

SUNSHINE

NEWSLETTER OF THE FLORIDA DISTRICT UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST ASSOCIATION



Volume 1, Number 2
Winter, 1998

Florida District Annual Meeting, 1998

The 1998 Annual Meeting of the Florida District will be held April 17-18 at the Gainesville fellowship's new facility. Each congregation will receive a packet with registration forms, childcare information, and housing information. The meeting is titled "Programming for the 21st Century" and will feature a large variety of workshops and many displays, including a UUA bookstore.

Prior to the District Annual Meeting, the Florida Ministers and DREs will meet. A Religious Education Committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 16 at 7:00 p.m. at the fellowship. On Friday, the keynote speaker for the District Meeting will conduct a workshop with the DREs on the topic "Professional Ethics and the DRE."

Our keynote speaker for the meeting will be **Rev. Carol Ann Taylor**, Minister of Religious Education for the Main Line Unitarian Church in Devon, Pennsylvania. Rev. Taylor will address her remarks to us on Saturday morning. In addition to serving churches in Madison, Wisconsin and Devon, she has been a teacher and a professional ballerina and modern dancer. Currently, her service to the denomination takes the form of being vice president of the Unitarian Universalist Minister's Association.

Among the workshops to choose from will be:

- *The Church and the Media*, with Rev. Dr. Wayne Robinson
- *The Third Age: Programming for the Older Adult*, with Rev. Susanne Nazian and Mary Louise DeWolf-Hurt
- *Computers and Audio Visual Aids in Adult Education*, with Revs. Sam Trumbore and Suzanne Nazian
- *The DRE and the Church*, with Rev. Mary Higgins and Andrea Lerner
- *Multiple Intelligences*, with Andrea Lerner
- *Teacher Recruitment and Training*, with Karen Gonzalez
- *Biomedical Ethics: Assisted Reproductive Technology*, with Dr. Stanley Nazian
- *The District YRUU Human Rights Project*, with YRUU Panel Participants
- *A Taste of Leadership*, with the Florida District Leadership School Committee
- *Campus Ministry*, with Sara Reece and Amy Jo Smith

These are not all the offerings! Some have yet to be scheduled.

The District is planning food and fun also! Entertainment for Friday night features the Rev. Dr. William Ellery Channing, Mrs. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Miss Elizabeth Palmer Peabody from the 19th century. Musical entertainment will take place Saturday night during the banquet. Most meals, except for the banquet, will be included in your registration fee.

Quality childcare for children under 12 will be available. Stephanie Hamblin, DRE of the Gainesville congregation, who has provided children's programs for a variety of national UU organizations, will be on hand with her staff of caregivers to insure that your child has a fun and meaningful experience of the District Meeting.

The UUA bookstore will carry many of those titles you meant to order but didn't quite get to, and many of the new releases. Last year, this was a very popular feature of the District meeting, and promises to be this year as well.

The traditional banner parade and an ingathering service will begin the meeting on Friday night, followed by a set of workshops and entertainment. Two more sets of workshops, the Florida UU minister's service, awards luncheon, business meeting and banquet follow on Saturday.

District personnel, ministers, DREs and laypersons have worked many hours to bring you what we hope is a high quality assembly. More is better! We'd like to have as many of you as are able to come experience the larger community of Unitarian Universalism in the state of Florida.

— REV. SUZANNE NAZIAN



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Planting the Seeds for a Campus Ministry

When Sara Reece, a 39-year-old mother of two children, came to the UU congregation in Tallahassee (UUCT) a year ago, she felt that Unitarian Universalism had given her a lot, and she wanted to give something back to her church community. Like many others in our denomination, she wished she had found out about the UU option earlier in her life, and so the idea of starting a campus ministry appealed to her.

"I felt it would be a way," Sara said, "of bringing in the new generation of UU's. When they got done with college and had a job and were looking for a church to join, they'd have good memories, would have absorbed some of the principles, and would want to belong to a UU congregation wherever they lived."

As it happens, Sara was in the right place at the right time, because Trudy Deyle, UUCT President, had just drawn up a grant proposal for a campus ministry, and so had the UU Fellowship of Gainesville. Last year, the UUA and Florida District awarded an \$18,000 grant, to be split between UUCT and the UU Fellowship of Gainesville.

The three-year "Giving to Grow" grant, which began in September 1997, allots \$3,000 a year to each congregation. The UUCT also put in another \$2,000 as a line-item in their budget, so this fiscal year the Tallahassee congregation had \$5,000. Of this, \$3,200 is for Sara's salary and the rest goes for advertising and programs. Realizing the budget was limited, Sara sent out a letter to other campus ministries asking for donated meeting space. She received one positive response – from Rabbi Ron Goff at Hillel – who offered their building for larger gatherings, and as luck would have it, one of the UU students who was involved with the Women's Center got them that space free for weekly Thursday night meetings.

