It was the culmination of years of women and male allies working tirelessly with clear vision, a commitment to justice and the tenacity to move past barriers regardless of size or location. But in the moment when all those in favor said "Aye," lives changed. Women and girls in our communities, local and global, would feel the power of this resolution in the coming years. Congregations would experience a dramatic impact in their ministries, both lay and ordained, and in the delivery of services from UUA staff. Our collective religious voice would be heard in the world community, calling for women's equality. The UU Women's Federation has remained the center of this work, transforming itself to meet the changing needs of women and girls.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

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UUWF Events at GA 2007

Please refer to the GA program for locations.

Thursday, June 21, 2 p.m.

The Caring Revolution: Turning Economics Right Side Up!

Eminent social scientist, attorney and author of the international bestseller, *The Chalice and The Blade*, **Dr. Riane Eisler** discusses her latest book, *The Real Wealth of Nations*. She maintains that flawed economic systems that set the wrong priorities and misallocate resources cause poverty, inequality, war, terrorism and environmental degradation. UUWF will also present Dr. Eisler with the Ministry to Women Award as part of this workshop.

Friday, June 22, 1 p.m.

Keep the Chalice Lit

Our foremothers and forefathers had the foresight and generosity of spirit to endow our UU organizations and congregations to keep them alive and vital for us. Learn from two experts how we can provide for the future of our beloved organizations and congregations while

sustaining ourselves. Speakers: **Barb Brown, Denny Davidoff, Pat Grimm**

Friday, June 22, 4:30 p.m.

Supporting Justice for Women: UUWF Grants Programs

Hear grant recipient **Dr. Beverly Anderson Forbes** speak about her three volume compen-



Dr. Beverly Anderson Forbes

dium of UU May Sarton's work and learn about our two grants programs. Through them, UUWF funds projects that advance equity and justice for women and girls, counteract gender oppression, and ex-

plore UU religious feminisms. Speakers: **Linda Lu Burciaga, Dr. Beverly Anderson Forbes.**

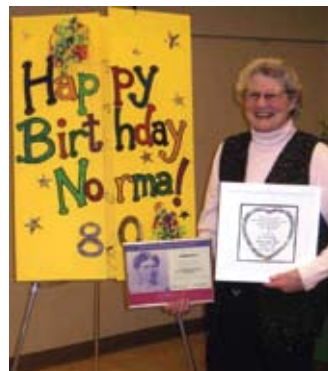
Welcoming New Members of the Clara Barton Sisterhood

The Clara Barton Sisterhood is a UUWF program named for and inspired by Universalist Clara Barton, who did not begin the work for which she is best known – organizing relief 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 for women's groups, churches, and other organizations or individuals to honor women for their contributions to church and community life.

Between December 1, 2006 and May 15, 2007, the following women have been enrolled in the sisterhood:

- **Eryl Court, Eleanor Mason**, honored by the UU United Nations Office.
- **Norma Rios**, UU Women's Association of the UU Church of Akron, OH.

- **Beatrice M. Shriver**, Alliance of the First Parish UU Church, Arlington, MA.
- **Eleanor Morton, Jane Stehn**, Women's Group of the Minnesota Valley UU Fellowship, Bloomington, MN.
- **Janet Taylor Spence**, Women's Circle Alliance, First Parish, Brewster, MA.
- **Eiko Takemoto**, First UU Church of Detroit, MI.
- **Frances Jones Casselman**, First Unitarian Society Alliance, Madison, WI.
- **Elsa Mannheimer Carpenter, Phyllis Fairman**, Association of Universalist Women, First Universalist Church, Minneapolis, MN.
- **Carnzu "Conny" Clark**, Unitarian Universalist Alliance, First UU Church, Santa Barbara, CA.



The UU Women's Association of the UU Church of Akron, OH, honored Norma Rios with a Clara Barton Sisterhood earlier this year.

For information about the Sisterhood, go to www.uuwf.org or contact the UUWF Office.

UU Women & Religion Plans International Convocation

by Rev. Dr. Dorothy May Emerson,
Co-Convener, UU Women & Religion

Unitarian Universalist women and other progressive women of faith are being summoned to Houston, February 27-March 2, 2009, to share and learn ways we can work together to improve women's lives around the world. This will be the first major gathering of UU women since WomanQuest in 1990, and the first ever gathering that specifically includes international UU women.

