



# LREDA Newsletter

## Quickening The Spirit

*Reflections from our LREDA President, Susan Archer*

Each time I hear Rev. Bill Sinkford speak, I am reminded of the beauty and grace of Unitarian Universalism and the transforming message our Faith has to offer. When he spoke at Fall Conference of his recent visit to our nation's capital, where he and other faith leaders delivered thousands of petitions calling for an end to the war in Iraq, I was once again connected to the values we UU's hold dear, such as creating a peaceful, fair, and free world. He illustrated this point further by calling for increased visibility of Unitarian Universalism in the public eye and for Unitarian Universalists to hold up their values and beliefs in the public forum. He affirmed the life-saving message of Unitarian Universalism and expressed concern that not many people are hearing our message; we are keeping ourselves a well-guarded secret.

In response to this need, he said, the UUA has launched a national advertising campaign. The program includes a full-page ad in *Time Magazine* that features the provocative tag-line "Is God keeping you from going to church?" This eye-catcher is just the beginning of an effort to bring people into conversation about faith, religion, and Unitarian Universalism. In addition, from the *Time Magazine* website, readers are able to link to a forum that will discuss topics pertaining to spiritual and religious life in the United States. Rev. Sinkford also presented a ten minute video

produced by the UUA, "Voices of a Liberal Faith," that introduces us to newcomers. Copies of this DVD have been mailed to each congregation and it is also online. There are many ways that the video can be used, both at the congregational and the denominational level. Its purpose is to weave a new story of our Faith: a story that draws together the threads of our rich and noble history and our hopes for what our future can be. Its most exciting and striking feature was the prominence of Religious Education; in the video, the RE ministry is lifted up, honored, and given a central place at the table of Unitarian Universalism.

Those of us at the LREDA Fall Conference really appreciated the chance to listen to and dialog with Rev. Sinkford. Our time with him was especially precious because he went so far out of his way to be with us and to share his vision of the future of Unitarian Universalism. I look forward to seeing these efforts come to fruition as our hearts, faith, and churches begin to grow!

*Susan*

Inside this issue:	
Fall Con Reflections	2-3
Treasurer News	3
GA Preview '08	3
Northern Notes	4
Chapter Chats	4-5
Nominations Are Open	5
Milestones	6



## Two First Impressions of Fall Conference

Sonja Lamicla, DRE

First Unitarian Universalist Society of Syracuse, NY

This October I was fortunate enough to receive a scholarship to attend the LREDA Fall Conference in San Antonio, TX. As a new DRE and first time attendee, I can't begin to describe how inspiring this was for me. While I could tell you all about the wonderful sessions, with performers like Meg Barnhouse; participatory, energizing music led by Melody Feather; and speakers like UUA President Bill Sinkford, UUA Moderator Gini Courter and Odyssey presenter Rev. Makanah Morriss, what really struck me was the implicit curriculum that was the conference itself.

An integral part of the conference was an "Integrity Team" that addressed how we behaved vs. our expressed values. There were Process Observation Forms that could be filled out, allowing folks an appropriate way to raise concerns when they felt something was done that was not consistent with our philosophy. These were dealt with promptly in non-escalating ways to quickly restore right relationships. Thus at this conference, I neither saw nor heard oppressive behavior toward anyone. When the wheel chair accessible spaces were covered with chairs, someone quickly addressed the issue so that everyone had a choice where to sit.

I was struck by the total lack of ego-driven agendas, and even in a room full of some of the most accomplished Religious Educators of our Era, the newest members were treated as every bit as valuable as those who had been pioneers in the movement toward professional recognition for Religious Educators.

There were people of all races, classes, congregation sizes, every conceivable gender orientation, and people from volunteer lay leaders to full time MREs and everyone treated each other as peers. I have never before been in an environment so free of prejudice or hierarchy. The most inspiring thing was to see that it was truly possible to interact in such life affirming ways.

When we teach RE, so much of what we teach is in how we teach. Children may not remember the exact words we use, but they will remember how they feel here. They will become the people they become largely based on the heroes they hold up. Odds are that those heroes will be the ordinary folks who touch their lives even more than the "famous UU's" we inform them of in our curricula. I have challenged my congregation to bring this kind of im-

PLICIT curriculum alive in our church each Sunday as we interact with each other in Worth and Dignity Affirming Ways. Our little ones are watching and we all own a little piece of the magic.

Beth Clifton, DRE

Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Glen Allen, VA

I must say it was truly wonderful to attend GA in June, but many of my colleagues speak so highly of the LREDA Conference, since it speaks directly to what we do in religious education and faith development (whereas GA is the much "bigger picture"). I was very excited to meet and learn with many other DREs and share ideas. Being with like-minded folks and generating ideas in order to not re-create the wheel is priceless. The conference itself had an emphasis on the upcoming *Tapestry of Faith* curriculum that has been in the works by the UUA's Lifespan Faith Development staff.

