



SUNSHINE

NEWSLETTER OF THE FLORIDA DISTRICT UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST ASSOCIATION



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1999 Florida District UUA Awards

Due to time constraints at the recent District Annual Assembly, the awards presentation did not receive emphasis that was intended. The District wishes to appropriately honor those UU's who have worked diligently to achieve ideal "UUisms," from newsletters to social justice actions to enduring long-term ongoing "smaller" projects. They deserve applause and accolades. Here are the recipients of this year's District UUA Awards:

Appreciation Award

First Unitarian Church of Miami—Host of the Florida District Annual Meeting, 1999
Doin' a Splendid Job!—**Rev. Mary Chulak Higgins**, District Executive

John DeWolf Hurt Levity Award (presented by Mary Louise DeWolf)

Sarasota/canvass and church history play, "*Annie Get Your Pledge*"
Written and produced by **Sara Anderson**

Excellence in Religious Education

Connie Goodbread, Spirit of Life, Oldsmar—Long term R.E. Professional with a superb overview of Sophia Lyons Fahs incorporated with individual, personal family religious education and guidance.

Nancy Kellman, Orlando—Long term R.E Teacher and committee worker in various capacities.

Unsung Unitarian Universalists

Joyce Mills, Ocala—Numerous offices held at many levels, spearhead and quiet worker wherever; ongoing, ongoing...

Jim Ingram, Valdosta, GA—One of Georgia's leading architects, whose work includes Valdosta's UU church and fundraising for its building!

Youth Recognition Awards

Julianna Rose Dow, Orlando, and Laura Baum, Lakeland, CoChairs—FDYRUU "Transitions" Confab: bringing many new young people into Unitarian Universalist lifespan welcomings...

Clarence R. Skinner Award (promoting social principles of Unitarian Universalism)

Rev. Dr. Wayne Robinson, Ft. Myers—"Sixth Principle: World Peace/Vedran Smailovic, Sarjevo Cellist" (See article on page 3)

Outstanding Newsletters

Non-High Tech: Lecanto—"Nature Coast Unitarian Universalist Newsletter,"
Ray O'Connell, editor

Small/Medium-size: Fort Lauderdale—"The Journey," Ernie ToBordo and
Kate Lampe, Editors

Large Congregations: Orlando—"Oracle," Amy Fairweather, Editor

Lifetime Achievement Award

Bill Ranck, Friendship Fellowship of Pineda—A true UU beacon, everywhere he shines!

Jim Barrett Social Justice Award (presented by Steve Jens-Rochow perennial JBSJA winner)

Connie Holzinger, Ft. Myers—Amazing "right wing/local school extremists' turnaround"
(continued on page 2)

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District Awards *(continued from page 1)*

District Website Excellence *(new award suggested by online wiz, Enid Ulrich)*

www.electro-net.com/~uuct/

Unitarian Universalist Church of Tallahassee, Keith Henry, Webmaster

WOMEN AND RELIGION HONORS:

Eleanor Elizabeth Gordon Award *(For lifetime service of UU ideals)*

Frances Kennicutt, Buckman Bridge UU Society, Jacksonville

Harriette Glasner, First Unitarian/Miami

Suki Nickerson, Alliance UU Society of Miami

Anne Telefsen, Alliance UU Society of Miami

Charlotte Perkins Gillman Honor *(For empowering others)*

Alice Lingswiler, Alliance UU Society of Miami

Linda Mowers, Buckman Bridge UU Society, Jacksonville

Olympia Brown Honor *(For recent and significant non-sexist society promulgation)*

Lucy Swenson Knights, Alliance UU Society of Miami

Our thanks to **Rev. Amy McKenzie-Quinn**, Tallahassee, for serving as Master of Ceremony for the Awards presentation, and congratulations to all who were recognized.

