



# SUNSHINE

NEWSLETTER OF THE FLORIDA DISTRICT UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST ASSOCIATION

## Governance Policy

In my column in the last Sunshine, I indicated that I understood an Ends statement to be one that answers the question 'When we get there, what will we be'. I provided you with our first draft and warned "It will change, perhaps significantly, as it is refined with your help."

Well, thanks to the help of many people it really did change - all for the better. The Board proudly adopted the Ends statement and the rest of the Governance Policy at its March meeting. Here is the Ends statement.

### ENDS

The Florida District of the UUA will be a diverse community of healthy, interdependent, self-governed congregations that live our UUA purposes and principles.

Congregations will:

- be connected to the District and to each other,
- have well trained, knowledgeable and competent leaders,
- grow in total membership and in number of congregations,
- champion social and racial justice and oppose oppression,
- be grounded in our living tradition and history,
- view the District as a responsive, creative and prudent steward of financial and human resources.

For a task oriented person like me, it seems like we have spent a lot of time on process, but this process change is essential if the Florida District is going to achieve these Ends. The board must function in capacities of policy, finance and planning. The District Executive must be given clarity of direction and empowered with appropriate authority and accountability. Thereby, under the direction of the D.E., the Program Council and Committees will flourish in a creative, nourishing environment where they can make things happen.

You can find the complete Governance Policy on our website "<http://www.cyberstreet.com/uufld/>". Also, some copies will be available at the District Annual Meeting or contact me at 941-945-1315 and I'll get one to you.

Additionally, the Florida District will be sponsoring a meeting on this subject at G.A. It will be titled "Carver Policy Governance" and held on Friday afternoon, June 23 at 1:45 P.M. in the Nashville Convention Center, room 107. The Florida District is the first district to institute this policy and several other Districts are beginning to think about it. We will be joined by representatives from several congregations that have been using it for some time.

— ED PORTEUS, FDUUA PRESIDENT



Dates for The New Presidents' Forum 2000 are May 12 and 13, Friday evening and Saturday. This event, organized by the Congregational Presidents' Council through the Florida District Program Council, will take place this year at University UU in east Orlando. The program combines social and educational activities to promote networking and enhance the leadership skills of incoming congregational Board presidents and presidents-elect. Topping the list of facilitators this year will be Rev. Mary Chulak Higgins, Florida

District Executive, and Margaret Sanders, UUA Trustee. Additional information is available in your current District packet or through the Florida District office.

— DOROTHY EMMER WARMKE, COORDINATOR, CONGREGATIONAL PRESIDENTS' COUNCIL



Volume 3, Number 3  
Spring/Summer, 2000

### Inside this Issue

- 1 Governance Policy
- 1 New Presidents' Forum 2000
- 2 District Executive: Foundations of Diversity
- 3 March on Tallahassee
- 3 Wanted: DRE for UU/Sarasota
- 3 Fall Leadership Conference Plans
- 4 Churches Plan for Disasters
- 4 Spirit of Life Receives Chalice Lighter Funds
- 4 Look at Your Church with New Eyes
- 5 Annual Program Fund Report
- 5 Social Justice Workshop for Middle School
- 6 Our Whole Lives Embraced
- 6 Humanism Conference Highlights
- 7 Alpha Connections for Yount Adult UU's
- 7 Florida Leadership School: An Alumni's Perspective
- 8 Florida District Calendar
- 8 Electronic Newsletters Available



By the time you receive this copy of the *Sunshine*, our District Annual Assembly will be upon us. The topic of our keynote this year is diversity and how all the diversity we invite impacts our UU movement. I do not know what Stefan Jonasson, our keynote speaker, is going to say, but I would like to share with you the foundations of diversity as I see them. I believe the diversity that will enhance our congregational life will ask deeper, more personnel questions than what should we “do.” It will be asking questions of whom we “are” and whom we want to “become,” and “how” we want to change the world.