Sara says her biggest challenge has been coming up with relevant weekly topics so no one gets bored or offended. They've had "movie nights" followed by pizza and discussion; an "Ethics Coffee House" with case studies of ethics situations taken from newspapers or the Internet; and a Haiku night with a local poetry teacher. They've also pitched in making and serving meals to the homeless at the Cold Night Shelter.

Although she studied for a year and a

half at seminary, Sara does not do pastoral counseling. "I'm just a mother with a lot of life experience," she says. However, she does make herself available for one-on-one sessions with individual students. Over lunch or coffee, they'll talk about the group, or their personal concerns. If any appear to need extensive counseling, she'll refer them to Amy McKenzie Quinn, the Tallahassee congregation's extension minister.

Gainesville spends its grant money a little differently from Tallahassee. Because they could not get free meeting space, they rent space for \$75 a month at the Presbyterian Disciples of Christ student center across from the University of Florida campus. This means they can't afford to pay a salary to their adult leader, Amy Jo Smith, who serves as a volunteer. Both these factors have affected their organizational setup. Since they are registered as a campus organization, they had to come up with a constitution and bylaws and elect student officers.

"My role is that of mentor/role model/support person/facilitator," Amy Jo says. The students do much of their own planning, but the church congregation has organized a Campus Ministry Support Team, a group of adults from the congregation that meets monthly with student leaders. They assist with planning, help with logistics, and bridge a cap between campus and congregation.

Gainesville kicked off the school year with a barbecue and also had a "lock-in" or sleepover which they called "Green Eggs and YAM" (Young Adult Ministries). Another favorite activity is renting a video, watching it, and discussing it. Two they've done this year have been "Witchcraft in America" and the life of physicist Stephen Hawking. Another night the students had a musical potluck – everyone brought his or her favorite piece of music and told why it was a favorite. Another night brought a "Values Clarification Quiz" where students replied to open-ended statements about values. Putting their principles in action, this year they did the "Cropwalk," and they're developing other community service projects for next year.

Amy Jo says she is amazed at how accepting her group is of differences in backgrounds and lifestyles. One young woman in the group is an atheist/Humanist, to whom the word "God" was anathema. The group decided to go with her to visit the campus Humanist groups and talked about joint activities with them. They also plan to reach out to the gay/lesbian campus group.

What are the requirements for a cam-

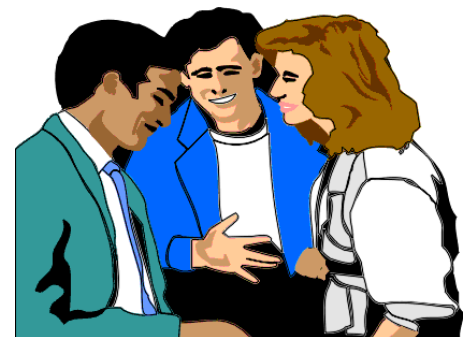
pus ministry leader? Sara said they include a grounding in UU philosophy and tradition, plus an understanding of "Generation X" psychology.

"I'd forgotten," Sara said, "How high the highs are and how low the lows."

A retired teacher (and former nun), Amy Jo says it's important for adult leaders of campus ministries to remember "that you're not working with children; you're working with young adults." She suggests that whatever you do, don't call them *kids!* "You can't be a dictator, or they won't respect you. You can't be their mother, father, teacher – they've already got those. Yours is a very special relationship, one that calls for an ability to listen and to guide without being overly controlling. You really have to like young people, and to value their ideas." Their fellowship is developing a resource list of such people in the congregation who would like to come and talk to the young people or do programs with them.

We asked some of the students involved what they thought of the project so far. Roommates Dawn Preston and LisaJoy (LJ) Zillgitt of the Tallahassee group are both 30 and sometimes have trouble finding common ground with the traditional college students. "What we like about the campus ministry is it gives us a chance to meet with students of different ages, different backgrounds, differing opinions, who have various interests and ideas and styles of communication."

Andrea Rowan of the Gainesville group said, "Sometimes college life can be stressful and tiring, and it's nice to know that every week I will get some downtime and be with fellow UU's." She prefers having a separate college ministry to going to the regular fellowship, because it's convenient and close to campus. "I also like having a group of peers . . . with similar interests and mind-sets." She was part of the youth group at her UU church in Boca Raton, and now feels she has "a home away from home in the campus group." As for how the campus ministry has helped her personally, Andrea responded, "It's brought me back to my spiritual side. For the first two years in



college, I was not a part of a fellowship or church, and I had neglected that part of myself. It is wonderful to have a way to keep my life balanced again, to be able to focus on personal growth instead of just schoolwork."

Asked what their visions were for their future of their campus ministry, the students indicated that they'd like the group to grow. "I would like to develop a strong group of 10-15 students," Andrea said. "It will be easier to get things done once more students are involved, and there will be even more energy."

In years two and three of the project, both Sara and Amy Jo plan to do more outreach to expand the groups. Between six and sixteen students show up for the weekly meetings, Sara says, and the next semester they plan to advertise in the campus papers to try to get more. So far the main way both congregations have been getting student members is to contact those students who register as UU's in their university application.

