



Autumn 2005

Heartline

Newsletter of the Heartland Unitarian Universalist District

District Executive

Connie Haas Zuber, Board President

Mary Andrus-Overley, Heartland's District Executive for the last four years, announced her resignation at the District Annual Meeting and Spring Conference in April. Mary's last day as district executive was Friday, April 22.

The Heartland Board accepted her resignation with grateful appreciation for the many gifts Mary brought to the office of district executive and which have contributed to the health and growth of the new Heartland District.

A search committee has been created to begin the search for a permanent district executive to be hired sometime between January and June of 2006. It takes this much time because significant effort will be made to solicit feedback from both lay and professional leaders in the district on the topic of what skills and abilities Heartland needs in a district executive. Until that time, Rev. Lisa Presley, will serve as the interim district executive.

The district is strong and moving forward. This change is an opportunity to get even more clarity on how the district board, the district staff, and our partners at UUA headquarters in Boston can

grow Unitarian Universalism and serve the congregations in the district. If you have questions, please don't hesitate to contact the district office at 888-948-4883, or email office@heartlanduu.org.

In the Interim

It is a great honor to be asked to be the Interim District Executive for the Heartland District, and I am looking forward to working with you all! Having been one of those people who voted for the creation of Heartland, and having watched the transformation, I'm glad that I can offer my services to help in this time of transition.

Transitions are rarely easy. In the midst of them, we are called upon to do things differently than we've "always done them," and we're called upon to look at ourselves in a deeper way, asking the hard questions. What should be done? How best can it be done? What's the right thing here? What are the priorities? What must be left undone, because there simply isn't the time and resources available right now? How can we best position ourselves and structure ourselves for the future? What didn't work so well before, and where can we polish up our strengths? These, and more, are the questions that I will be asking as we go through this time together.

And in the midst of all of this, we will be continuing the construction of this district, to make it one of the stellar ones shining forth in our UU movement. This will take all of us working together. No one or two or three people can make the Heartland what it can be—since I'm only in this position for a year, I'm going to need your help. I won't have a chance to get to know you all, and figure out who to ask to do various things, so I'm going to be relying upon you to step up. Step up and tell me who

you think would be a terrific person to help. Whether it's serving on a consulting team, or conflict resolution team, or transition team, or workshop leading team, or whatever, Heartland needs high quality volunteers. We need people who have the vision beyond their own congregation, as important as the local congregations are. We need people who know how to do things well, and who are willing to help at the district level. When I was being interviewed for the position, I said that I could help create the structures, but that you, the individuals in the Heartland, would have to help me know who is best to tap as a volunteer for the larger whole. Please join me in that work!

I also want to thank the Board, the District Staff and the UUA for their understanding and care. Some of you may know, but others will not necessarily know that my partner, Amy, went in for surgery at the beginning of August, and then faced a series of complications. Now that she's home after seven weeks in the hospital, there will be a long time of convalescence. I will be as responsive as I can be—email me at de@heartlanduu.org or call me at home (248-446-8155), and I'll get back to you as soon as possible.

Again, I'm looking forward to us working together to shape the future of the Heartland.

Lisa Presley
Interim District Executive

REvision

Nancy Combs-Morgan
Lifespan Religious Education Program Consultant

As I write this my heart is so heavy with the terrible loss of life and dignity for those who were hit by Hurricane Katrina. In reflection, I realized that my faith and my expression of faith as a Unitarian Universalist are key in my life in sustaining hope and a sense that I can make some difference in this world of so much challenge and suffering. I have been tremendously moved by the outpouring of support from UU's across the nation to our UUA-UUSC Gulf Coast Relief Fund! (For more information on UU relief efforts go to our website: www.uua.org.)

Also, I have been thrilled to hear of congregations throughout the Heart-

land who are responding in tangible and directly helpful ways. For example, my home congregation, the UU Church of Lexington, Kentucky, with the energy and guidance of Ministerial Candidate, Esther Hurlburt, organized an inter-faith prayer service and connected with Lexington's Catholic Action Center and Christian Appalachian Project. With this coordinated effort families in Central Kentucky will be hosting displaced and hurting folks from the Gulf Coast. I would love to hear more about what your congregation has done in response to this terrible tragedy.

