



LREDA Newsletter

Moving Forward

Reflections from our LREDA President, Susan Archer

Greetings to you all! It is a busy time! Many projects are in the works for LREDA and I want to bring you up to date on them.

In February the LREDA Board met in Bethesda, MD at the home of Ginger Luke. The location of the meeting was selected to minimize travel and housing costs and we are very grateful to Ginger and her husband, Don, for hosting us.

Our midwinter board meeting is the one in which we can consider more fully the bigger issues that concern our professional life. We talked about the concerns, inspirations and ideas you have been sharing with us and many of the ongoing initiatives we have committed to. I lift up several of them below.

LREDA Documents: We took your input about both our *By-Laws* and *Guidelines* and made a conceptual sweep of both documents. We sent them to board subcommittees for first drafts, will review drafts at our June meeting, and will bring those revisions for your focus group consideration at our Fall Conference. Issues were wide-ranging and related to the life membership category, compensation, appropriate hours/units, and accountability, among many others. We noted that “language teaches” and committed to using that lens in our detailed review for the next draft. We

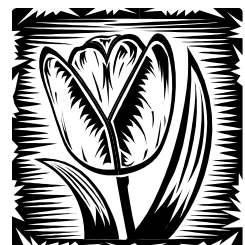
expect to vote on *By-Laws* changes at our Annual Meeting at GA 2008 and *Guidelines* at Fall Conference 2008. We know it is frustrating to have to wait for possible changes around issues you have identified as important, but, as you know, these are our guiding documents and we want to do this well.

Other Member Issues: Apart from document changes, there are several other member concerns which the board has noted for our ongoing attention. I raise two of these here:

* We have a deep concern about the relationship of interim parish ministers and religious educators. Issues around this have been persistent for many years. As a professional organization we also must remain persistent and insistent in efforts to improve these situations. The Board is and will continue to be in conversation about this with the UUA and others.

* Governance issues likewise continue to be of huge concern for many. The LREDA best practices document on this issue will be reviewed in draft form by the board and other LREDA members in time for our June meeting, reviewed one last time at a member focus group at Fall Conference, and then published.

Inside this issue:	
Moving Forward	1-2
25 Years	2
Scholarship News	3
Good Offices Trainings	3
Prayer Book Plea	3
Chapter Chat	4
Summer Opportunities	4
Honoring Sophia Fahs	4
Milestones	4



President's Column, continued

Relationships with Colleagues:

* LREDA hopes to join with UUMA colleagues to offer at shared colleague chapter meetings a workshop or retreat on professional relationships, with joint continental leadership. We are just beginning to work on this. We also will be in continued conversation with the UUMA Board on issues of mutual concern.

* We continue to be an active presence at the Professional Leadership Coordinating Council. The Board is committed to trying to strengthen colleague relationships wherever they exist. The challenges continue as do the potential opportunities. We note with gratitude the efforts at professional organization cooperation around health insurance, disaster (Katrina) relief, last year's shared GA professional track programming, and look forward to new initiatives when we meet in late March.

* Finally, we hope you will plan to come to the LREDA-sponsored workshop/reception for teams of professionals, led by Fahs Lecturer, Bill Doherty, on "Faith Development in a Too Much of Everything World." We hope this experience will not only help us address this huge issue, but will also give us a good venue for further enhancing the team ministry approach to congregational life. This effort has been underwritten by a generous grant from the 21st Century Fund of LREDA.

Canadian concerns: As always, the Board lifts up Canadian issues at each of our meetings. We are aware that since the separation of the CUC and UUA we must be especially intentional about our responsibility as a continental, not national, professional organization. We invite ideas, vision, and concerns from both sides of the border.

RE Education Futures Committee: The Board feels strongly that LREDA needs to provide more leadership around RE education of religious professionals in the

years and even decades to come. Issues of educational opportunities after Renaissance modules and apart from the Credentialing process, as well as increased support and direction for RE courses in seminaries for all religious professionals, are part of the charge the Board will be giving to this new committee. We are currently recruiting committee members. We look forward to launching this committee by our June membership meeting.