They're also planning district-wide outreach, giving workshops and "Super Saturday" programs to mentor other congregations who want to start their own campus ministries. Meanwhile, they've said they'd be happy to answer questions. Here's how you can contact them: Sara Reece – phone: (850) 309-1933; e-mail: reecdenn@electro-net.com Amy Jo Smith – phone: (352) 332-1350; e-mail: amyjo1350@aol.com

—VERNA SAFRAN

Trustee Report: Accountability

One of the fuzzy issues in most of our lives is accountability. The UUA Board is beginning discussions about how it can ensure that the resources of the Association, your resources, are used to further the purposes of the Association— "to serve the needs of member congregations, to organize new congregations, to extend and strengthen UU institutions, and to implement our Principles." (UUA Bylaws)

In addition to setting direction through planning and policy, we are also beginning to look at how the Association's budget expresses those purposes. I'll keep you posted on how we are working as well as what we come up with. This is critical work for our Board as well as yours, and I hope we can be in dialog about this process.

— MARGARET SANDERS,
UUA TRUSTEE

Our Caring Community:

I think the First Unitarian Church of Miami, also known as the Unitarian Universalist Society of Miami, is living proof of shared ministry.

Over a year ago, on August 30th 1996, to be exact, a dear member of the Society, suffered a severe stroke while on a family visit to Tallahassee. She was found in her car several hours after her stroke and remained in a coma for close to two weeks. When she regained consciousness, unable to speak or move, everyone was taken by shock. The predictions that she would recover had been slim.

A drive to raise funds for a medical plane to bring her back to Miami was successful and she was soon placed in the loving hands of her husband, her husband's children and her friends, in a good rehabilitation center where they form part of the team actively working with her to regain the use of her limbs and voice. The prognosis was not good, she had been in her coma too long to hope for much rehabilitation.

She has gone way beyond anyone's expectations. One is struck with the outpouring of love when one enters her room which is completely covered with cards and good wishes and all types of stuffed animals keeping her company.

Encouraged, people have organized to help with her care and rehabilitation, and have not been daunted in spite of slow progress. They feel energized by her improvement and willingness to go beyond what the medical community calls her "optimization."

Suki was lucky that the part of her brain that effects long and short term memory was not effected. Her motor and speaking abilities were severely impaired. She has graduated from no speech, to communicating through the use of a tube and a communication board. The goal right now is to have her being able to communicate for seven days without the use of the tube. Why the goal? *Suki wants to go home and she is working very hard at it.*

She labors to express herself. "I want to go home." Well, I have no doubt she will. She needs to strengthen her legs to be able to stand and walk. But, the spark and determination are there. The Nursing Home Administrator said, "We all love Suki, and I am constantly amazed at the caring and support of all her friends." Truly we are sharing the Ministry, and as we do so, we become more aware of the importance of a community of love and dedication.

— SELVA JOSEPH

Creating A Jubilee World



An Anti-Racism Workshop

Sponsored by
Community Unitarian Universalist Church
Presented by
The Jubilee Working Group for Anti-Racism
of The Unitarian Universalist Association

Objectives of the workshop are to:

- Increase Awareness of racism within our church and the larger community
- Recognize the power/privilege of racism from personal and institutional perspectives
- Identify activities and responses that promote the elimination of racism
- Identify the challenges and barriers when working to eliminate racism
- Examine our denominational values, principles & purposes as they relate to the vision of a jubilee world

March 13, 14, 15, 1998

Community Unitarian Universalist Church

Daytona Beach, Florida

Friday Evening, March 13

Registration 6:30 - 7:00 p.m.
Evening Program 7:00 - 9:00 p.m.
Reception and Refreshments,
Movie, Discussion

Saturday, March 14

Registration/Breakfast 8:30 - 9:30 a.m.
Workshop 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
Lunch 12:30 - 1:30 p.m.
Workshop 1:30 - 4:30 p.m.

Cost of Workshop:

\$20.00 for Friday evening and Saturday
\$15 for Saturday only
Child care will be available.
(Preregistration by March 6
is required for child care)

Send your name, attendance dates, and
child care needs to:
Community Unitarian Universalist Church
1124-F Beville Road
Daytona Beach, FL 32114
For further info, call Charley Barcelo,
Phone/Fax: 904-767-4189
E-mail: Charaud@aol.com

Directions: From Beville Road, 100 yards west of intersection of Nova Road, turn North into Nova Village office complex (across from Wal-Mart), proceed to Building F.

Note: Additional Jubilee Workshops are being planned for this year in Tallahassee, Orlando and Ft. Lauderdale—to be announced.

Greetings from the Florida District Training and Church Management Committee

Our training invitations this year were planned with you in mind. We begin with our Super Saturday Seminars (S³). These vital and informative sessions provide congregational members and friends with tools, techniques and new connections from around the state.

In April (17/18), at the District Annual Meeting, our committee will be available to hear what you need to better serve your congregation.