— MAUREA SLEESMAN, DISTRICT AWARDS CHAIR

A Home for Every Unitarian Universalist

- How many people are there in the Florida District who are UU's and don't know it?
- How many don't even know what Unitarian Universalism is?
- How did I find out about UU?
- Why did I join?
- Does our congregation want to grow?
- Do we have enough professional staff and trained lay leaders to grow?
- Do we have enough space and facilities to grow?
- Do we have a plan for growth?
- Do our services provide stimulation and sustenance for those of us on spiritual journeys?
- Have we considered two services during the peak season?
- Can the District Executive or the Extension Committee be of help?
- Do I have a friend that I should invite to go with me next Sunday?
- Do we make visitors truly welcomed?
- Have I introduced myself to a visitor every Sunday this year?
- Do we have "clarity at the gate" so that new members understand the freedoms and responsibilities of being part of this great faith movement?
- Do we walk the talk of "diversity and pluralism"?
- Do we help new members make six new friends in their first six months so they really find a new home?
- Do we practice the UU Principals and Purposes in all of our affairs?
- Do visitors feel as welcomed and accepted if they are a Republican as a Democrat, a Christian as an Humanist, an Afro-American as a Caucasian, or a Gay as a Straight?
- Do we provide a caring, energizing, nurturing community that brings out the best in each of us?
- If unable or unwilling to grow, is our congregation willing to support the establishment of a new congregation nearby?

A home for every Unitarian Universalist is the theme adopted by the Board of Directors for the 1999/2000 church year. The questions listed above are some of those that we hope our congregations and individual members will be asking themselves during this year. District programming and training will be aimed at stimulating discussion of these topics and helping you and me to find some of the answers.

I personally feel a strong sense of duty or responsibility to help make available to others what has been given to me by the Fellowships, Society and Churches of which I have been a member. It's payback time in my book. I hope you will all join in the process.

— ED PORTEUS, PRESIDENT

A Remarkable Centenarian

Betty Kaplowitz Phillipoff is a life model for all of us! As a young woman in the ghetto of New York City, she worked by day and attended New York University Law School by night, graduating in 1925, one of about five women in her class. She worked for the New York State Labor Relations Board. "I felt I was being useful, helpful to people and society."

She later met and married Anatole Phillipoff from a peasant village in Macedonia who matched her intellect and humanity. He spoke six languages and, remarkable, graduated from Harvard University in one and one-half years after immigrating to the United States. They were members of the Ethical Culture Society on Long Island.

In 1981 they retired to Port Charlotte, FL, where they were active in the Charlotte County UU Fellowship. When Anatole died, family access to nursing home records became an issue. Betty spearheaded a drive which changed the Florida law, so families could see these records. The group, *Quality Care Advocates*, resulted from her efforts.

She was chosen the *Quality Super Senior* in 1990, an award by the Florida Council on Aging and Florida Power and Light Company for this accomplishment.

Now living in Bradenton near her family, Betty continues to be an inspiration. The Manatee Fellowship celebrated her 100th birthday last year with a special Sunday service followed by a gala party given by her family. The music was lively and she led the dancing with her son Robert.

This centenarian continues to live in the present. She has just finished editing the manuscript of a biography of her remarkable husband; *Anatole Remembers* is available through the Manatee Fellowship. Despite some physical frailty, she continues to keep church members and speakers on their toes with cogent remarks and questions during discussion. She is a UU gem!

— SHIRLEY CRANDALL

You Are The Sunshines (APF SHINES)



You may remember the old song, "You Are My Sunshine." I don't know the author or to whom (s)he was dedicating this familiar tune but it seems an appropriate manner in which to "sing" APF (Annual Program Fund) appreciation. I have re-written the words and hope you will indulge my attempt to make the tune fit"

"You are the sunshine, the District Sunshine.

*You provide the dollars, for all we do.
You'll never know friends, how much we love you.*

Please continue to show your APF support as caring U.U.s."