Specialized RE Ministries: The Board affirms support for the diversity of professional religious educators who minister at all stages of life and in many settings. At this meeting we explored in particular, ways to support professional youth ministry staff, in conversation with LREDA members Jan Taddeo and Andrew Mertz.

These are highlights of some of the issues, strategies and projects considered at this round of meetings. The Board's next face-to-face meeting will be in June in Portland. In addition to the follow-up from the February meeting and our own portfolio work, we will be focused on our committees and representatives, their work to date and plans for the future. As always, your input as individual members and chapters is always welcome whether or not it is time for a regularly scheduled board meeting!

Finally, we have a wonderful set of experiences planned for Professional Day and GA in Portland in June. See the information in your packet or on the web! Fall Conference likewise promises a fine program and many excellent opportunities for professional growth. Please note that we have scholarship assistance this year for both! I hope many of you will attend and be strengthened and renewed. Together we can stand strong!



25 YEARS?

Will you or someone you know have completed 25 years as a religious education professional by the end of June, 2007? We would like to honor you by speaking your name at our Professional Day worship service in Portland. We would also like to know about those who have completed MORE than 25 years and were not included in last year's service. Please let us know, c/o Susan Archer; sarcher@cedarlane.org. Thanks!

News About Scholarships *Kathy Silver, LREDA Treasurer*

2006 was a great year to receive a LREDA scholarship. We had about half the number of usual applicants and about twice the amount of money donated. I'm hoping that these increased donations are a growing trend on the part of our generous LREDA members. Those of us with adequate professional expenses, who are willing to share our riches with some of our less well-funded colleagues, reap the benefits at Fall Conference. In Orlando, we welcomed a wide diversity of religious educators from very large to very small churches scattered all over the North American continent.

LREDA scholarships help people who are new to the field and new to Fall Conference. They help people who have special needs and people who are very special. LREDA scholarships remind us of what we can do when lot of us make a little extra effort. So in the interests of continuing and furthering our scholarship tradition, the board of

LREDA would like to try to expand the scholarship program to General Assembly LREDA Professional Day.

If you all continue your habit of giving generously to the scholarship fund, then we can include a scholarship application with our GA materials and we'll see what happens. Hopefully with the money left over from Fall Conference added to the new funds sent in now, we can help some more religious educators get to LREDA Professional Day.

The Board also wants to remind everyone that dues waivers can be requested from the board when a member has financial hardship. If you know of a new religious educator, we hope that you'll take some time to tell them about the benefits of our professional organization and encourage them to join LREDA at the appropriate level. Together we can accomplish great things!!

Two Good Offices Training in 2007

Ginger Luke, MRE, River Road Unitarian Church, Bethesda, MD and LREDA Board for Professional Concerns

LREDA will be offering two trainings for Good Officers this year. One will take place during "Professional Days" at General Assembly on June 19th in Portland, Oregon. The other will take place just before the LREDA Fall Conference on October 12th in San Antonio, Texas.

Good Officers participating in the June 19th training will have their Professional Day registration paid (because the training takes up most of the professional day time) and will receive a \$100 honorarium to pay for the extra night of housing or other expenses involved.

Good Officers participating in the October 12th training will receive a \$100 honorarium to help defray expenses for

coming in early.

LREDA is adding this second training because we realize that more LREDA members attend the annual Fall Conference than attend the GA Professional Days and because we realize that travel expenses may often determine which of these two events a religious educator may be able to attend. We feel there is a need for more trained Good Officers and want to make it easier for that to come about. We are also beginning conversation about offering a training for Canadian Good Officers.

If you have questions, please contact Rev. Ginger Luke (gluke@rruc.org or 301-229-0400 ex 105).

A Plea for Prayers

Rev. Annie Foerster, author of *For Praying Out Loud: Interfaith Prayers For Public Occasions*, has asked for our help. She writes:

Skinner House Books has invited me to write a book of prayers for children. I've decided it should be more than a collection of prayers; a kind of how-to, why-to book. It will be interactive; that is, the readers will be encouraged to create their own prayers.