In May (8/9/10), a most Worthy Weekend Workshop (W³) responds to one of your greatest efforts: Canvass Fundraising. Please, please, please send your Canvass Team. Mr. Jerry King is a renowned, knowledgeable trainer whose warmth and attention to your concerns and planning will give your Canvass Team quality, effective canvass production motivation. All congregations who have a new president by June 5/6 will want to consider sponsoring her/him to the Fantastic Fulldays Presidents' Forum (F³) where, along with other new presidents, will enjoy a full complement of panelists offering strategies, techniques and practical information on how to lead a board of UUs! Rev. Mary Higgins, our District Executive, will be a panelist.

The time is NOW to plan and act on registering those who can benefit from Leadership School for your congregation. Those who are asked to register can say they are pleased to go for their congregation. The Florida District Leadership Committee is proud to announce the reestablishment of the Florida Leadership School. Look for lots of good information on what the school will provide students during the week-long, exciting experience in leadership of UU societies.

Please register for all of this good training through the District office. May you find growth and nourishment throughout this year of gatherings.

— KAREN JUDD, CHAIR
TRAINING & CHURCH MGMT. COMMITTEE

WANTED: The Training and Church Management Committee is seeking more members to assist in *coordinating* the quality training initiatives this District is known for. It is a home-based effort with low time commitment. No experience necessary. Functional descriptions available. Contact: Karen Judd, P.O. Box 1643, Lake Panasoffkee, FL 33538. Phone 352-568-3007, E-mail: judds@mail2.scia.net

Sits & Pieces

Southeast Cluster Board members elected at the November 1, 1997 annual meeting were President, **Arthur Morrison**, Miami First; Vice President, **Myra Symons**, Ft. Lauderdale; Treasurer, **David Doucette**, Ft. Lauderdale; Secretary, **Mair Buddug**, At Large; SWIM Rep, **Marty McAnulty**, Ft. Lauderdale; Newsletter Editor, **Elisabeth Hoffman**, Boca Raton.

The first activity for the new year was a rousing success. **Ft. Lauderdale** church was the host of a social gathering to launch a **SE Cluster Interweave** group. Approximately 35 people attended from across three counties, representing at least four churches. A gourmet potluck dinner was followed by socializing, games, and a movie. A committee has drafted by-laws, and an organizational meeting will be scheduled in the near future.

—MAIR BUDDUG

The Friendship Fellowship played host to the **Florida UU District Board** meeting on Sat., Jan. 17th, for the first time since it began almost 5 years ago. Now located on Route 1 between Cocoa and Melbourne, Friendship provides a site that's hard to beat: a hillside facility overlooking the Indian River Lagoon on a high ridge, across the street from a blossoming very substantial (tree) nursery.

On Saturday, February 14th, Friendship will hold the first meeting of the six-member **East Central Cluster**, comprised of members and friends of **Orlando, Lake County, University, Vero, Melbourne** and, of course, **Friendship**. The facility currently consists of what used to be a farmhouse, and a double wide building. The property was purchased from the Episcopal Archdiocese of Orlando. Both congregations used the facility for about five months last year while Hope Episcopal was building a new one. The congregation of 60 people convened under an oak tree in a park, progressed to a day care center for a couple of years, and now, the hill. Plans for the future include a new, permanent building.

— CATHY STANTON

Under the leadership of Unitarian Universalist **Joe Irwin** and **Bob Crowe**, Floridians for Health Care has recruited hundreds of Palm Beach County residents. Originating with the Social Action Committee of the **First Unitarian Church of Palm Beach County**, FHC has

sponsored seminars, conferences with medical professionals, and rallies protesting health care inequities.

On December 2nd, as physicians and lay activists dumped health insurance forms in Boston Harbor, Palm Beach County protesters did the same in West Palm Beach's Intracoastal Waterway. (Ecologically concerned, small boats immediately pulled the forms from the water.)

Ultimately favoring a Single Payer System, Floridians for Health Care is now a viable coalition of physicians and other citizens, proving that local congregations can initiate effective community action.

— ELLEN SATTLER

First Coast Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans is dedicated to the study, discussion, and celebration of the Earth-centered spiritual practices of pre-Christian, indigenous, Pagan and neoPagan religions. First Coast CUUP is a local chapter of the national CUUP, an affiliate of the UUA, and has celebrations scheduled throughout the year, usually held on Saturday evenings, 6:30 p.m. at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Jacksonville. UU's from throughout the district are invited to attend these events. All are welcome regardless of age, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, or spiritual path. All that is needed is an open mind, and a respect for the viewpoint of others. Upcoming celebrations include Spring Equinox (1/30); Beltane/May Day (5/2); Summer Solstice (6/20) and more. For additional information regarding celebrations, contact **Greg Hines**, Coordinator, FCCUPP, at 904-725-8133 between 8 a.m. and 1 p.m., during church office hours.