Your ever busy APF Florida District chair missed the last two deadlines for the *Sunshine* submission and am most apologetic for this slipup. However, not so for many of our hardworking, generous congregations who have already paid their 1999 APF gifts and are much ahead of the deadline (June 30, 1999). I am pleased to acknowledge these wonderful congregations, realizing that by the time this *Sunshine* reaches you, many of your congregation will have contributed their fair share for this year, in order to be Honor Societies" at this years General Assembly. These folks are our APF honorees so far: **Manatee UU Fellowship, UU Church in the Pines, Community UU Church, UU Fellowship of Key West, UU Congregation of Lake County, UU Congregation of Naples, UU Fellowship of Marion County, Buckman Bridge UU Society, Friendship Fellowship at Pineda, UU Church of Sarasota, UU Church of Tampa, Spirit of Life UU Congregation, and UU Congregation of Venice.**

As you know the UUA is an association of independent congregations. It's primary purpose, according to its by-laws, is "to serve the needs of its member congregations, organize new congregations, extend and strengthen UU institutions and implement its principles." Support of our UUA is vol-

Clarence R. Skinner Award Presented for Memorable Social Justice Sermon

Each year, the **Clarence R. Skinner Award** is presented for the sermon that most effectively represents Unitarian Universalist principles. Though the sermon entries for this award were ALL outstanding, this year's recipient, **Rev. Dr. Wayne A. Robinson** of Fort Myers, was honored for his sermon entitled, "*The Sixth Principle: The Goal of World Community with Peace, Liberty, and Justice for All.*"

The sermon, submitted for consideration by **Jean Bishop Porter** with a heartfelt endorsement, was described as "the most moving sermon and delivery ever experienced." Rev. Dr. Robinson described unusual perspectives of foes, such as those of the Palestinians, instead of the Zionist Jews. He explored the way that a minority voice or action can make "a difference."

The sermon included the moving story of a bombing in Sarajevo, in May of 1992. Innocent, wartorn citizens were standing in line to buy bread at a bakery when a bomb explosion killed 22. The principal cellist of the Sarajevo Opera, Vedran Smailovic, wearing a tuxedo, appeared the day after the bombing, where more people were again waiting to buy bread. He sat on a chair, cello in hand, and played a dulcent Adagio by Albinoni, in memory of those killed. He returned, to repeat that eloquent performance,

untary and although the amount per member is designated by the UUA, it is what is required of us as stewards of a larger and very important movement. Most of us take that very seriously and I am forever grateful.

In the next *Sunshine* I will write some thoughts on what's it worth to be a part of the UUA. In the meantime please know that I am available to talk with your board of trustees and/or congregation about the importance of us sharing the financial commitment together in our wider UU world. My UU friendship and thanks to you all.

— JOAN LUND

FLORIDA DISTRICT CHAIR
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every day for the total of 22—one performance for each victim.

At this point in the sermon, the principal cellist of the Naples Philharmonic Symphony reenacted that performance. After the music, the minister described other Sarajevo bombing memorial tributes and performances, including one, at an international cellist festival in England, by famed cellist Yo Yo Ma. Mr. Ma, who was wearing a tuxedo, later went into the audience to embrace a ragged, disheveled old man. This man in tatters had just escaped from Sarajevo. The audience then realized it was Vedran Smailovic.

The sermon ended with "His cello, it turned out, had held more power than bombs and guns and all the ugly instruments of terror combined. With his music, the cellist of Sarajevo had defied the power of death itself, inspiring many to resist despair by celebrating love, life and that spark of the human spirit which can never be destroyed. Our principles say that we covenant to affirm, *the goal of world community with peace, liberty and justice for all. Blessed be.*"

We honor Rev. Dr. Wayne A. Robinson for his powerful and meaningful sermon.

— MAUREA SLEESMAN,
DISTRICT AWARDS CHAIR

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From Your District Executive: Some Important Thoughts on Parenting and Values

I have walked in a strange and disturbed state since the recent spate of shootings in Colorado and Georgia. Maybe we all feel as though we have heard enough of this to last a lifetime, but for me it brought home a need to dredge my understandings of what we, as religious people stand for, and how we take these disasters and use them to change the world our children are living in.

I watched one of the expanded news programs that was on the evening after the shootings in Littleton and I was able to tap into a sadness so deep and a rage so broad that I have not come back to myself fully since then. I experienced a powerful sadness and hollow feeling inside as I imagined the future that the families of all the students and teachers face. I found a gigantic grief at the thought of the families of the shooters trying to come to grips with the magnitude of the murderous acts of their children and the anguish of the eternal questions that will plague them about their roles in those tragic events.