SouthWest UU Women are providing the major leadership for this unique event, which is supported by an initial grant from the Fund for International Unitarian Universalism. UU Women & Religion are co-sponsors, and many other UU organizations are represented on the Advisory Committee, including UUWF.

A convocation is a gathering in response to a summons. The word comes from the Latin *convocare* "to call together," from *com* ("together") plus *vocare* ("to call") from *vox* ("voice"). We are being summoned to respond to a hurting world, to gather as women of faith to share and learn ways we can improve women's lives. We are coming together in recognition of the need for action.

The call we hear today is not unlike the one issued nearly a century and a half ago, by our Unitarian foremother Julia Ward Howe:

"Arise all women who have hearts... Say firmly:
'We will not have great questions decided by
irrelevant agencies...'"

"Let women now leave all that may be left of home for a great and earnest day of counsel.

"Let us meet first, as women, to bewail and commemorate the dead.

"Let us then solemnly take counsel with each other as the means whereby the great human family can live in peace."

The goals of the Convocation are

- To take stock of challenges that lie before women around the globe
- To showcase programs that serve as models for achieving equal rights, opportunities and security
- To explore and learn from women's accomplishments in the past and how their work has improved women's lives
- To discover common interests, emergent ideas and priorities for the future
- To worship together and connect spiritually with our individual and collective power, caring and humility
- To adopt an action plan that will engage UU congregations and women's groups to form global partnerships and move forward together toward women's equality, social justice and world peace.

We are planning for 1,000 women to attend the convocation in Houston, but even if you are unable to come in person there are ways to participate in the Convocation process. We are developing a Cultural Literacy Program for congregations and women's groups. The six sessions, which will feature



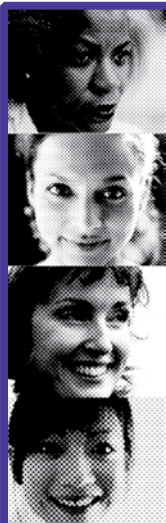
Unitarian Universalist Women and Religion

profiles of UU women from around the world, will introduce participants to major issues in women's lives and how they are being and can be addressed, as well as outlining ways groups can become involved with the Convocation process. One of the key ways groups can support the convocation is by raising money for travel funds and scholarships, particularly for international women.

You can learn more about the convocation and begin participating in the Convocation process by visiting the website at www.icuuw.com. Check back often as new information will be posted as it becomes available. Major events of the Convocation will be available via the Internet.

We hope those who participate in the Convocation process will benefit from new friendships and connections among women from different countries. We hope you will all join in creating and supporting new and strengthened global partnerships and a renewed commitment to action.

For more information and to make a donation, please contact Laura Nagel, Convocation Coordinator, at convener@icuuw.com or 713-524-5608, or write to SWUW, 5202 Crawford #19, Houston, TX 77004.



Grant Funds Available

The UUWF Grants Program advances justice for women by funding projects that effect positive social change. This year's projects included:

- English language instruction and lifeskills training for recent arrival to the U.S.
- Radio commercials educating Guatemalan women on domestic violence.
- Financial literacy training and goal setting for women at risk.
- Early childhood education program in Sierra Leone.
- Support services & livelihood projects for women and girls in the Philippines.

UUWF's Margaret Fuller Grants Committee is seeking thoughtful, accessible projects exploring religious feminisms and theological issues impacting UU women. Past projects have included books, seminars, study guides, curricula, videos, music, visual arts, dramatic productions, poetry and conference programs.

2008 applications available
online at www.uuuf.org
or from the UUWF Office
ph: 617-948-4692,
email: uuuf@uua.org

Application deadline:
October 15, 2007



Women & Religion Resolution, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Transformation is the lifeblood of the UUWF. Denise Taft (“Denny”) Davidoff, who has served Unitarian Universalism both as UUA Moderator and as UUWF President, said the ability to transform has been there all along. Davidoff called it the “genius that is the UUWF” when she told the story of the 1981 Biennial UUWF Meeting at Bryn Mawr College. The body was close to adjournment with a tight timetable, but the women became aware of a newly forming lesbian caucus that wanted to be heard. The group was seeking UUWF support for a resolution for presentation at the coming GA.