The UU Florida District Women and Religion gathered in Fort Myers for their Spring Retreat, January 30 - February 1. Members of the **UU Church of Fort Myers** church did an outstanding job of hosting some 120 UU women for this intense weekend of exploring "*The Masks We Wear*." Keynote speaker and facilitator was **Margot Adler**, New York Bureau Chief for National Public Radio, author, Unitarian Universalist Pagan and authority on feminist spirituality. Many thanks to the **Florida District W&R Committee**, as well as those from Fort Myers who put in lots of hard work and commitment to create a meaningful weekend! The upcoming Summer Retreat is scheduled for May 15 - 17 at UU in the Pines with facilitator Susan Stephenson Heftte. Information and registration forms will be published in the March issue of W&R newsletter, *WomanSpirit*.

Florida District UU Awards

There are some groups and individuals among us who deserve accolades for their fine efforts. Awards to be considered are:

- **Jim Barrett Social Justice Award**, for significant contribution to the cause of social justice.
- **Clarence R. Skinner Award**, for a memorable sermon on the social principles of Unitarian Universalism.
- **Unsung Unitarian Universalist Award**, to recognize a lay or professional person who has made a significant contribution to UUism or the practice of its principles.
- **John DeWolf-Hurt Levity Award**, for a Unitarian Universalist who keeps us grinning like Rev. John did.
- **Award for Excellence in Religious Education**.
- **Three Outstanding Newsletters**; one for large congregations, one for small/medium congregations, and one for non-computer or non-hightech productions.

Women in Religion Awards will be considered by their own awards committee, and all awards will be presented at the District Annual Meeting in Gainesville this spring.

The Deadline for submittals/nominations is **March 1st, 1998**. Please have your church officers and boards figure out who should be considered for these awards, and send in your written nominations (or a few newsletters), with descriptions, data, specifics, etc. to the Awards Chairperson, **Maurea Slesman**, 5531 Darlene St., Weeki Wachee, Florida 34607. For additional information, call 352-597-0074.

GA to Spotlight Florida W&R

Florida UU Women and Religion will shine at General Assembly in June, in Rochester, NY. Celebrations will include a study of Elizabeth Cady Stanton's "A Woman's Bible," programs and panel discussions based on the views of women ministers, the Women's Heritage Society, and Lucile Longview, author of the W&R Resolution, passed in 1977 at GA, who will be honored, as well as Rosemary Matson, a W&R visionary. Cathy Stanton, Stanton's great-great-granddaughter and member of Friendship Fellowship at Pineda, will also be a panelist. Bus tours will be arranged to visit Seneca Falls, where the first Women's Rights Convention was held in July of 1848, as well as to the Stanton house and the other historic buildings at the Women's Rights National Historic Park.

Yours In Faith,

Notes from Your District Executive

As I travel our District, I am struck time and time again by the ways in which we are trying to engage each other in the most constructive and healthy ways. You are asking for guidance on the ways in which you can incorporate the values implicit and explicit between us into your daily lives. These are the values that honor the worth and dignity of all who are on the journey with you; your fellow congregants, clergy and staff. What does the democratic process look and feel like as we work it out between us? We are looking for answers to these questions, dilemmas and processes that honor our commitment to compassionate thoughts and deeds.

Living out our values congruently and with integrity is easy when all is well between us. When there is even minor tension, the covenants we have developed can be stretched. We all know that how we respond to the tensions is important for the well-being of the individuals. How we handle conflict is also a significant indicator of spiritual well-being for our whole Unitarian Universalist community. We judge our churches and fellowships by how well we are able to live out the values we espouse. I hear folks tell me all the time, that without success in treating each other using our core values of respect and tolerance, what hope have we to impact the larger world.

Without the ability to forgive "each other our trespasses" we are also in jeopardy. The fall from the high standards we expect of each other is inevitable, for we are human, complex, and glorious creatures in relationship with each other. To forgive our transgressions and return to the community to try again, is our call. Forgiveness does not imply that we agree with the actions taken or the words hurled. Forgiveness is a commitment to the principle that the flawed act will not destroy the possibility of a more vibrant future between and among us. Forgiveness starts where we are and moves toward the future.

Another dimension of healing beyond our conflicts is to take personal responsibility for the role we have played in the conflict. When it is always about the "other," we are refusing to see our place in the whole picture. In my own journey, the more I focus on what "they" did to me, the more sure I am of my need to search my own heart. I search that heart not to shame myself or take on more responsibility than is rightly mine. I search

my heart in order to be able to forgive myself and find ways back into right relationship with myself and others.

Acknowledgment of our role in relational stress and strain opens a door to the healing work of more vital, healthy, inspired congregations we seek. We are on a continuum of life, striving to fulfill an ideal; striving to do the right and good; falling off the path; searching our hearts and minds; forgiving ourselves and each other; and getting back on the path. Let us keep between us a generosity of spirit that continually seeks ways to reconnect us, one to another.

— MARY CHULAK HIGGINS

D.E. Relations Committee

Do you have comments, concerns, questions or reflections on the work of our District Executive (D.E.), Rev. Mary Higgins, that you would like for the Florida District to know about? We have a D.E. Relations Committee whose function it is to assist you in having your issues addressed. The members of the Committee are **Gretchen-Bremer Hosken, Joan Lund** and **Rev. Dr. Marni Harmony**. Please feel free to contact any one of them. Their telephone numbers and e-mail addresses are found in your 1997-98 Florida District Directory.