I was drawn most powerfully back to thoughts of my own parenting, though. I am the mother of a now grown son whose uniqueness and inability to fit into the proscribed model for growing up in the all American way made him the constant object of taunting, ridicule, teasing, and physical assault. I watched his heart open up to others and get bruised more than once. As is true of so many parents, I died small deaths with each attack on this sweet child. The vast love and generosity in his heart was matched only by the depth of feelings he elicited with his sometimes inappropriate behavior. He saw squares where only circles would fit and he would push until he and we were all exhausted trying to change all of us to fit his idea of how the world should be.

I would love to claim that I parented the way I wanted to all the time, but that was not so. I had much to forgive myself for and much to be forgiven. I had much to learn and there was a panic inside me that I

might not learn it fast enough to help my child grow up well or even grow up at all. I was one of the lucky ones to be able to chose to make parenting my son and my daughter my primary job. I worked when they were at school. I also faced the silences at parties when asked what I did for a living and told them I was learning to be the best mother I knew how to be. I was asked on more than one occasion whether I felt my life was passing me by? Did I feel stifled in the use of my talents? Did I resent not becoming a minister when I knew for decades that was what I wanted? From very few quarters did I get support for the decision to stay home with these two children. I remember talking to a parent of one of my son's friends who had left her young teenage child home alone while she went to the beach for the weekend. I asked her what she was thinking to leave this thirteen year old alone and she said she deserved to fulfill herself too and she wasn't willing to wait until he was grown to start.

It isn't all about what we want. The hardest jobs stretch us and call us to use our instinct, training, wits and compassion every day. What more can be said of parenting than it fulfills those criteria. At the end of the day, what is it to have a successful career outside the home if our children are afraid, lonely, struggling and do not know where to go when they hurt. When will we really honor the men and women who spend time in a state of readiness for those brief moments in our children's lives when they are confused about their next steps. When will we really honor those who are present for the first tentative steps that need to be applauded. I have never thought that quality time together was enough; we need to be present for those few moments when the window of opportunity opens wide, and we know how afraid our children are and how much they need reassurance. The are just a few moments when we are privileged to share the joys of accomplishment WITH our children, not in their later story to us.

Is it not time to take back our children to our own raising? For those who MUST work outside the home is it not time for all of us to support these parents with the highest quality

care and support for our children this society can buy? Is this sometimes a sacrifice for fathers and mothers who choose this path? Of course it is. The is not the easiest path to choose. Sacrifice is not something that is coerced out of us, but a choice we make. Sacrifice is a concrete declaration of what we value. Sacrifice is not about bemoaning our fate, but choosing one thing of value over another.

My experience is that there will be few accolades for the choice until the job is done and your children are standing upright in the world they are making as adults. Along the way I wish more had asked in what ways the choice to parent full-time made me a better person? What had parenting taught that no other life experience could teach? What did I hope for my children as I struggled to meet the demands of this incredible work? A couple of offers of support along the way would have been lovely. Most of all I would have wished for a sense that people HONESTLY believed that parenting was a REAL job. That would have given me something to hang onto when I felt so inadequate to meet the challenges full-time parenting presented to me.

“Our children belong to all of us. The shooters are our children as well as the victims.”

The voice of our faith cannot be silent or punitive in the sadness and fear that grips us in the face of tragedy. Hand ringing will do no good but may make us more cynical and isolated. How do we really live out our values to affirm the potential of all our children to grow up well? These are questions of religious people. How do we respond?

— REV. MARY CHULAK HIGGINS

FDYRUU Social Action

Social—1: Of or pertaining to society;
2: Pertaining to or occupied with welfare work

Action—1: The state or process of acting or doing; condition of being active

So, I find myself outside of a church 300 miles from my hometown, selling cookies and bread baked just yesterday by teens with a social conscience and more than enough conviction to use it. I'm here for a bake sale to raise money for a small tribe of people in Honduras, called the Mosquitia, whose land was ravaged by Hurricane Mitch. With me, in Tampa, are three other youth from the weekend's Social Action Conference and a laundry basket full of baked goods and small bags of worry dolls. In Tampa, alone, we made almost 250 dollars (and there were five other small groups like ours at five other churches in the St. Pete area, all raising money for this cause). My name is **Caspian Baskin** and I'm the Social Action Co-chair from the Florida District Youth Council.