There are multiple ways that we are a diverse people. We have theological differences; ages that span more than 100 years; some racial and cultural diversity, especially in our Sunday Schools; and diversities of opinions about many topics from politics to favorite novels. We also have much in common with each other, as the survey from the Fulfilling the Promise Committee reported to us in 1998. (You can read this on line at the [uua.org](http://uua.org) web site in the “*Fulfilling the Promise*” section.)

I believe that the first place for us to start thinking about diversity is inside ourselves. Our minds can and do affirm a wide variety of ways to be fully human. Our hearts are not always caught up to our minds on this one. How do the lifestyle choices of another impact you? How comfortable are you singing the words to a hymn that does not reflect your own way of understanding the world? How do you disagree with others in your congregation when they seem to be saying things that deny your closely held beliefs or world view? How do you express your vision, belief or concern in a way that does not attempt to destroy another’s view? These are the questions at the beginning of

our yearnings to be diverse.

In our congregations, the keys to the diversity we have already affirmed must be found in the vision, values and mission of the congregation. The vision of your congregation paints a word picture that reflects what the world will look like if you are successful in actualizing your dreams. Anne Odin Heller, in her excellent book, *Churchworks*, links vision and the values that guide the life of the congregation. You must know what common values you will be accountable to and for in your movement toward your vision. Without a common understanding of the values that will guide your work, it is too easy to run amuck and run roughshod over the people and processes that may differ with you. In order to maintain its values, the community develops covenants. Covenants are the promises the members make to each other about their behavior as they try to stay as close as they can to their values. Congregational covenants give the members of our churches and fellowships the needed tools to hold each other accountable for the common life of the community as it works together.

The Mission of your congregation is the mirror to each other and to the larger world that tells them the “why and who” of your existence? Why is it necessary for there to be a Unitarian Universalist congregation in your community? Why do you exist? Who are you as a congregation? Your mission tells the larger world what you stand for. Anne Heller says, “A congregation’s mission, deeply felt, shines out of its members’ eyes. It informs their work as a religious community so members of the congregation and the larger community, know who they are and what they stand for.”

Notice, that the emphasis here is on mission not statements. Missions come from the hearts, minds and spirits of the members of the congregation. Statements are just our attempts to get our “whys” and values on paper to remind us of the excitement and passion we feel about the work we are attempting to do together. The statements are not unimportant, for we need the common documents of our commitments and vision to keep us on track sometimes, but the process of bringing the documents into existence is what really

matters. It is important that we ask each other about the deepest yearnings we have for our communities. When we do, we often find ourselves in the presence of staggering hope, love, vision and the need to make the world more just. It can be a profound experience when we hear what others in our community yearn for. Often their yearning sparks in us a sense of possibility and wholeness that is rare in our culture. This is religious work.

When we know who we are and what we want, and know where our resistance is and where our commitments and values are, we can then look at how to make our congregations more diverse. Diversity is not a goal, but the by-product of doing the heart, and hard work of defining ourselves singly and in community.

If any of this rings true for you and you want to talk about how to do this in your congregation, please call the District office.

— REV. MARY CHULAK HIGGINS,  
DISTRICT EXECUTIVE

## Check Your Monthly District Packet!

*It contains valuable information on upcoming district meetings, programs, and events! The packet is mailed to each congregation at the beginning of the month. Materials from the packet can be posted at your church or distributed to the appropriate committees or individuals.*

The **SUNSHINE** is published quarterly by the Florida District Unitarian Universalist Association  
1901 E. Robinson Street, Suite 18  
Orlando, Florida 32803  
Phone: (407) 894-2119  
Fax: (407) 894-9564  
E-mail: [UUAFLDIST@aol.com](mailto:UUAFLDIST@aol.com)  
<http://www.cyberstreet.com/uufld/>  
Rev. Mary Chulak Higgins,  
District Executive

Submissions may be sent to:  
Linda Mowers, Sunshine Editor  
2043 Pompano Parkway  
Orange Park, FL 32073  
Phone (904) 272-3862  
Fax (800) 417-7657  
E-mail: [mowers@snapjax.com](mailto:mowers@snapjax.com)