New Congregation Forming in Tampa Bay

Spirit of Life Unitarian Universalist is a new congregation forming to serve the Tampa Bay area. Congregants are busily working on a mountain of things to be done, focusing on making theirs a full service congregation with a focus on religious education. They are already enjoying fellowship with each other, and held their first social action outing together on Monday, January 19, when a group of fifteen adults and children participated in the Clearwater parade honoring Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. As they stood together waiting for the parade to assemble, "Spirit of Life -- right here," was called over the megaphone. They turned to each other for a special moment, saying almost simultaneously, "Hey, that's us! That's the first time we've been called by our name in public." The event was a milestone for the congregation. During spring and summer, they will be building numbers and focusing efforts on programs that will benefit families in the area. Public worship services will begin in fall.

— SUBMITTED BY JIM AND ROBIN MOIR

Ministerial Milestones

Rev. John M. Higgins, Ed. D.

The Rev. John (Jack) Higgins is the new minister of the UU Church of Brevard. He arrived in Melbourne from Buffalo, NY where he had been minister of the UU Church of Hamburg, NY for 1996-97.

Jack was ordained in June, 1996 after completing the M.Div. at Meadville/

Lombard School of Theology in Chicago the previous month.

Prior to entering the UU ministry, Rev. Higgins was an educator, having taught or been an administrator in six different states and six different countries. He taught everything from a one room school in Tasmania to graduate courses in Education at the University of Miami. He was the first Dean of Education at the Tiverina College of Advanced Education in Wagga, Wagga, Australia and Dean of several smaller colleges in New York and Pennsylvania. Other places he has taught or been an administrator in schools and colleges are Brazil, Canada, Colombia and Uganda. He also taught in Alaska, California, Connecticut, Florida, Washington, DC.

He has baccalaureate and master's degrees from Los Angeles State College, a doctorate in Education from the University of Toronto and M.Div. from Meadville/Lombard School of Theology.

He is married to the former Jacqueline Portland and they have two children and five grandchildren. Jackie has been a teacher for forty years and accompanied Jack to all those places above with their children.

Jack is a member of the Humanist Institute and is a sometimes writer having had numerous articles in education journals and published a monograph on the recruitment of college and university personnel. His most recent article is in the September/October 1997 issue of *The Humanist*.

He does not consider his call to ministry as a major change in vocation. Rather is it the completion of a journey. A career in education prepares one for ministry by being concerned with the problems of people at many different ages. It can give one insight into human problems, accomplishments and helps in acquiring a strong conviction that all human beings still journey towards fulfilling their promises no matter what their ages.



Rev. Jack Higgins

Dr. Grace Hanson

Dr. Hanson began serving as the Minister of Buckman Bridge Unitarian Universalist Society in Jacksonville this past October 1st. Her relationship with the church is part of a "Learning/Service" agreement that provides both part-time ministerial services to BBUUS, and opportunities for Dr. Hanson to complete the fellowshiping process in the UUA. She is considered a "transfer candidate," and Dr. Richard Speck of Vero Beach is her supervisor.

Before becoming a Unitarian Universalist several years ago, Dr. Hanson, who is the daughter of a Lutheran pastor, was herself a Lutheran parish pastor for 12 years, serving churches in Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Tampa, Florida. Dr. Hanson currently serves as the Director of a long-term residential treatment center for women and their babies recovering from alcohol and drug addiction.

Her previous experience includes service as Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor for the State of Washington, where she lead a team of social service workers to work with clients considered disabled that were receiving welfare.

She also served as a hospital and university chaplain, and was the first woman to preach at the Abbey, St. John's University, Collegeville, Minnesota. Dr. Hanson was also a Seminary teacher, and the first woman to chair a committee at the largest Lutheran seminary board.

Her credentials include: B.S.W., Eastern Washington University, Cheney, WA.; M. Div., Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, Berkeley, CA.; D. Min., United Seminary, New Brighton, MN.

A published writer, Dr. Hanson and her husband of 31 years, Jan, have one daughter and two granddaughters. Her husband was also a Lutheran minister and is the co-director of a long term residential treatment village for poor women and their babies.

As an active Unitarian Universalist working toward the goal of becoming a Fellowshiped UU Minister, Dr. Hanson serves as the Chair of the Social Justice Committee for the Florida District Unitarian Universalist Association. She also



Dr. Grace Hanson

serves as the Regional Coordinator for the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee.

Philosophically, Dr. Hanson walks and teaches a path entitled *The Labyrinth Spiral* — getting access to the internal patterning of one's life so that emotional blocks can be removed, giving flow into a greater consciousness. These inner workings are then introduced into the external, natural, rhythms of creation so that one learns to dance more joyfully with oneself and all else. She has also been much enriched by the spiritual teachings of the Native American people, and has incorporated these ways into her own life.