Every year, the Social Action Committee plans and puts on two Social Action Conferences for Florida District youth. This year, the first of these took place March 5-7. Teens arrived from all over Florida at the St. Pete Church on Friday night. We had our opening circle to tell everyone why they were there and what they would be doing. Then, we all went to sleep so we could be ready for the long day ahead.

In the morning, a group of teens made breakfast for everyone and then we met in our small groups and chose a workshop from a selection of yeast breads, sweets, worry dolls, speech writing, and visuals. The speech writing workshop taught one kid from each group what was going on in Honduras and what the money from the next day's bake sale was going towards. (We had decided to send it to an organization called **Development and Peace** at McGill University because they seemed to be successful at working with grassroots organizations in Honduras to get the aid to the indigenous tribes.) Then, they each wrote a speech to present to their group and to the church that they would be going to. The visuals workshop made signs and price lists for each group. The sweets workshop made cookies and rice crispy treats and ba-

nana bread. The yeast breads workshop made a variety of loafed breads. Lastly, the teens in the worry dolls workshop made worry dolls and small bags for them to go in. Because it took so long to make worry dolls and breads, we were finishing off those things all through the day. In the middle of the day, we had a little free time to make lunch and eat and socialize a little. At the end of the day, there was a worship service led by the one-person youth group in St. Pete and their Youth Minister. The food and signs were all organized into baskets for each separate church. Then, there was a little more free time for everyone to relax and get ready for sleep so they could be refreshed and ready to sell their goods. Then they all went to sleep. I, myself, woke up a little earlier than anyone else so I could make sure everything was ready. Then everyone got up, got dressed up, and got into their groups where the group leaders explained in detail what was going to happen. Then all the groups left. I decided to go with the group going to Tampa because they were short one person. Scott Curfew drove us to the church in Tampa. We set up our table outside of the entrance door. When the service started, Scott, who had written the speech for the ten minutes we had been promised in the service went in and made his presentation. Once the service was over people began to buy up our stuff. After only half an hour, we had sold everything and made about \$250.00. We packed up and left to go back to St. Pete for a celebration lunch and the closing at Eric Bolton's house. We were the last group to return and people were already eating when we got there. So, we turned in our money and started eating. After everyone was finished, we had a closing circle. All in all, we had raised over \$800. Not too shabby for one weekend's worth of work.

The conference was great success and everyone felt like they had done something. In my eyes, I only hope that they learned that they can do things to help all the time and not just when it's planned out for them. This was my last Social Action Conference as a leader. I've been the co-chair for two terms now. I hope that I've brought the standards up and interested enough people to keep this sort of thing going throughout Florida and YRUU.

— CASPIAN BASKIN

"Spark the Spirit" Youth Spirituality Conference

From Friday, May 9 - Sunday, May 11, 26 youth and adults met at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship in Vero Beach to hold the first Youth Spirituality Con. Last year **Kris Komondorea**, Sarasota, and **Rev. Richard Speck**, Vero Beach, were selected by the Florida District Youth to be sent for training in youth spirituality. This year was spent in finding a date in the busy District calendar when it could be held.

The conference started with "getting to know you" games and an opening worship service. The group brainstormed the issues which caused problems in worship. Friday evening ended with a pajama worship where a story was read and participants received a milk and cookie communion. Saturday morning began with a wonderful breakfast provided by **Sue Baskin** and **Kevin**, her assistant. Following morning worship, we split into three personal spirituality practice groups where people drummed, silently meditated, or did moving meditation to music. Saturday afternoon was a mix of discussions about what makes for good worship interspersed with four different groups planning their own worship services with resources provided by Rev. Speck. There was also time for singing new songs and fun activities. The conference ended on Sunday with many of the attendees participating in a high energy worship service led by Rev. Speck which featured movement, rhythm instruments, and lots of music. The members of the host Fellowship were very pleased to have so many different people participating in the worship service. Following a closing worship, hugs were given freely and people started back home tired but energized as well.

Many youth and adults said that they had gained a deeper appreciation for their own spirituality as well as a better understanding of what makes for good worship. They hope to take what they have learned to their home congregations and use it for both youth and adult worship services.