# March on Tallahassee

On March 7, 2000, 43 Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Tallahassee (UUCT) members, friends (and friends of members and friends), marched as a unified group in the March on Tallahassee to express concern regarding the One Florida gubernatorial executive order which removed Affirmative Action in significant parts of Florida State government programs. The reasons for concern varied from lack of a democratic process to firm support for Affirmative Action in the affected areas. Rev. Amy McKenzie marched in the memory of Rev. James Reeb, a Unitarian minister who was killed in the Selma, AL civil rights march on the same date in 1965. Although the reasons varied, the spirit was consistent and strong. The participants took time off of their jobs and in some cases allowed their children to miss regular school attendance to participate in what turned out to be the largest citizens demonstration to ever occur in Florida. The police department estimates of only 10,000 marchers were clearly low. At least 20,000, and quite possibly more than 50,000 were actually present.

The group marched behind the banner of the Racial and Cultural Diversity Committee, of which Bob Kenon is the chairperson. The banner was beautifully crafted by Barbara Sterling within 36 hours of her recognizing the need for a banner for the March. Members also carried individual signs proclaiming their personal opinions. The group was joined by 10-12 members of the UU church of St. Petersburg led by their



*UU marchers from Tallahassee and St. Petersburg gather at the Taylor home near the State Capitol.*



*Many Tallahassee members joined the Racial and Cultural Diversity Committee (RCDC) for the March.*

minister, Rev. Dee Graham. Front yard parking near the start of the March was provided by UUCT friends, Tom and Katya Taylor. The St. Petersburg members all wore teal green tee shirts with the name of their church on the back and many Tallahassee members wore the St. Petersburg shirts as well. The Tallahassee group included Sally Bellamy who may well have been the oldest marcher and Linda Logan who

“marched” in her wheelchair with a little help from her friends. Rev. Graham, holding her Unitarian sign, was captured on the newsclip run by CBS news as was Kim Ross-Frichter, Campus Ministry Coordinator at Tallahassee. Six of the Tallahassee marchers were children.

— NANCY BASS  
DENOMINATIONAL AFFAIRS, UUCT

## **Watch for Upcoming Details on the Florida District UUA Fall Leadership Conference!**

The conference will include two of the three candidates for UUA President, as well as a representative for the third. Also featured will be the two candidates for Moderator of the UUA. Plan now to attend this important event on December 1 - 2 in Orlando!



POSITION AVAILABLE:

### **DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

**ARE YOU...Creative? Energetic? Self-motivated?**

**DO YOU...Enjoy working with children? Have knowledge of Unitarian Universalist curricula? Have enthusiasm for Religious Education? Work well with volunteers? Exhibit excellent communication skills?**

If you have answered “YES” to these questions, you may be just the person we are seeking!

**THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF SARASOTA** is conducting a search to fill the vacancy of part-time Director of Religious Education. It would require approximately 15 to 20 hours per week including Sunday mornings 9 til 1. The salary is commensurate with education and experience.

**THE UU CHURCH OF SARASOTA** is experiencing growth in membership, especially young families with children. We have a newly settled minister, The Rev. Don Beaudreault, who has energized this congregation with his sermons, caring and humor. A new building to house offices and meeting area will be completed by early spring. This will free additional space for our expanding RE program.

For further information, please call 941 371-4974. E-mail [UUSARA@GTE.NET](mailto:UUSARA@GTE.NET)  
3975 Fruitville Road, Sarasota, Florida 34232

## Plan for Disasters!

As Chairman of Disasters for the State of Florida, I would like to suggest that each of our churches plan to do the following action whenever we have, or appear to be going to have, a disaster in our state.

Use your church's communication tree (which all of you should have that reaches your members and close friends) to survey your members on the following questions:

*If your church area is in harm's way or potentially in harm's way, check which families need to evacuate from their homes and divide them into the following categories:*

1. those with adults (how many?and what age group) with no pets or children.
2. those with adults (how many?and what age group) with pets that must accompany them (kind and how many?)
3. those with adults (how many?and what age group) and children (ages and how many?)
4. those with adults (how many?and what age group) and children (ages and how many?) and pets (what kind and how many?)