Her current interests include finding avenues for our children to learn how to learn, allowing their natural curiosity to flower and bless us all, and how to more deeply live in harmony with the diversity of our world — to be fed by, rather than threatened by, its complexity.

"I am energized by ideas," says Dr. Hanson. "I see the church as an arena where resources are gathered and its members can come and use them to feed and manifest their specific callings in life. Each person is honored as they adventure toward the knowing of their own truth."

The Rev. Barbara Dunbar Morgan

Community UU Church of Daytona Beach welcomed their minister, the Rev. Barbara Dunbar Morgan on February 1, 1998. In less than a year and a half since its origin and eight months after it began regularly scheduled Sunday worship services, Community UU Church, with a membership of 76, has a full time minister. On December 7, 1997, the congregation voted overwhelmingly to approve Reverend Morgan's appointment to serve for five years as CUUC's New Congregation Minister.

She spent five days in early December meeting members of the church, meeting with committees and the board, and preaching at a Sunday service.

She has just completed seven years as parish minister at the Northlake UU Church in Kirkland, Washington. She was fellowshiped with the UUA in 1990 and was ordained in 1991.

Reverend Morgan has a Bachelor of Arts from Eastern Washington University; a Master of Public Administration from Washington University; and a Master



Rev. Barbara Morgan

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From Your District President: Traveling Around the District

In late November I spoke at the Friendship Fellowship in Pineda. Lucille and I had the good fortune to be the home hospitality guests of Harold and Margaret Jesslo—two delightful longtime UU's, whom we had not previously met. Our conversation covered history of the Florida District, Humanist/Christian issues and the importance of the Democratic Process to Unitarian Universalism. We agreed that it is important to learn that tolerance and diversity incorporate the concepts of avoiding the making of enemies and learning to agree to disagree without being disagreeable. It was a most stimulating and enjoyable stay.

I attended the Memorial Service celebrating the life of Bob Chamberlain who had been President of the Manatee Fellowship in Bradenton and an At-large Member of the Florida District Board. All of Bob's children, his significant other Phyllis Read and many others spoke of Bob. They made it abundantly clear that he was immensely generous with his time, energy and resources and that he was truly a man of great character. He will be sorely missed and serves for me as a reminder of how truly extraordinary so many of our "ordinary" UU members are.

What a thrill to see Dorothy Optekar at the Installation Service of the Rev. Harris Riordan the exciting new minister at Boca Raton. I met the Optekars in Pittsburgh in the early 1960s soon after I joined the UU church. I considered Ed as a mentor both in Unitarian Universalism and in the business world. It is always a joy to run into old acquaintances and friends at District and other UU functions.

— ED PORTEUS



The Incredible Light Shining Through

A rather exciting rebirth is taking place at a building constructed to resemble a tent, and at the wrong time of the year. Rebirth is reserved for April, with the focus on birth around December, so what is causing this unseasonable occurrence?

Those of us of long commitment to our society ponder the happenings, and can not blame it on el Nino, or other world events, but to the reemergence and re-dedication of people to families. Take yesterday, for example, when 28 people became members of the Unitarian Universalist Society, also known as the First Unitarian Church of South Miami.

They spoke about their search with emotion. They had found their home. A new member spoke of being a "closet Unitarian." Another said, when asked about why she chose to be a UU, "I don't know what I get out of it, but, I like it." Another said that finding UU was like holding a baby—pettiness seemed to fall away. And, still another, "Now, that I have it, I know what I was missing." But, the funniest was when someone called it "One Stop Shopping." Over and over new members talked about looking for a church for their children, and finding their own.

The President, Alice Lingswiler addressed them. "Don't throw out your old beliefs, we welcome your challenges, your questions, continue your exploration with us." Over and over the new members talked about the feeling of warmth and family, and a sense of coming home.

Are we unique? No, various articles

have been written about the recurrence of religion in peoples lives." And so, the new members spoke up. One remembered being at the unique structure with windows that allow the outside light to come in, as a child. Another remembered marching "for choice." Still, another remembered being part of a musical program. Many Social Actions have originated in this church. And under the able direction of Gertrude Pearl, still do.

There is a heightened sense of purpose in the membership. After the Hurricane so many of the members were lost to other parts of Florida, and other states. Yet, the ones who stayed behind worked hard and the results are being reaped; a restored sanctuary which doubles as an art gallery; an ever growing church school under the able direction of a trained Religious Education Leader, Sue Baskin; a curriculum which includes world religion; a church school where children become members at their own request; restored grounds under the able leadership of an environmental "cop," Gwaldys Scott; and a beautiful new kitchen, the pride of the community, spearheaded by Beth Worsdale. This is a place where the individual is respected, and members want to stay after service, in the relaxed, welcoming ambiance. Here truly is a family that has come home.

— SELVA JOSEPH

Builders Build, Members Pay

Work on renovated Religious Education and Administrative facilities, as well as the building of a new social hall, now nears completion at the First Unitarian Church of Palm Beach County. A successful capital campaign now in progress will secure the necessary funds for building and furnishings.