The next Spirituality Con is tentatively set for next February. A place for it has not been decided as yet. As the song we sang states, "They will know that we are UU's by our love." This conference has moved us in the right direction. *Spark the Spirit* next year in your youth group and attend!

— REV. RICHARD SPECK

Ministerial News and Milestones



The Reverend Abhi Janamanchi

Clearwater Welcomes The Reverend Abhi Janamanchi to Pulpit

The congregation of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Clearwater voted Sunday, April 18, to name **The Reverend Abhi Janamanchi** as its new minister.

He will begin his duties in September. He replaces **Reverend Jan Vickery Knost** who has been serving as Interim Minister the past year and a half.

The Reverend Janamanchi was recommended by a 9-member Search Committee that studied 16 applicants for the position.

Rev. Janamanchi was born in India and brought up in a liberal Hindu tradition that is similar to Unitarian Universalism. In this country he studied for the ministry at the Meadville/Lombard Seminary in Illinois. He has had pastoral assignments at the Unitarian congregation at Evanston, Illinois; the Rush-Presbyterian St. Luke's Medical Center in Illinois, and the UU Community Church in Park Forest, Illinois. His latest assignment was as Interim Associate Minister at the First Unitarian Society of Madison, Wisconsin.

— BUD WYLIE, UUCC

The Reverend John Rex Accepts Call from Buckman Bridge UU Society

The congregation of Buckman Bridge Unitarian Universalist Society welcomes their new minister, **The Reverend John Rex**, who began serving the congregation June 1st. BBUUS voted unanimously to call Rev. Rex following the recommendation of their Search Committee, which had been actively considering candidates for nearly a year.

After graduating from Bowdoin College in 1962, John was part of the first contingent of Peace Corps Volunteers to go to Ethiopia, where he served until 1964. He then embarked on a twenty-seven year career as a high school English teacher in Western New York.

John became a Unitarian Universalist in the mid-seventies, and was an active layperson in the Unitarian Universalist Church of Amherst, NY, where he served as Religious Education Director for five years. He graduated from Starr King School for the Ministry in Berkeley, California, and was ordained in 1995.

He then served a three year Extension Ministry at the Unitarian Universalist of Fredericksburg, Virginia. From September, 1998, through February, 1999, he engaged in study and ministry with the Khasi Unitarians of Meghalaya, India. This was his second extended visit to India, reinforcing his commitment to advocate for better understanding and connections among peoples of the world.

In addition to his enthusiasm for the ministry, John is an avid reader, writer, and a watercolor artist. He enjoys community involvement, actively pursuing social justice and advocacy areas such as mental health, family systems, gay and lesbian relations, non-violence issues, and inter-faith dialogue.

Rev. Rex is a single parent, whose son, Christopher, died in 1995 at the age of 25. His daughter, Anne, is beginning her third year at New York College of Osteopathic Medicine. John will reside in Orange Park.

— LINDA MOWERS, BBUUS



The Reverend John Rex

Editor's Note: Our Interconnectedness Exemplified

The **Revs. Abhi Janamanchi** and **John Rex** first met in August, 1993, at the IARF Congress in Bangalore, India, when neither were "Revs." In October of that year, when John arrived in Hyderabad, it was Abhi who greeted him at the railway station, loaded him and his luggage on the back of a motorcycle, and negotiated the crowded streets of that great city. For two weeks, Abhi served as John's advisor and guide, introducing him to the worship of the Brahmo Samaj, where the two shared leadership of services two Sundays in a row. Abhi's extraordinary skill with languages and sensitivity to intercultural issues became an important part of John's learning in India. John was welcomed into Abhi's home by his warm and wonderful family, most especially Abhi's wife, Lalitha, who was then expecting their first child. When their son, Abhimanyu, was born on John's birthday, he joined the family in waiting and celebrating at the hospital, and was honored to be asked to be godfather to the new arrival. John revisited Hyderabad later the next year to see his "family" there, has stayed in touch with Abhi through his move to America, his theological studies, and his ministerial activities, and is eager to reunite and to meet the newest Janamanchi, Yashafi, born just a year ago. It is a wonderful coincidence that their intros appear together on this page! Grace happens.