Call in the results of your survey to me, Enid Uhrich, 813-634-7564 or if you get no answer call the district office. DO NOT give us names or phone numbers of each family, but only the numbers in each category. DO give us the name and phone number (with area) of a contact person who will know the names and phone numbers of families needing placement.

If your church is one who could take evacuees please make a same survey of your families to see who could take in evacuees and determine which category each family could take. DO NOT give me those names and phone numbers but do telephone me the number you can take in each category and DO give me the name and phone number of my contact person in your church. Also let me know if you are opening the church premises for evacuees and what you can handle.

We used this system during FLOYD and it works. While you can do some planning for this in advance, it would constantly need updating and therefore works best when the incident has recently happened or seems probable. This system can also be used within one church if only an area of your members is in trouble and the rest of your members can help them.

— ENID UHRICH, 813-634-7564  
1509 BUNKER HILL DR.  
SUN CITY CENTER, FL 33573



*Jim Emerson, Florida District Chalice Lighter Chair, presents Spirit of Life President Joe Velazquez with contributions from Chalice Lighters throughout the Florida District.*

## Spirit of Life Receives Big Bucks!

On Sunday, February 6th, Jim Emerson took a big bundle of Chalice Lighter checks to Spirit of Life Unitarian Universalists in Oldsmar, Florida, near Tampa. Your generous contributions totaled \$3367, which is greatly appreciated by Jim and by Spirit of Life.

February 13th was Chalice Lighter Sunday in the Florida District. Not all congregations participated on that day, and new sign-ups are still coming in. So far about 250 new Chalice Lighters have made it to the list. many thanks go to Phil Spear of Gainesville, who did a fabulous job co-ordinating Chalice Lighter Sunday in the Florida District!

The next call, to benefit Buckman Bridge, was mailed out in mid-March, and Jim thanks you in advance for your generosity in that effort.



Q: What impression does our church give to first time visitors?

A: Look around with "New Eyes"!

Q: How do we raise congregational awareness about the importance of creating a budget line for regular and preventive maintenance?

A: Look around with "New Eyes"!

After thirty years of pride in their "award-winning" sanctuary designed by an architect who studied with Frank Lloyd Wright (Bob Broward) the Building and Grounds committee of the UU Church of Jacksonville had to overcome an attitude of "taking for granted" before spending money on refurbishing and renewal could be approved by the

congregation. Progress was excruciatingly slow—a new carpet here, a new coat of paint there. Until, that is, "new" Building and Grounds Chairman—a transplanted UU from Gainesville and admirer of Frank Lloyd Wright, David Henderson—got the attention of the congregation with his "new eyes" and enthusiasm. Inclusion of the words "sacred space" in the newly adopted mission statement help involve the congregation in thinking about our buildings—sanctuary, classrooms, and social room—as an expression of our community spirit. As the congregation "sees" the impact of work and the dramatic improvement in our community's self-image, a keen interest is growing in building stewardship.

New members and visitors notice what old-timers don't see anymore. If only we could get the entire congregation to see through new eyes! What we needed was a New Eyes Walkabout.

*(continued on page 5)*



## FUNDING OUR FAITH Annual Program Fund

Congratulations and a GREAT BIG THANKS: Manatee U.U. Church, U.U. Church of Brooksville, U.U. Church of Clearwater, U.U. Fellowship of Key West, Lake Region U.U. Fellowship, Nature Coast U.U.s, U.U. Fellowship of Marion County, Buckman Bridge U.U. Society, U.U. Fellowship of Bay County, and U.U. Church of Tallahassee. As of this writing you are the fully paid, APF fair share leaders in the Florida District.

By the time you read this we will fast be approaching General Assembly time, this year in Nashville, Tennessee. I know that the Florida District will continue to be continental leaders in fair share contributions to the Annual Program Fund and thus be Honor Societies at G.A. It may seem like \$40 per church member is a lot of money but the value we get is immeasurable. Even though the fiscal year does not end until June 30<sup>th</sup>, remember if you pay the remaining amount of your fair share by the end of May you will be honored as a fair share congregation at General Assembly.