I was among the 200-some attendees, 60 of whom were first-timers. It was not overwhelming people-wise. The conference started with a great orientation for those who were new. There was a creative ice-breaker in which we met each other without talking....little did I know I agreed to write this article during that process! Our name-tags had little heart stickers on them so we could be identified and greeted by others. We were the "heart throbs." There was such "care and feeding" of the LREDA members. The accommodations were wonderful, even with the few quirks of the vending machine sometimes not accepting dollar bills and one elevator being down for repair. Having scheduled time to "take care of you" was also a really nice touch. As is my October birthday month practice, I scheduled a massage in the hotel's *fantastic* spa.

My star-struck feature kicked in when getting to meet authors I've read, know of, and admire, like Betty Jo Middleton, Gaia Brown, Cindy Leitner, Gail Forsyth-Vail, and Makanah Morriss to name a few. Having Bill Sinkford there to communicate the bigger picture of the UUA National Ad Campaign, Gini Courter's involvement, and the UUA staff involvement affirmed a partnership and a level of respect for the work that we do. There was impressive diversity in the mixture of meetings from breakout groups to meeting all together to separate workshops and small group ministry----what a great idea.

A last thought on the actual "feeding". I heard many people say that this was the best food we've ever had at one of

## Two First Impressions of Fall Conference (con't)

these conferences. I found it surprising how much food was wasted. For a community of such care takers of the earth, I was disappointed in my colleagues bringing multiple plates to the table only to realize that their eyes were bigger than their stomachs and plates would be taken away by servers untouched.

I believe folks left feeling renewed and rejuvenated. Of

course, the atmosphere must always be different obviously with the different locations; one thing certainly remains the same---the attitudes, professionalism, and friendliness. Next year's conference plan is in place....October 24 - 27 in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Make plans now, apply for a scholarship, it's worth it!

## News from the Treasurer

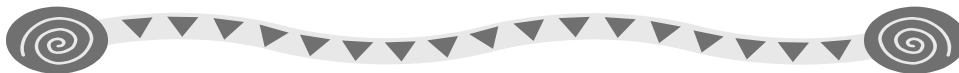
*Kathy Silver, DRE*

*New Hope Congregation, Dexter, MI and Treasurer of LREDA*

At the LREDA Fall Conference Bookstore this year we had net record sales of over \$10,000. Many thanks go to Kevin Drewery for his great preparation and for the many hours of work he put into making the bookstore a wonderful service and benefit for all of our conference attendees. Kudos to Kevin!!! [Kevin is looking for someone to train at next fall's conference, which will be the last time he will be doing the bookstore for us. Talk to him if you want to help keep this great tradition going! [DFD@uuclv.org](mailto:DFD@uuclv.org) - Ed.]

Also at Fall Conference our LREDA members celebrated Association Sunday by donating \$3369 to the UUA in a special collection. Hurray for us!

In an attempt to make the LREDA booth at General Assembly more efficient and professional, we are going to invite our chapters to take some responsibility in helping to sign up people to work at the booth. The purpose of the booth is to welcome newcomers to the field of religious education and to membership in LREDA, and also to educate members of congregations about the needs of their professional religious educators. In order for us to be successful, we need to be sure that there are LREDA members at the booth for folks to speak with. The booth represents us all to the GA community and I know we can work together to give religious educators a greater presence.



## What Awaits You at General Assembly '08

*Cindy Leitner, LREDA At Large-- GA*

LREDA programming for Ft. Lauderdale next summer promises to be exciting, deep, and inspirational for religious educators. The theme revolves around the development of spirituality through the natural world. Our Key-note speaker for Professional Day (Wednesday, June 25) is **Joseph Cornell**, internationally acclaimed naturalist and author of such books as *Sharing Nature with Children* and *Listening to Nature*. His topic is "Finding the Divine in Nature." He will also do a smaller experiential workshop to share his inspiring nature activities and explain the use of "flow learning" in exploring and reflecting on nature. As usual, there will be additional workshop choices.

The Sophia Lyon Fahs lecture will be presented by scholar Bob Richardson. He will explore how transcendentalism influenced Sophia Fahs and how it relates to our lifespan learning programs today.

The LREDA workshop at GA is entitled: "Earth Beat: The Presence of Nature in the Growth of Faith." And, of course, there will be the LREDA luncheon and meeting as well as the LREDA Booth for making connections and sharing ideas.