Preparing for a Potential Media Crisis

Remember the oft-repeated warning that the worst nightmare for a non-profit organization is to find cameras from "60 Minutes" on the doorstep? A crisis can arise whenever people are working together in a common cause:

- improper food handling at the annual dinner for People Living with HIV/AIDS could result in massive salmonella contamination from the turkey
- failure to train volunteers in appropriate ways to change diapers in the nursery could cause an outbreak of impetigo or diarrhea among the toddlers
- poor screening of youth advisors could bring charges of inappropriate relationships between teens and an adult

The list could be as long as your arm! A case study in the July/August edition of Board Member provides some words of wisdom on how to prepare for the eventuality of contact with the media.

1. Most importantly, have a plan in advance. "Know who the official spokesperson is and refer the media to him or her." The spokesperson should acknowledge the situation, express concern for those affected, report on what the congregation is doing to deal with the situation, indicate clearly when further information will be available, and remind the media of the good work the organization is known for.

2. Establish a comprehensive emergency response plan, which includes:

- notification of appropriate local, county and/or state officials
- contact with the congregation's legal counsel
- contact with public officials such as the mayor, whose public relations office may be fielding calls
- information on media contacts, including names and contact information for newspaper, radio and television reporters and their deadlines

3. The board should review "what if" questions periodically. Everyone on the board should know who to call, and how to refer media calls to the spokesperson. Board members and staff other than the official spokesperson must be crystal-clear that they should say "No comment" to any media requests.

4. Create and update policies and procedures which are reviewed by all relevant staff, both paid and volunteer.

Around the District . . .

West Central Cluster held three razzle-dazzle events! A cozy Cluster Picnic and Talent Sampler, held at the woodsy glen of the Lakeland Fellowship, a UU Revival, **Ay Urnari**, M.C., held at the Pines in Brooksville, featured rousing ministerials mit der tambourines and other audience effusiveness, keyed by the **Rev. Katy Korb**, from New Orleans. Regional speakers included **Jeff Harper**, "There is Power in the Mud!," **Rev. Mitch Modisett**, "Religious Red Herrings," **Jim Leavy's** Spiritual Workshop, **Joel Frye's** Poetry Workshop and solo singing, **Sue Atkins' Gospel Singout**, **Chaplain Bob Keim's** "Riddle of Fishing," Maurea Fernfrond's stone-ware clay leafy impressionisms, written messages of UU cheer from local UU clergy, and an enthusiastic large audience, (which scarfed up the delish' food and "the message(s)" AND—an orange-glow campfire under the piney moon, with folksongs and s'mores!) The third gala gathering was at the Annual Meeting, Clearwater church, May 15, featuring a consciousness-raising play by **Irene Miller**, about the women's suffrage movement, *Make Way!* More yummy food and frolic ensued, proving that the West Central Cluster is very much alive, full of caloric intake, toots suit and boot kickin' & scootin'. Next year the hope is for more involvements of slightly younger folks, those with a bit of gray just creeeeping into the chapeau, with some family turnouts too, and piggy-backing onto *bigger pictures* a la SSS and other District workshops. **Ya'll should discover YOUR cluster events and shenanigans**, and help to get 'em up and invigorated! Reciprocity! UU Teamwork! *Rah RAH!*

— MAUREA SLEESMAN
WEST CENTRAL CLUSTER PRESIDENT

NEEDED FOR CLEARWATER: **Part-time religious education coordinator** with good organizational skills, flexible personality and some inherent talent for public relations to work approximately 10-12 hours per week. Job Description and application available upon request. Call 727-531-7704, Fax 727-531-4188.

Friendship Fellowship at Pineda (Rockledge) is on a roll. Since we are located on a hill overlooking the Indian River Lagoon right on Rte 1, we decided to erect a sign large enough for speeding motorists to see. It was installed in mid-May, and lights up at night as well. No trouble seeing it—it's 18 ft high. Now we can spread our UU messages to thousands more in the central Brevard area, and hopefully will attract some of them!

Speaking of growth—our **Women's Friendship Circle** held a very successful bazaar in March, and \$1,000 of the proceeds initiated the **NEW BUILDING FUND**. The Circle has raised money for kitchen equipment, new hymnals and many other items.