And now for some news about great stuff happening here in our district...

our Young Adult/Campus Ministry district leaders held a conference at Earlham College in Richmond, Indiana, on September 30 to October 2. The CON was a celebration of music, with a special workshop on music and worship. This CON was open to all Young Adults ages 18 to 25. On November 4-6 in E. Liberty Michigan at our Clarklake Congregation there will be CONvergence, a Leadership Development conference for young adults. Registration for this event is available at www.connectuu.com.

I hope you and/or other members of your congregation take advantage of all the wonderful and enriching trainings that are coming up this fall.

In faith and hope,

Nancy



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Send submissions to Heartland District office at the above address or e-mail to office@heartlanduu.org

Deadline for next issue: December 15, 2005

Heartland Young Adults are on a roll!

Let it be sung from the rooftops that there is a spiritually alive and conscience-driven leadership in the Heartland. Both local groups and district leadership have events planned throughout the year that focus on some important topics: sustaining the Young Adult movement; our own creative power and how that feeds us and contributes to our communities; connections between friends—in person, via the internet, locally and across the continent. Our district has been active on a continental level, and has been recognized as a major advocate for the growth of our movement via the Church of the Younger Fellowship. Find out more at <http://huud.uuan.org>.

"If we wish to stop the atrocities, we need merely to step away from the isolation. There is a whole world waiting for us, ready to welcome us home."

—Derrick Jensen

Michigan UU Justice Network Receives Grant and Seeks to Hire Staff

The Michigan UU Social Justice Network (MUUSJN), a state-wide network of UU social justice advocates, was awarded a \$10,000 grant in July as a first of a multi-year commitment by the UU Service Committee (UUSC) to expand the Network's capacity to empower and activate UU's for justice in Michigan. The Network will be working to implement the following goals:

- Forward justice issues and service information to activists in Michigan UU churches;
- Empower UU's and others to influence Michigan legislators on justice issues;
- Organize one or more justice events that can be replicated in other areas;

- Build and make more visible UU power by recruiting people to join the MUUSJN; and
- Promote communication between UU activists in Michigan through development of a website, a list serve and teleconferencing on justice issues and activities.

Background on the MUUSJN mission and history of achievements can be found on its web page: www.northwestuu.org/social_justice_network.htm. For more information, call Randy Block, MUUSJN Network Manager, at 248-549-5170, or Gwen Winston, Justice Network Coordinator at 313-574-8463.

Unsung Hero and Charlotte Cowtan Award Winners

The Heartland District Board of Trustees is pleased to announce the winners of the annual Unsung Hero Awards and the Charlotte Cowtan Award.

Chrissie King from The Northwest Unitarian Universalist Church in Southfield, MI is the recipient of the Adult Unsung Hero Award. Chrissie's kindness, energy, creativity, organizational skills, and her cheerful, warm and gentle manner has earned her this recognition.

Melissa and Mark Fochesato, members of The Community Unitarian Universalists in Brighton, Brighton, MI are the recipients of the Young Adult Unsung Hero Award. They have served their congregation in many activities from social programs to being pioneers in the church's religious education program. Their good humor and willingness to lend a hand when needed has given them the recognition that they deserve.

Savannah Reef, a youth from The Community Unitarian Universalists in Brighton, Brighton, MI is the winner of the Youth Unsung Hero Award.

Savannah exemplifies the UU Principles by the way she lives her life and is always ready to lend a hand in church activities wherever or whenever she is needed. Along with her intelligence and sensitivity, these attributes have earned her this youth award.

The Charlotte Cowtan award has been granted to the UU Church of Bloomington, IN (UUCB) for their growth and dynamic outreach to their community, for their being in "right relationship" with themselves and those around them, and has definitely taken our message to their larger community and is living our Principles. This congregation is truly deserving of this award.