“We were sitting outside. It was a beautiful day and I remember this group was furiously writing and asked for a delay to finish. I asked the people present if we could do that. They said ‘Yes.’ We waited fifteen, twenty, maybe thirty minutes for them to bring the resolution forward. What was powerful then and now was the ability to see the greater good that was beyond Roberts’ Rules. We didn’t want to do away with parliamentary procedure, but we needed to bend the rules to let these sisters come forward. There was the germ within the culture that was UUWF.”

According to Davidoff, that culture was still evident ten years later in Bloomington, IL when the UUWF board voted to conduct a restructuring study. It is evident today in the UUWF’s transformation from a organization that primarily provides services to its members to a panel funding organizations that benefit women and girls. As Davidoff notes: “Boards are loathe to do that, to have faith there is a better way to do it. This is a model that should be praised.”

Denny Davidoff is only one of a long list of women who have graced UUWF with their spirit, time and talents. The Women’s Federation has led or been deeply involved in many projects: women’s spirituality conferences, the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice, the revision of the UUA Principles and Purposes, Task Force I on Clergy Misconduct and Sexual Abuse, awakening the association to the issue of inclusive language, and more recently, the UUWF Clara Barton Internship for Women’s Issues program and the pilot grant given to Spiritual Youth for Reproduc-

tive Freedom. These all happened because strong women were involved or leading each effort and were, themselves, transformed.

UUWF changes lives including the lives of the women who call the UUWF home. On this anniversary we honor the courageous

women who paved the road that we have traveled for thirty years – roads not just for themselves, but for future generations of women. They wanted to change the world and knew they could... and so they did.

So can you.

Women and Religion 1977 Business Resolution

WHEREAS, a principle of the Unitarian Universalist Association is to “affirm, defend, and promote the supreme worth and dignity of every human personality, and the use of the democratic method in human relationships”; and

WHEREAS, great strides have been taken to affirm this principle within our denomination; and

WHEREAS, some models of human relationships arising from religious myths, historical materials, and other teachings still create and perpetuate attitudes that cause women everywhere to be overlooked and undervalued; and

WHEREAS, children, youth and adults internalize and act on these cultural models, thereby tending to limit their sense of self-worth and dignity;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: That the 1977 General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association calls upon all Unitarian Universalists to examine carefully their own religious beliefs and the extent to which these beliefs influence sex-role stereotypes within their own families; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: That the General Assembly urges the Board of Trustees of the Unitarian Universalist Association to encourage the Unitarian Universalist Association administrative officers and staff, the religious leaders within societies, the Unitarian Universalist theological schools, the directors of related organizations, and the planners of seminars and conferences, to make every effort to: (a) put traditional assumptions and language in perspective, and (b) avoid sexist assumptions and language in the future.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: That the General Assembly urges the President of the Unitarian Universalist Association to send copies of this resolution to other denominations examining sexism inherent in religious literature and institutions and to the International Association of Liberal Religious Women and the IARF; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: That the General Assembly requests the Unitarian Universalist Association to: (a) join with those who are encouraging others in the society to examine the relationship between religious and cultural attitudes toward women, and (b) to send a representative and resource materials to associations appropriate to furthering the above goals; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: That the General Assembly requests the President of the UUA to report annually on progress in implementing this resolution.

Sexuality Education Training, New Orleans Visit Among Clara Barton Intern's Activities

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

Spring has finally arrived in Washington, DC. The cherry blossoms have come and gone but the remaining flowers and blooming trees serve as a reminder of all the new possibilities that can come from our nation's capitol. These past few months have been filled with exciting legislation, events and service and I am already looking forward to General Assembly, in June in Portland, OR.

The third annual Sexuality Education Advocacy Training (SEAT) was a huge success! Thirty-five Unitarian Universalist and United Church of Christ youth, young adults and adults from across the country participated in the three and a half day training where they learned how to be effective religious advocates for comprehensive sexuality education. I was constantly impressed by their enthusiasm, confidence and insight.

Many participants were empowered by their lobbying experience. They visited over 30 offices asking their members of Congress to support the Responsible Education About Life Act which provides federal funding for comprehensive sexuality education programs. One participant said, "Lobbying now seems so easy! I know I will be back on the Hill and hope to lobby at my state level." These visits were supported by thousands of phone calls from UUs and United Church of Christ folks in our coordinated National Call-In Day.