UU in the Pines Retreat Center has announced a successful Mortgage Matching Fund Drive! In May of 1998 an anonymous donor stepped forward and offered The Pines 20,000 if it could be matched to pay down our second mortgage. We are happy to announce that this Drive succeeded and we raised \$47, 284.85 including the \$20,000 from the donor. We borrowed the last \$10,000 from three UU's and have paid off the second mortgage this Spring. Donations will continue to be accepted to pay back borrowed funds. *A big thank you to all who donated to this program, and to our original donor who made it possible for all this to happen!*

Contact UU in the Pines in Brooksville, FL at 352-796-4457 for additional information on how to become active in supporting and using this beautiful conference center!

Florida District Board of Directors

Officers

President Ed Porteus, Ft. Myers
Vice President .. Rev. Barbara Morgan, Daytona Beach
Secretary Bob Kenan, Tallahassee
Treasurer Wini Stowe, St. Petersburg (UU Church)

At Large

2000 Maureen Armour, Naples
2000 Jim Luce, Melbourne
2000 Kathy Converse, Jacksonville
2000 Peter Goldhammer, St. Petersburg
2000 Frank Dunn, Sarasota

District Executive - Ex-Officio

2001 Rev. Mary C. Higgins, Orlando

District Governance Restructured...

The Florida District is transitioning to a smaller **Board** and **Program Council** form of governance. The Annual Assembly held in Miami on April 17, 1999 voted to reduce the size of the district board from eighteen members to nine. The Program Council will be formed of **District committee chairs, representatives of the Clusters, Young Religious Unitarian Universalists, the Florida UU Ministers' Association and the Congregational Presidents' Council.** This newly formed group is charged with fulfilling the promise of Unitarian Universalism through the development of quality programs and training opportunities. The Program Council will meet on July 31st at the First Unitarian Church of Orlando, from 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. A second meeting is tentatively planned for January.

Our District Executive, Rev. Mary Higgins, envisions the Program Council meetings as fulfilling four main purposes:

- *to foster lateral relationships between different groups to strengthen our programs and find ways to share expertise and resources, to create networking opportunities, and to promote meaningful dialogue between the people charged with program development;*
- *to set a common calendar for the year whose events reflect the priorities of the congregations of the Florida district;*
- *to create an opportunity for those charged with programming to look at the financial resources available to us and determine how we can share those in order to have the maximum positive effect on the health and vitality of our congregations.*
- *to evaluate the impact of our programs to fulfill the goals and ends of the district as we support and nurture Unitarian Universalism in the Florida District.*

Look for great energy and enthusiasm from your Program Council!

FLORIDA DISTRICT CALENDAR • 1999

The information in this calendar is thought to be correct as of 6/7/99. Please contact the District Office at (407) 894-2119 or uuaflldist@aol.com to confirm, add or change the information contained in this calendar.

June	4 - 5	New Presidents' Forum	Lakeland
	11-12	District Board Retreat	Orlando
	18 - 20	Social Action #2 - YRUU	Daytona Beach
July	31	Program Council Meeting	Orlando
August	27-28	Youth Advisor Training	Lakeland
September	10-11	District Board Meeting	Lakeland
	11	October <i>Sunshine</i> Submission Deadline	
	25	NE Cluster	Daytona Beach
October	22-23	Fall Leadership Conference	Orlando Rev. Clark Olsen
November	7-13	Florida District Leadership School	Oviedo
December	10-11	District Board Meeting	Daytona Beach
	10	January <i>Sunshine</i> Submission Deadline	

Check your monthly **District Packet** for important information on scheduled events and programs, as well as other items of note. Flyers and notices should be posted at church or given to applicable committees and representatives!

The Unitarian Universalist Service Committee has expressed appreciation for the special gift of \$816.04, which was collected for humanitarian relief in Kosovo during the District Annual Assembly in April. Our commitment to the cause of human rights around the world continues.



**NEWSLETTER OF THE
FLORIDA DISTRICT UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST ASSOCIATION
1901 E. Robinson Street, Suite 18 • Orlando, FL 32803**