

the communicator

THE NEWSLETTER OF UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST WOMEN'S FEDERATION

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DC Intern Appointed

Jessica Halperin has joined the UUA's Multi-cultural and Witness staffing group as UUA Program Associate for Women's Issues, the new title for the UUWF Clara Barton Intern for Women's Issues. She is a 2008 graduate of Earlham College in Richmond, IN, where she was a recipient of a four year, achievement-based presidential honors scholarship. Her background is in communications, having previously worked for the Friends Committee on National Legislation (Quakers) and other non-profit organizations in the Washington, D.C. area. She will work out of the UUA's Washington Center.

Read what Jessica has to say about her new position - see page 2.

Recent Website Postings and Links

"We need to think of ourselves as a religious movement," writes Rev. Peter Morales, UUA President, in his recent article, *Congregations and Beyond*. "The difference is potentially huge." Visit www.uuwf.org for a link to the article.

Other recent website postings include:

- UUWF statement on the "Occupy Wall Street" and related protests
- A link to information about the UUA "Gathered Here" initiative which UUWF board has endorsed
- An invitation to share with UUWF the ways the women in your congregation gather

Make a Difference

Perpetuate your values by making a difference in the lives of women and girls: consider including the UU Women's Federation in your planned giving. The UUA's Office of Legacy Gifts has the resources and expertise to help you – contact them at 1-888-792-5885 or visit www.uua.org/giving and click on Planned Giving.

UUWF to Commission 2012 Equity & Justice and Margaret Fuller Projects

To enhance UU Women's Federation's participation in the theme of the Unitarian Universalist Association's special 2012 justice General Assembly, the UUWF will this year focus two of its three grants programs on the GA theme by commissioning this year's funded projects.

"Given our mission, the way our funding programs support it, and the GA theme of furthering the rights of immigrants – both documented and undocumented – and indigenous peoples," said UUWF President Rev. Marti Keller, "this is a good fit for all of us."

The UUWF's Equity and Justice grants, she went on to explain, support one part of the Federation's organizational mission – advancing justice for women and girls. Potential 2012 Equity and Justice projects, she said, include UU justice projects with a direct, positive impact on the lives of immigrant and/or indigenous women and girls. "This could be a local congregation working in partnership with a reproductive health clinic serving the unique needs of these populations," she said, "or with literacy or life skills projects serving immigrant women and girls."

The UUWF's Margaret Fuller grants support the other part of the UUWF's mission – promoting the spiritual growth of women and girls. "It's particularly relevant that within a decade of its founding as the Feminist Theology Awards," Rev. Keller said, "this program was revisioned and renamed to embrace a wider and richer variety of woman-centered theologies and spiritual practices."

The revisioned program, she said, is inclusive of those who describe themselves using such terms as womanist, eco-feminist, or mujerista. "We'll be looking for 2012 Margaret Fuller projects that deepen our appreciation and understanding of woman-centered religious beliefs or spiritual practices of immigrants and indigenous cultures."

Since UUWF will commission this year's Equity and Margaret Fuller Projects, no unsolicited proposals will be considered this year. Plans are to identify at least one project each for the two programs in time for announcement at GA.

"Our goal is to identify and fund the best possible UU projects directly related to the intersection of our mission and the justice GA theme," Rev. Keller said. "Because of this our funding programs will function proactively rather than reactively this year. Instead of limiting ourselves to consideration of proposals submitted to us, we use our established networks within the UU community to identify such projects."

Scholarships Available



UUWF's Marjorie-Bowens-Wheatley Scholarship Program provides general financial support to aspirants or candidates to the UU ministry who identify as women of color, Latina or Hispanic.

Applications are currently available at www.uuwf.org/fundingprograms.html. The deadline for 2012 scholarship applications is March 15.