I had been mentioning in earlier columns some of the services available to our District and individual congregations. This month let me name just a few more in my effort to make you aware of how your dollars are spent: Capital Campaign Consultants, Worship Consultation and Resources, Young Adult and Campus Ministry, and Home Page and List Serves.

The Florida District is among the continental leaders in fair share contributions. We can be very proud of our giving each year. Did you know that if 90% or more of our congregations are fair share the Florida District would receive an **extra \$5000** next year? Think of it; even more services and events would be available right here in our wonderful District. It is up to each one of us to make sure our church or society is fair share.

On behalf of the Unitarian Universalist Association Annual Program Fund I thank our Florida congregations for all you do. Please contact me if I can be of service. See you at General Assembly.

— JOAN LUND, FLORIDA DISTRICT CHAIR  
ANNUAL PROGRAM FUND  
813-931-9727/JBLUND@AOL.COM



## Social Justice for Middle School Youth

22 middle school youth from the Spirit of Life and Naples congregations participated in a Social Justice workshop on April 7, 8 & 9. The workshop was led by Sarah Walls and Anne Mayher from the Milestone Learning Center at the Mountain. Senior high youth from SLUU and advisors from both congregations provided support for the workshop.

The students played games, did art work, and participated in discussions that helped them to create a community. The overall goal was to come up with personal social justice projects. Everyone had a wonderful time, and we all made new friends. The weekend was made especially enjoyable thanks to professional catering provided by Melodie Stubkjaer, mother of a participant.

The workshop was initiated by Connie Goodbread, DRE at SLUU. She obtained a grant from the UU Program Fund to finance the weekend. She has plans to expand the workshop in future years, and hopes to include participants from other faith communities.

—JIM MOIR

## New Eyes *(continued from page 4)*

Some Sundays later each order of service contained a color-coded map of the grounds and a form for note-taking. Congregants were invited to: 1) Bring their coffee and join the others who had the same color insert. 2) Put in **New Eyes**, and look at different areas of the building and grounds as if they were a member of the group identified by the color of their sheet. (Yellow/Single Adult, Blue/Children, Red/Parent, Green/Senior, Pink/Physically Impaired, Orange/committee leader or member). 3) Move around the grounds clockwise 4) At each numbered station on the map, imagine how a person in their described group would use this area, noting needed maintenance, improvement, and suggesting possible future projects. 5) Hand comments to members of the B & G committee. 6) Re-

turn to the social room for rewards (extra special treats) and thanks.

Over 25 pairs of New Eyes noted two typewritten pages of group comment, possible improvement, and needed improvements. Suggestions and ideas ranging from “bathrooms not handicapped accessible,” “frayed carpet in adult discussion meeting room,” “new lines needed in parking lot,” to “clearer signs to RE classes” are now found on the building and grounds committee agenda. An added excitement for the finance committee—a plan to include funds for predictable maintenance and replacement emerged!

If your building could use a face-lift (what color *is* your building?) you may want to consider a “New Eyes Walkabout”—it’s fun. It will pay off in new enthusiasm, and enhance your church home.

— KATHY CONVERSE, UUCJ

# The Importance of *Our Whole Lives*



I am so pleased to be raising my children in this faith in an age when many of our political systems are becoming more closed minded and/or fearful of retaliation from the religious right on the issue of sexuality education. (My county school system no longer mentions homosexuality as a viable alternative lifestyle because the threat of lawsuits was more than it could afford!) It is hearing about John Buehrens' part in creating an important statement about sexual morality that reminds me of this. And, it is seeing our new lifespan sexuality program become a reality and begin to be a presence in our Florida congregations that gives me real hope.

The Religious Declaration on Sexual Morality, Justice, and Healing calls for sexuality education throughout the lifespan from trained religious and lay leaders. It affirms that sexuality is one of God's most fulfilling gifts and outlines a new paradigm for sexual morality that does not discriminate on the basis of age, marital status, or sexual orientation. John Buehrens is one of the creators of the Declaration and one of two denomination presidents who have endorsed it (along with 1000 of America's religious leaders representing a broad range of faith traditions). The Declaration appeared in The New York Times as a full-page advertisement on January 25th and will appear in other news publications in the future. Many of our district leaders have endorsed this declaration (including myself). You can see a copy of it hanging in the District office or by visiting the web site listed below.