The Board of Trustees is looking forward to receiving nominations next year for all of these awards. There are so many dedicated people and churches that deserve our praises. Be on the lookout for the announcement in this newsletter next fall and nominate that special adult, young adult, youth and/or your church for recognition next year.

Speaker? Preacher? Rites of Passage?

From time to time, the District Office gets calls wondering who might be able to do preaching, or teaching, or rites of passage. We have the names of ministers in congregations who do this, but we also know that there are many lay people or retired ministers or student ministers or others who would be more than willing to speak in congregations. We also know that there are ministers, retired or still working, who are willing to do rites of passage for members of congregations without ministers, or for the "unchurched." We know that you're out there, but we don't always know who you are, or how to get in touch with you.

So here's your chance. Please call or email the District Office to let us know that you exist—whether you're willing to preach, speak or do rites of passage. Let us know if you have topics you prefer to speak about, and whether you have any geographical restrictions. Give us your contact information, too—phones and email. We want to build a comprehensive list, and so even if you've told us before that you're available, please remind us that you still want to be on call. Thanks!

Lisa Presley
Interim District Executive

Heartline goes in-house!

As former chair of our district Communications Committee, I'd like to take a moment to thank Sarah Haley, of Clifton Unitarian Church in Louisville, for her work as Editor of *Heartline*, our district newsletter. Beginning with our next issue, *Heartline* will become a completely in-house publication, produced by our district staff. Sarah, your work as a volunteer has proven invaluable in our efforts to keep our members and congregations informed about district news. Thanks for all your work!

—Rev. Todd Eklof, Clifton Unitarian Church, Louisville, Kentucky

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District Calendar

October 2005 through January 2006

October 3–5	UUMA Grailville Retreat	Cincinnati, OH
October 7–9	UUCS 10th Anniversary Celebration	UU Community Church of SW Michigan Portage, MI
October 8	“Moving From Conflict to Right Relations” A congregational team training event	St. John’s Unitarian Church Cincinnati, OH
October 13–15	Administration-Renaissance Module Fall Training Institute	Crowne Plaza Hotel Grand Rapids, MI
October 15	Basic Youth Advisor Training	People’s Church of Kalamazoo Kalamazoo, MI
October 14-16	Fall Training Institute	Grand Rapids, MI
October 19	LRE Meeting—Indiana Cluster	UU Church, Indianapolis, IN
October 21–24	LREDA Conference	Philadelphia, PA
October 23	Ordination: Linda Eppert	St. John’s Unitarian Church Cincinnati, OH
October 28–29	Program Council Meeting	Best Western Luxbury, Fort Wayne, IN
November 3–6	District Presidents Assn Meeting	Boston, MA
November 4–6	ConVergence Young Adult Conf.	UU Church of E Liberty, Clarklake MI
November 11	DRE Cluster Meeting-MI	UU Church of E Liberty, Clarklake, MI
November 11–13	Board Meeting	Indianapolis, IN
November 16	DRE Cluster Meeting-OH-KY-IN	Heritage UU Church, Cincinnati, OH
November 19	Basic Youth Advisor Training	UUU, Indianapolis, IN
November 24–25	OFFICE CLOSED—Thanksgiving	
Nov 29–Dec 4	UUA BCM (Big Complex Meeting)	Boston, MA
December 9	DRE Cluster Meeting-MI	UU Church of Greater Lansing East Lansing, MI
December 7–10	RE Consultant Training	Dallas, TX
December 14	DRE Cluster Meeting-IN	TBD
Dec 26–Jan 2	OFFICE CLOSED—Christmas Break	
January 6–8	DYSC Spirituality Development Con	TBD
January 13	DRE Cluster Meeting-MI	Emerson Church UU, Troy, MI
January 18	DRE Cluster Meeting	UU Church, Bloomington, IN
January 20–21	Program Council Meeting	Indianapolis, IN
Jan 29–Feb 2	UUMA Pokagon Retreat	Pokagon State Park, Angola, IN

*It isn't enough
to talk about peace.
One must believe in it.
And it isn't enough
to believe in it.
One must work at it.
—Eleanor Roosevelt*