*Advancing justice
for women and girls,
and promoting
their spiritual growth.*

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Meet Jessica Halperin, the new UUWF Clara Barton Intern for Women's Issues

***Editor's Note:** The UUWF Clara Barton Internship for Women's Issues was established in 2002 in the UUA's Washington Office by UUWF's \$200,000 donation and assistance to the UUA in raising a matching amount for the permanent endowment that funds the internship. In Summer 2010, staffing of this position was temporarily suspended as the UUA revised its approach to public policy work. The new internship position changes the title and moves the position's emphasis from direct advocacy at the federal level to providing resources and opportunities for congregations and their leaders to advocate for issues specific to women.*

*by Jessica Halperin
UUA Program Associate for Women's Issues*



Greetings from Washington! Congress is in session and the city is bustling. It's a good day to be a Unitarian Universalist advocate in the nation's capital. In the short time since I began as the Program

Associate for Women's Issues at the UUA's Washington Office, I've attended coalition meetings, briefings on Capitol Hill, and congregational activities; it's been an inspiring trial-by-fire in this field of faith-based advocacy and organizing.

I am honored to work on such important issues as reproductive justice and government support for low-income women, and I look forward to partnering with UUs across the country to help make our society safer, more compassionate, and more just for women.

Unfortunately, now is a time when this country is neither particularly safe nor just for women. Not since *Row v. Wade* in 1973 have reproductive rights been under so much attack from politicians hoping to turn their paternalism into law and women, especially low-income women, have yet to see any substantial recovery from the Great Recession of 2008.

My hope is that we as Unitarian Universalists will have a positive impact on proposed legislation as it comes up at the state level or here in Washington. I'll be working to build that capacity through four main aspects.

First, I am compiling a core of relevant information on these issues that will be available on the UUWF's website (but don't look now – I've only just started) so that our faithful voice can be heard by anyone with internet access.

Second, I'm keeping in regular contact with UU reproductive justice advocates via a weekly listserv featuring news and action items. Email me (jhalperin@uua.org) to sign up.

Third, I look forward to hosting conference calls, webinars, and other events to connect you – leaders in UU congregations – to other UUs working for women's justice so we can exchange strategies and inspiration.

Finally, I will be personally wading into politics in Washington: speaking with members of Congress, signing our name on coalition letters to Capitol Hill, and working with interfaith progressive lobbyists to realize our vision for a better world.

I need your help every step of the way.

I know that UUWF members and their passion for justice created my position in Washington, and I'm grateful. And I'm asking for more. Constituent communications and lobby visits mean more to Congressional offices than do the efforts of professional lobbyists, and it will be your letters to the editor, your questions at candidate forums, and your activism that will make a difference.

I am looking forward to working together.



Find us on
Facebook

Thanking Our Donors

We extend a heartfelt “thank you” to all the individuals who contributed generous donations and pledges between January 1 and December 31, 2011.

We equally appreciate the support of our member groups in local congregations, other women’s groups and congregations. They are listed at the end of each giving circle, in order of their home cities, for easier identification.

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Salem, OR - UUWF, UU Congregation

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Lawrenceville, GA - UU Congregation of Gwinnett

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

MARCH 8th: International Women's Day



By Arlene Johnson, Secretary
International Convocation of UU Women

Annually on March 8th, International Women's Day (IWD), thousands of events are held throughout the world to inspire women and celebrate their achievements. Ranging from local women's craft markets, training workshops, theatrical performances, political rallies, parades, and business conferences, the array of events provide opportunities for women not only to celebrate but to connect and support each other in the ongoing struggle for equality.

For many years the United Nations has held an annual IWD conference to coordinate international efforts for women's rights and participation in social, political and economic processes. This year is the 101st anniversary of IWD, so celebrate and honor the women who have led the way in your communities and make plans to actively make a difference in the lives of women and girls for the coming year.

For more information on global events check out <http://www.internationalwomensday.com>.

Thomson Reuters has developed some great resources as they invite you to join them in celebrating International Women's Day and the role of women in bringing about positive change in the world. To mark this occasion Reuters has created a slide show of women from across the globe, living in extraordinary times. To view it, go to <http://online.thomsonreuters.com/womensday>.



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CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

Twenty Four Women Honored with Clara Barton Sisterhoods in 2011



From left: Universalist Clara Barton, for whom UUWF's Sisterhood program is named. Among those honored with Sisterhoods in 2011 were Betty Cutler Nering, by Valley UUWF, Valley UU Fellowship, Chandler, AZ; Donna Kopick, by the Minnesota Valley UU Fellowship's Women's Group, Bloomington, MN; and Esther Jones, by the UUWF Chapter at The UU Congregation of Santa Fe, NM.