The UUA's new OWL (Our Whole Lives) program is based on the philosophy of comprehensive sexuality education, which helps participants make informed and responsible decisions about their sexual health and behavior. It equips participants with accurate, age-appropriate information in six subject areas: human development, relationships, personal skills, sexual behavior, sexual health, and society and culture. Grounded in a holistic view of sexual-



*Humanism Conference seminar presenters, left to right: The Reverend Mary C. Higgins, District Executive; Dr. Robert P. Tucker, Minister at Lake Region UU Fellowship; Mary Louise DeWolfe, ministerial candidate; the Reverend Jack M. Higgins, minister of UU of Brevard church and conference host; Dr. William Murry, Meadville-Lombard Seminary President.*

## Humanism Conference: A Milestone

A conference on Humanism was held March 3 - 4 at the UU Church of Brevard in West Melbourne. Principal speaker was Dr. William Murry, President of Meadville-Lombard Seminary in Chicago, IL, who spoke on "Humanism—Where It's Been" in the morning and "Humanism—Where It's Going" in the afternoon. The conference was history-making, as it was the first time that a seminary president ever publicly discussed or even acknowledged humanism.



*The Reverend John Rex, newly installed minister at Buckman Bridge Unitarian Universalist, gave the opening address at the Humanism Conference.*

ity, comprehensive sexuality education provides not only facts about anatomy and human development, but support for participants to clarify their values, integrate sexual and spiritual understandings, build interpersonal skills, and understand the spiritual, emotional, social, and political aspects of sexuality.

The Florida District is sponsoring a spring training workshop for those people chosen to facilitate the Junior High OWL program in our congregations. Another Jr. High training will take place in October of 2000. A joint training for the K-1 and 4-6 grade program will be held on September 15th and 16th. These trainings are strongly encouraged for anyone attempting to facilitate these programs, and required for the purchase of any visuals.

The OWL program gives us the information and strength to teach our children with honesty, respect and love. May we have the courage to embrace it and support it within our congregations.

— IN FAITH, KAREN GONZALEZ  
FLORIDA DISTRICT LIFESPAN  
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION COMMITTEE CHAIR

*For more information on OWL trainings in Florida or advice on the process of establishing an OWL program in your congregation, feel free to contact me at [KarenDRE@aol.com](mailto:KarenDRE@aol.com) or contact Florida's OWL trainer, Dora Finamore at [doracamille@cs.com](mailto:doracamille@cs.com). For more information on OWL, visit <http://www.uua.org/owl/>. For more information on The Religious Declaration on Sexual Morality, Justice, and Healing and a list of its endorsements visit <http://www.religionproject.org>.*



## Alpha Connections: Meeting the Needs of Young Adult UU's

The March Alpha Connections Florida District Young Adult Conference was a success! Held in Orlando & hosted by the Young Adult Group of First Unitarian of Orlando, there were 25 attendees from all over Florida. This was the first Young Adult Conference in Florida in a long time, and the first UU conference for many of the attendees.

The conference was filled with fun for all—long time friends re-connecting and people getting to make new friends. We discovered through workshops, worship and a terrific coffee-house just how much talent a group of UUs can have.

The conference's goal was to create community and friendships among UUs from age 18 to 35. We talked about the special needs of young adults when it comes to Campus Ministry programs (which currently only exist at FSU and U of F) as well as in congregations. Many of the attendees spoke of their difficulties in connecting to their local congregations. Of course, this is a situation common throughout the UUA—and is one that the UUA is working on.

We in Florida are hoping to be in the forefront of finding ways to keep UU young adults active in congregations and encourage new young adults to discover a place within Unitarian Universalism.

The hopes that grew out of Alpha Connections? We'd like to see Campus Ministry Programs in more colleges and universities, we'd like to see a program to aid congregations in addressing the needs of Young Adults and we'd like to see a strong Florida District Young Adult Community—similar to the style of YRUU. Those are also the goals of the Florida District Campus Ministry/Young Adult Subcommittee.