Participants were asked to summarize the training in one word. Here are a few of their responses: empowering, inspirational, fun, connected and wowee-zowee! I'm looking forward with excitement to next year's SEAT!

On March 8th the UUA collaborated with other religious organizations to celebrate International Women's Day. We organized a Congressional briefing titled "Healthy Women, Healthy Families: Religious Leaders Speak Out on International Women's Day." The speakers highlighted the importance of supporting international family planning programs, religious grounding for this work and the Focus on Family Health Worldwide Act

(HR 1225). To learn more, please visit www.support-familyplanning.org

Most recently, I spent a week in New Orleans participating in service, reflection and anti-racism dialogue with a group from the Washington, DC All Souls Church. It was an incredibly powerful experience for me to witness the extent of the devastation to homes, businesses, communities and individuals. I spent several days gutting houses that were completely ruined, still filled with moldy personal belongings 19 months after the disaster.

At first I felt that all had been lost. But after talking with residents and gaining perspective into the communities that are rebuilding, I am filled with hope: hope that these issues of injustice will be addressed on a personal and systemic level, hope that our government will develop just policies and hope that as a religious community we be in solidarity with the people of the Gulf Coast. Hope by itself isn't enough to make these desires happen. I strongly encourage everyone to learn more about oppression, privilege and the difficulties that New Orleans and other areas of the Gulf Coast continue to face. Take action and advocate for just policies and, if possible, volunteer and witness for yourself.

The upcoming UUA General Assembly provides an amazing opportunity to be in community with UUs from across the country and around the world, enhancing our connections and strengthening our commitment to justice. I invite you to attend the workshop "Sex, Religion and Politics: Reclaiming Our Moral Ground." This is just one of many exciting workshops and events about reproductive justice and women's issues that will take place in Portland. **Rev. Debra W. Haffner**, from the Religious Institute on Sexual Morality, Jus-



UUWF Clara Barton Intern for Women's Issues, Meredith Schonfeld-Hicks (center), on a recent trip to assist in the Gulf Coast Relief effort.

stice and Healing; **Emily Goodstein**, Spiritual Youth for Reproductive Freedom; and I will facilitate the workshop.

If you are a reproductive justice advocate (congregational social justice leader, women's group member, Our Whole Lives facilitator, community volunteer, health educator, medical provider, advocate, minister, etc.) please join us for an afternoon networking tea. This will be an important opportunity to connect with others doing similar work for reproductive justice. Come learn about UUA and UUWF resources and opportunities, and receive spiritual support and recognition for your contributions to this movement. The tea will be held from 3-4 p.m. on Saturday June 23rd in the Alaska room of the Doubletree Hotel (1000 NE Multnomah). Please contact me with any questions at mschonfeldhicks@uua.org. I also invite you to stop by the Advocacy and Witness booth and say hello. I'd love learn more about you and your work supporting women's issues.

www.uuwf.org



UUWomen

*Advancing justice for women
through education and advocacy*

Inside This Issue

- The Transformative Power of
the Women and Religion
Resolution Page 1
- UUWF Events at GA Page 2
- Welcoming New Members of
the Clara Barton Sisterhood Page 2
- UU Women & Religion Plans
International Convocation Page 3
- Women & Religion
1977 Business Resolution Page 4
- Sexuality Education Training,
New Orleans Visit Among
Clara Barton Intern's Activities Page 5

Scholarship to Honor Work of Rev. Marjorie Bowens-Wheatley

Beginning in 2008, UUWF will offer an annual scholarship in memory of Rev. Marjorie Bowens-Wheatley, whose passing earlier this year was such a great loss to us all. The scholarship will be awarded to a woman of color who is preparing for the UU ministry.

"This scholarship," said UUWF President Nancy Van Dyke, "is intended to honor particularly the spirit of Marjorie's mentoring to women of color as they ready themselves to pursue their path in our denomination."

A long-time member, Marjorie had served our organization as a board member, newsletter contributor, and as a member of the first UUWF Grants Panel.



An application for the scholarship is currently in development. It is anticipated that it will be distributed beginning in the fall, with a February, 2008 deadline.