The UUWF's Clara Barton Sisterhood was founded in 1969 as a way for women's groups, congregations and other individuals and organizations to honor women aged 80 and over for their contributions to their congregations and communities.

Why women aged 80 and over? The Sisterhood is named in honor of Universalist Clara Barton, born on Christmas Day, 1821 in North Oxford, MA. Best known as founder of the American Red Cross, Barton's path toward that work did not begin until she was over 40 – in an era when many women did not live to reach that age.

Information on honoring women in your congregation by enrolling them in the Sisterhood can be found at www.uuwf.org or by contacting the UUWF Office.

Join with us in celebrating those enrolled in the Sisterhood between January 1 and December 31, 2011:

- Asheville, NC – Ann Macpherson, honored by the Unitarian Universalist Church of Asheville
- Belmont, MA – Elizabeth Betty Braucher, Laura C. Miller, and Ethel R. "Smoke" Twichell, by The First Church in Belmont
- Bloomington, MN – Donna Kopnick, by the MVUUF Women's Group, Minnesota Valley UU Fellowship
- Brewster, MA – Sylvia Doble Stringer, by the Women's Circle Alliance, First Parish Brewster
- Chandler, AZ – Betty Cutler Nering, by Valley UUWF, Valley UU Congregation
- Fort Myers, FL – Dorothy Webb, by the UU Church of Fort Myers

- Golden, CO – Lois Abbott, by Jefferson Unitarian Church
- Green Bay, WI – LaVerneBochek-Robbins, by the Green Bay Area UU Fellowship
- LaCombe, LA – Eula Helen Mayne, by the North Shore UU Society of Louisiana
- Madison, WI – Nancy R. Dott, Barbara S. Nodine, by the UU Alliance, First Unitarian Society
- Minneapolis, MN – Fran Addington, Carolyn Mo, by the Association of Universalist Women, First Universalist Church
- New York, NY – Cornelia Do, Marion Stano, by the Women's Alliance, Unitarian Church of All Souls
- Pensacola, FL – Flo Fulwiler, by the UU Church of Pensacola
- Reading, PA – Caroline Simonson, by the First UU Church of Berks County
- Ridgewood, NJ – Helen Lindsay, Nancy Petrie, by The Unitarian Society of Ridgewood, NJ
- Rockford, IL – Kay Hotchkiss, by The UU Church of Rockford
- Santa Fe, NM – Esther Jones, by the Santa Fe Chapter of UUWF, The UU Congregation of Santa Fe
- Vero Beach, FL – Marian Wenzel, by the UU Fellowship of Vero Beach
- Westport, CT – Marion Wertheim, by The Unitarian Church in Westport

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www.uuwf.org



UUWomen

*Advancing justice for women and girls,
and promoting their spiritual growth.*

Inside This Issue

Recent Website Postings and Links	Page 1
Commissioning Projects	Page 1
Scholarships Available	Page 1
Meet the New UUWF Clara Barton Intern	Pages 1&2
Thanking Our Donors	Page 3
International Women's Day	Page 4
Clara Barton Sisterhoods	Page 5

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

Message from the UUWF President

On Social Action via Cyberspace

Within a few days of the story breaking that the Susan G. Komen Foundation had decided to end its funding of Planned Parenthood programs to screen and educate about breast cancer, women and men all over the country let their voices be heard – on the side of affordable, accessible health care – and against the exclusion of one of the largest providers of these services because it is pro-choice on the issue of abortion.

For as long as the UU Women's Federation has existed, women in our faith movement have called for reproductive justice and compassion. Consistently, when surveyed, they have asked that the UUWF work on this issue, as well as women's health care in general. So I was ready to issue a statement condemning the action of the Komen Board and asking UUWF members and others to join with me.

Then news came that the foundation had reversed its decision, due in no small part to the capability we now have to spread the word in cyberspace, through e-mail, websites, Facebook, Twitter and ever-emerging communication vehicles. The response was consistent and passionate and clear. My hope is that UUWF will be diligent, agile and eloquent as we continue to work toward equity and justice for women and girls.

Faithfully,
Rev. Marti Keller, President, UUWF