*Please join us in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, June 25-29!*

## Northern Notes

*Sylvia Bass-West, Director of Lifespan Learning,  
Canadian Unitarian Council*

We are fortunate to welcome **Laura McNaughton** as CUC's Director of Regional Services, West as of August 1, 2007. Laura is a former Religious Education Professional in Canada and USA.

**Rev. Christine Hillman** and **Lynn Sabourin** attended the LREDA Mentor Training prior to fall conference as another step toward Canadian LREDA members receiving portfolio support once in the UUA's RE Credentialing Program. Negotiations continue regarding fees and the Ministry and Professional Leadership office services.

The theme the Canadian Unitarian Council Annual Conference and Meeting, May 16-19, 2008 in Ottawa is "The Web Of Life, In Our Hands"



## Chapter Chats

*Patti Withers, DRE, First UU Church, Houston, TX, and LREDA Board for Professional Concerns*

**Central Midwest District:** The CMwD LREDA Chapter's annual Fall Conference has the topic "Spiritual Growth Across the Ages". Chapter members will present workshops on faith development, spiritual practice and children's worship, Spirit Play and adapting curriculum. Those who attended the Continental Fall Conference will give a presentation on the Tapestry of Faith curriculum. Opportunities abound for group worship, good conversation, personal spiritual practice, and sharing of "best practice."

This event has been happening for about ten years with new DRE's encouraged to attend and join LREDA if they have not done so yet. Attendance is supported by the

The Conference Planning Committee and CUC staff would like to invite our colleagues from UUA Districts to join us in Ottawa! Registration and program details will be on line early in the new year, at [www.cuc.ca/conference/2008](http://www.cuc.ca/conference/2008)

Our multigenerational weekend offers a diversity of concurrent sessions 1 1/2 hours long including:

- Social Responsibility (e.g. environment, peace, justice, globalization)
- Personal Practices (music, movement, meditation)
- Our Unitarian and Universalist faith
- Congregational Leadership (e.g. financial, growth, organizational).
- Lifespan Learning
- Youth and Young Adult Ministry
- International and Interfaith relations

For the first time ever, LREDA will be offering a workshop at our CUC ACM! Come be in dialogue with Rev. Ginger Luke about how WE can create advocacy and support processes for religious educators in Canada. Nothing helps us not only survive but thrive more than direct collegial connections.

availability of scholarship money for those with little or no professional expense funds.

**Pacific Southwest District:** The Chapter gathered for Professional Days at the PSW District Assembly last April. Stephanie Ludwig, DRE at the UU Fellowship of Flagstaff, Arizona, led them through self-care and healing exercises. They also met with William J. Doherty concerning his work with family ministry in the UUA.

The Chapter is working with the PSWD UUMA chapter to plan their annual retreat in January. They gather as one group for four days of programming or training coordinated by joint planning groups.

The Arizona/Las Vegas cluster of UU congregations has cluster meetings three times a year where *all* the

## Chapter Chats (con't)

church professionals (ministers, DREs, Administrators, Music Directors, and Volunteer Coordinators) gather as a large group for worship and lunch and then break into professional groups for deeper sharing and planning purposes.

**Southeast Chapter:** The Southeast Chapter reformed while at LREDA Fall Conference. Yea, Southeast!

**Chapter Chairs:** Several Chapter Chairs met over breakfast during Fall Conference to get to know one another and to share ideas and experiences.

**Southwest District Chapter:** They were so pleased to have this year's annual fall conference in San Anto-

nio! Having the conference "local" meant that lots of members were able to attend. They took this opportunity to dream some together about what an active and organized LREDA chapter in their large district might look like, and then they took some steps to get there. Four people who have offered to help lead these efforts are: Michelle Bradley of First UU in Springfield, Missouri; Amanda Robinson of Live Oak UU in Austin, TX; Cindy Sakaan of The Church of the River, Memphis, TN; and Natalie Wolc of Horizon UU, Carrollton, TX. They hope to get more information out to LREDA members in their district soon about upcoming plans and projects. Their next district-wide meeting will be at the February RE Conference in Argyle, TX--plan to attend!



## Nominations Are Open

*Thomas Pistole, DRE, Durham, NH and Chair of the LREDA Nominating Committee*

At our GA business meeting in June, 2008, LREDA members will be asked to elect two individuals to positions on the Board and one to the Nominating Committee. We are currently soliciting recommendations for these positions. The selection process will begin in mid-December with a goal of presenting a proposed slate to the LREDA Board in February. We invite you to nominate individuals for these positions. Self-nominations are welcomed and encouraged.