The children on my editorial panel are really getting into it. Some of the kids and their families have said they had already tried to write prayers for their own use. It occurred to me to open the book up to others' prayers, not just my own.

So, I'm soliciting prayers used in class rooms, at home with families or wherever you might find them; for and about children, but not necessary written just by children. Everyone whose prayers are included in the book will receive a free copy and attribution for their submission in the book. Feel free to advertise this broadly in your congregations.

My deadline is mid-April. Send your prayers and comments to me, Annie Foerster, at annicone@fuse.net, or by snail mail to Rev. Annie Foerster, 1511 Lakeland Ave., Cincinnati, OH 45237. (Manuscripts cannot be returned.) Many thanks.

Chapter Chats *Patti Withers, DRE, First UU Church, Houston, TX, LREDA Board for DRE Member Concerns*

The Ohio Meadville Chapter held a highly successful Spiritual and Collegial Retreat on January 12th and 13th at Sandscrest Retreat Center in Wheeling, West Virginia. Highlights of the retreat were a discussion on labyrinths by Vernie Hill with an opportunity to experience a real labyrinth and a presentation on mudras by UU therapist Emily

Williams, who also gave individual massages! Vernie dubbed it "the care and feeding of DREs." Worship was led by Lynn Kerr.

The SouthWest Chapter's Spring Retreat is April 13-14 in the Texas Hill Country at U Bar U, with a program led by the district's Compensation Consultants.



Summer Conference Opportunities

Grab your swimsuit, sunscreen and beach reading!

Ferry Beach, Saco ME, July 7-13. Re-vangelizing: Sharing Our Faith with the Wider World Contact: Jenn McAdoo, dre@uuyarmouth.org

Star Island, New Hampshire, July 14-21. We'll Build a Land: Educating for Social Justice in the Intergenerational Community. <http://www.starreweek.com>

Honoring Ourselves While Honoring Sophia Fahs

Honoring the Work We Do is the working title of a book that will do just that, while raising money for the endowment of the Fahs Lecture at GA. The funds to support this important lecture dwindle each year. What better way to support (both financially and spiritually) the ongoing legacy of Sophia Fahs than to tell our own stories of transformation, hope and (probably more often than we'd like) humility.

This book will be a compilation of *your* writings, *your* experiences, the very essence of what we do as religious educators and why we do it. The submissions will be collected, selected and edited to produce a book that will be available by this GA. All proceeds from the book will go to the Fahs Lecture fund.

If you write a newsletter column, you might already have your submission—an article on the importance of regular attendance in R.E., or about a successful "Mystery Friends" program, or suggestions for family rituals at home. Is there an "aha" moment you would like to share, or the story of the best Christmas pageant ever? Please choose one or a few of the articles/stories that you think best illustrate *the work we do* and send it to Gaia Brown (gaiabrown@aol.com or fax to 775-747-3780) by April 15. In general, submissions should be 300-700 words in length. Email any questions.

Let's honor ourselves and each other as we honor Sophia Fahs!

~LREDA Milestones~

Candidacy Status Granted for UU Ministry: *Tera Little* Director of Lifespan Programs Pacific Southwest District/UUA, in February 2007 by the Western Regional Subcommittee

Fellowshipped: *Ann Willever*, MRE, First Universalist Society in Franklin, MA, final fellowship was granted in September 2006

Anniversaries: *Tracey Robinson-Harris*, MRE Director of Congregational Services, UUA, celebrated her 25th anniversary in the ministry on January 10, 2007

Resignations Announced: *Mindy Whisenhunt*, DRE, First Unitarian Society of Schenectady, effective June 29 after 8 Years. She will pursue a career in public schools.

Degree Received: *Sara LaWall*, Neighborhood Unitarian Universalist Church, Pasadena, CA, an MA in education from Pepperdine University