— TOM COOK

*If you or someone else in your congregation have any questions about young adults, please contact Kim Ross Frichter at 850-562-7378, [kross@rice.hep.fsu.edu](mailto:kross@rice.hep.fsu.edu), 5726 Doonesbury Way, Tallahassee, FL 32303 or Tom Cook at 407-898-7586, [blackcat@magicnet.net](mailto:blackcat@magicnet.net), 2504 E. Jefferson St. #12, Orlando, FL 32803. We are the co-chairs of the FL Dist. Campus Ministry/Young Adult Subcommittee and would be happy to answer any questions.*

## Florida Leadership School: A Personal Perspective

When I first heard about Leadership school, I thought that it sounded very interesting. I was already very involved at Buckman Bridge Unitarian Universalist Society in Jacksonville, and a spark was ignited when my congregation encouraged me to go. I knew very little about leadership school. When I asked people who had gone to tell me what it was about, they would say as their eyes sparkled, that it is "life changing." I thought that was quite a statement, but after the third person had the same response, I thought, Leadership school must be really phenomenal!

Now that I have attended, let me say this, Leadership school *IS* life changing! It is incredibly transforming. When I returned from the School, I wanted to pack the congregation up and send them there so they could have the same experience.

The structure of the school has five basic elements—heritage and values, where we learned about our Unitarian Universalism roots; practical development; leadership development, where we explored our individual leadership style; Worship services, and faith journey discussions. We had wonderful talented, intelligent and skilled Leaders. The group of students and leaders celebrated all that was being put before us. We were highly encouraged to fully immerse into the school. I was very open to fully participating, and was thrilled to be with this intentional community. The leaders of the group were fully present and encouraged questioning and growth. A foundation of trust and safety was present, and encouraged risk to explore new ideas and styles. It was inviting to be authentic, and to develop more of my leadership style. I felt very valued, and was willing to go out of my comfort zone and stretch. I drew great value in the strengths in the different knowledge, experience and personalities in the students there. We all were integral contributors and we saw the realized potential of our diverse community. Their encouragement propelled me to reach for personal goals of success, and to contribute to the success of the group. I also knew they were there for support when I may have felt uncomfortable or challenged. There was a

positive challenge element from outside, and from within. This seemed to be echoed in the group.

A very strong part of the school that was modeled is the tremendous skills and value of listening and sharing. The students of the School each gave of their individual strengths and knowledge. In a supportive community we worked together as many of us do at our home congregations.

I was able to see the best of who I could be. In that environment, it felt wonderful to stretch, and try on new behaviors. I even ventured out in a canoe, for the first time on my own, and laughed with the other students after I fell out of the canoe! In the several months since Leadership School has ended, I have referred back to practical experiences at the school and the interactions with the other students.

A great support system was developed there. The other students are still available to communicate with to get feedback and suggestions for something being worked on in my congregation or hear of what they may be doing in their congregations. I often refer to the skills and knowledge I acquired there, and have shared much of the information with my home congregation.

I highly encourage you to go and get a chance to see the sparkle and the spark of Leadership School. It is a tremendously valuable experience for both blossoming and current Leaders.

— KAREN SILINSKY, FLS99 GRADUATE



**Registration  
Deadline:  
June 1, 2000**

Has your congregation taken steps to send representatives?

**November 5 - 11, 2000  
Canterbury Retreat Center in Oveido, FL**

Our lay leaders deserve this quality of experience and practice found in UU Leadership schools. Registration details and information on Florida Leadership School 2000 have been sent to each congregation.

# FLORIDA DISTRICT CALENDAR • 2000

The information in this calendar is thought to be correct as of 4/1/2000. Please contact the District Office at (407) 894-2119 or [uuaflldist@aol.com](mailto:uuaflldist@aol.com) to confirm, add or change the information contained in this calendar.