**Treasurer.** This individual maintains financial records for LREDA including major committees of LREDA and grants committees. The treasurer develops the budget for LREDA and provides reports to the membership. This person coordinates with chairs of Fall Conference and the GA Planning committees and with the LREDA Administrator. Kathy Silver, our current Treasurer, can provide additional information about this position. This is a three-year position.

**Member Support—Good Offices, Good Officers Training, Long Range Planning.** This is a newly configured position, one of two Board positions with member support as its major

focus. This person coordinates and oversees the Good Offices program, facilitates the Board's participation in long-range vision and planning, and works in partnership with the other Member Support Board member. Ginger Luke currently holds this position. It is a three-year position.

**Nominating Committee.** This three-person committee serves as a resource to the Board. Its primary role is to recommend individuals to fill positions on the Board and on standing committees. This is a three-year position.

Please send your recommendations, along with a brief statement of why you feel this person is a strong candidate, to Thomas Pistole of the Nominating Committee. Also, please indicate for which position you are making your recommendation. For more information about the nomination process feel free to contact any committee member. Thank you!

The 2007/08 LREDA Nominating Committee  
Susan Freudenthal (Susan@freudenthal.net)  
Thomas Pistole (tgp22@comcast.net)  
Natalie Fenimore (DRE@UUCF.org)



## ~LREDA Milestones~

### Renaissance Recognition:

*Lucy Carney*, DRE, Olmsted UU Congregation, North Olmsted, OH

*Patsy Hatch-Reinertson*, DRE, First Parish of Canton, MA

*Kym Johnson*, DRE, First Parish in Plymouth, MA

*Angela Lawrence*, First UU Church, Richmond, VA

*Denise Noble*, DRE, First Parish of Groton, MA

*Marge Thomas*, DRE, UU Fellowship of Wayne Co., Wooster, OH

*Jansen Wendell*, DCRE, First Unitarian Church, Philadelphia, PA

*Correna M. Ness*, DRE, UU Congregation of York, PA

*Kate Zabertini*, DRE, First UU Church, Rochester, MN

*Carol Larson*, DRE, First Parish of Portland, ME

*Louise Marcoux*, DRE, Unitarian Church of Sharon, MA

*Nathan Ryan*, RE Administrator, The First Unitarian Church of Dallas

*Katherine Van Leuwen*, Co-DRE, Unitarian Universalists of San Mateo, CA

### Credentialed:

*Jean Wiant*, CRE, DLRE, UU Fellowship of Centre County, State College, PA

*Cathy Cartwright*, CRE, DRE, First Unitarian Church of Portland, OR

### Degrees Received:

*Irene Praeger*, DRE, First Parish in Needham, MA received her Masters in Religious Education from the Institute of Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry at Boston College

### New Positions:

*Betty Skwarek*, Acting DRE, First UU Society of San Francisco, formerly at First UU Church of Austin, TX

*Andrea Lerner*, Acting DE, New York Metro District, formerly PC of New York Metro District

*Benette Sherman*, CRE, PC of NH/VT and Northeast Districts (soon to be Northern New England District), formerly DRE in Ames, IA

*Karen McCarthy*, DRE, UU Congregation of Grand Traverse, Traverse City, MI

*Rosie Rimrodt*, Ass't Minister for Lifespan Religious Education, UU Church of Bloomington, IL

*Eva Ceskava*, Interim MRE, UU Church of Palo Alto, CA, formerly MRE at the First Unitarian Church of Albuquerque, NM

*Nathan Ryan*, RE Administrator, The First Unitarian Church of Dallas, TX, formerly DRE, Live Oak UU Church, Cedar Park, TX

*Daylene Marshall*, DRE, First Unitarian Church of Albuquerque, NM

### Retired:

*Carol Ann Taylor*, MRE, as JPD Director of Lifespan Faith Development (and many years of service prior to that!)

### Sabbaticals:

*Fran Ateto*, DRE, UU Church of Annapolis, MD February-May, 2008

### The Liberal Religious Educators Association

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We're on the Web  
[www25.uua.org/LREDA/](http://www25.uua.org/LREDA/)

### About LREDA...

LREDA is an anti-racist, welcoming, professional organization open to liberal religious educators and those supportive of religious education. LREDA promotes the religious growth and learning of people of all ages and advocates for and supports religious educators and the field of liberal religious education. LREDA does this by providing continuous education, networking and sharing resources, advocating for professional recognition, and providing assistance and encouragement for religious educators. We offer a common forum where we can learn from and share with one another the great variety of skills and depth of knowledge which we, together, possess.

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Please send your original submissions, letters, articles, and book, tape, DVD and video reviews to Gaia Brown, copy editor, at [gaiabrown@aol.com](mailto:gaiabrown@aol.com)