MINISTERIAL MILESTONES (continued)

of Divinity from Northwest Theological Union in Seattle, Washington. She was a Student Minister of the Edmonds UU Church in Washington, a Summer Minister at the Rockford Illinois UU Church and a Ministerial Intern at Community Church, New York, NY.

Her experience before entering the ministry includes serving as manager of the Spokane and Stockton Symphony Orchestras in Washington. She was a Program Coordinator for the King Country arts Commission in Seattle, WA, and a consultant for various arts groups in Seattle. She served as Business Manager for Adoption Services of the Word Association of Children and Parents.

—SUBMITTED BY GRETCHEN BREMER-HOSKEN

Great Training Available for Your Religious Education Leaders!

The Florida District RE Committee will present a UUA Renaissance Module on **UU History**, March 6-8, 1998, from 6:00 p.m. Friday through 2:00 p.m. Sunday, to be held at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship in Lakeland. While the program is open to all who are interested, the UUA strongly encourages people working in religious education to participate in the Renaissance Program. (Eight modules of training available.) Registration forms are available in the District packets, or call Diane Baum at (941) 686-8820 for more information. Deadline for registration is February 20th.

The **SUNSHINE** is a publication of the Florida District Unitarian Universalist Association
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Conference Calls for Children

Promise the Children, a project of Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC), is sponsoring a National Advocacy Conference Call series. This call may be of interest to all of you who are wish to promote justice and work on human rights issues here in the United States.

The National Advocacy Conference Call series is one way to help improve the lives of low income children and their families. On the calls, we discuss legislative advocacy issues that originate at the Federal level of government. We then work on a legislative advocacy strategy for supporting or changing the particular legislation.

Throughout 1997 and continuing into 1998, we have been working on ways to ameliorate the problems created by recent changes in federal welfare law. We want changes in the welfare system but we want them to be humane and to lead to job training, living wage jobs, safe and affordable child care, affordable health care, and basic nutrition to help kids become healthy adults.

Conference call participation is an interactive experience where we exchange information. We are bipartisan and we welcome differing opinions. Participants from across the country learn and exchange ideas on many exciting issues. At the present time, there are participants in Florida who hail from Auburndale, Clearwater, and Lakeland.

The calls are moderated by National Advocacy Coordinator, Kim McDonald and feature a special Washington DC report by the Program Associate for Washington, DC, Ted Steege. To join, please contact Kim McDonald at 1-800-388-3920, ext. 217 prior to your first conference call.

Calls have taken place on January 5, 26 and on February 2. The next scheduled date is February 23. All calls are scheduled for 8:00 p.m. eastern time, and last 30 minutes. The calls are free to members of the UUSC and the first call is free even if you are not a member. There is no specific time commitment beyond the 30 minute call. We can use your participation whether you have ten minutes or ten hours to help improve the lives of children and their families. Please join us on the calls—we need you!

—KIM McDONALD, UUSC

Calling for news and information of interest and value to all members of the churches and fellowships in the Florida District Unitarian Universalist Association!

Next Sunshine Deadline: April 22, 1998

FLORIDA DISTRICT CALENDAR • 1998-1999

The information in this calendar is thought to be correct as of 2/1/98. Please contact the District Office (407) 894-2119 to confirm, add or change the information contained in this calendar.

February	15	Interfaith Alliance of N. Central Florida Ocala <i>Denny Davidoff, UUA Moderator and President of The Interfaith Alliance Foundation, guest speaker</i>
	21	SW Cluster Meeting Sarasota <i>"Growing Up Fundamentalist and Gay" with Marc Adams</i>
	21	S ³ (Super Saturday Seminar) Clearwater
	28	S ³ (Super Saturday Seminar) Valdosta
March	1	Awards Nominations Deadline
	6-8	Renaissance Module: <i>"UU History"</i> Lakeland
	13-15	Anti-Racism Workshop Community (Daytona) <i>"Creating a Jubilee World"</i>
	14	District Board Meeting St. Petersburg
	20-22	All Age Con Ft. Myers
	20-22	Choir Formation Workshop Melbourne
	21	Northeast Cluster Meeting Gainesville <i>"Unitarian Universalism: Yesterday-Today-Tomorrow"</i>
	28	Social Justice Conference TBD
April	17-18	District Annual Meeting Gainesville <i>"Programming for the 21st Century"</i>
		Youth Caucus Gainesville
	22	Submission Deadline: Sunshine Newsletter — Spring 1998 Issue
May	8-10	W ³ (Worthy Weekend Workshop) St. Petersburg <i>Canvass Leaders' Team Training</i> <i>Jerry King, Canvass Consultant, UUA facilitator</i>
	15-17	Women and Religion Retreat UU in the Pines <i>"Silence and Sharing in Community: A Sabbath Retreat"</i>
	16-17	New DRE Forum Boca Raton
	29-31	All Age Con St. Petersburg
June	5-6	F ³ (Fabulous Full-day Forum) TBD <i>New Presidents' Forum</i>
	25-30	UUA General Assembly Rochester, NY



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