## April

- 1 Northeast Cluster ..... Ormond Beach
- 2 YRUU Transition Con #2 ..... East Orlando
- 8 Super Saturday - East Central Cluster ..... Melbourne
- 8 Southwest Cluster Annual Meeting ..... Sarasota
- 14 - 16 Spirituality Con for Youth and Adults ..... East Orlando
- 28 Leadership School Reunion ..... Orlando
- 28 - 30 District Annual Assembly ..... Orlando
- 28 - 30 FDYRUU Youth Caucus/Coming of Age #5 Con ... Orlando

## May

- 5 - 7 FDYRUU Social Action Con ..... Tampa
- 6 Extension Committee Meeting ..... Orlando
- 6 West Central Cluster Annual Meeting ..... Tarpon Springs
- 10 - 12 Young Adult Con (Alpha Connections) ..... Orlando
- 13 New Presidents' Forum ..... East Orlando
- 19 - 20 Women & Religion Area Comm. Meeting ..... New Smyrna
- 20 Southeast Cluster Springfest ..... Boca Raton
- 26 - 28 All Age Con ..... Ft. Lauderdale

## June

- 2 - 3 Program Council ..... Orlando
- 9 - 10 Florida District Board Retreat ..... E. Orlando
- 12 District Directory Deadline ..... District Office/Orlando
- 17 South East Cluster: *Fulfilling the Promise*.. N. Palm Beach
- 22 - 27 General Assembly ..... Nashville, TN

## Fall Dates to Remember

### September

- 15 - 16 OWL Training ..... TBA

### November

- 5 - 11 Florida Leadership School ..... Oviedo

### December

- 1 - 2 Fall Leadership Conference ..... Orlando

## Key to Abbreviations:

- Con ..... Conference (generally refers to Youth Conferences)
- FDYRUU ..... Florida District Young Religious Unitarian Universalists
- FUUMA ..... Florida Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association
- OWL ..... Our Whole Lives (sexuality education)
- RE ..... Religious Education

## Electronic Newsletters Available

The UUA Office of Congregational Fundraising Services now offers a bi-monthly newsletter, which they are e-mailing to all congregations that have given their email address to the UUA. It is sent in PDF format that can be opened and printed with Acrobat Reader. The newsletter will be of special interest to those involved in the financial aspects of your congregation (annual canvass, capital campaign, endowments, etc.).

There's an easy new way for your committee chairs and other interested lay leaders to get a free subscription to *InterConnections* Online. Anyone who sends a request for a free subscription will get a short e-mail every time a new *InterConnections* issue is ready. The e-mail will contain a headline description of the feature articles and a link to click that will pop the new issue right up on their computer screens. In addition to every edition of *InterConnections*, you'll discover the searchable Resource Library that is part of the *InterConnections* website. In it you can find all kinds of information that can be useful to committees or other projects around the church. To subscribe to the list, send a message to [listproc@uua.org](mailto:listproc@uua.org). In the message field, type: subscribe InterConnections-L [your name]. You can also sign up using the short form on the Interconnections home page at <http://www.uua.org/interconnections>. Every *InterConnections* newsletter will go online in two formats-in addition to the usual web document, it will also be available as fast-to-download PDF files.

This publication, *The Sunshine*, is also available online at the Florida District UUA Website, <http://www.cyberstreet.com/uufld/>. It is offered in both HTML and PDF formats for downloading and printing.

**Florida District Board of Directors**

**Officers**

President ..... Ed Porteus, Ft. Myers

Vice President ..... Vacant

Secretary ..... Bob Kenon, Tallahassee

Treasurer ..... Wini Stowe, St. Petersburg (UU Church)

**At Large**

2000 ..... Maureen Armour, Naples

2000 ..... Jim Luce, Melbourne

2000 ..... Kathy Converse, Jacksonville

2001 ..... Peter Goldhammer, St. Petersburg

2001 ..... Frank Dunn, Sarasota

**District Executive - Ex-Officio**

2001 ..... Rev. Mary C. Higgins, Orlando



*Newsletter of the*  
**FLORIDA DISTRICT UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST ASSOCIATION**  
 1901 E. Robinson Street, Suite 18 • Orlando, FL 32803