

**TRUSTEE REPORT**  
**by Rev. Elizabeth L. Greene**  
**Unitarian Universalist Association Board member**  
**from the Pacific Northwest District**  
**Boston Meeting, January 18-20, 2008**

The Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) Board met in Boston, at UUA headquarters, January 18-20, 2008. I had a long meeting of the Committee on Committees on Thursday 1/17, and stayed an extra day to be part of the National UU Addictions Ministry. I see three primary areas of interest emerging from the Board's discussions and deliberations. At the end of my ruminations on these issues, I will list the actions we took.

Policy Governance

For the past 2  $\frac{1}{2}$  years, the UUA Board has worked doggedly toward becoming fully a policy governance board. For various good reasons, we did not start with values or mission or ends policies. Instead, we have—with considerable help from outside consultants—created and edited our means policies. (Executive Limitations; Board Duties; Board-President Linkage). Many Board members have been frustrated by the absence of a "religious" element in this work.

At this meeting, Rob Eller-Isaacs and Louise Wolfgramm of Unity Church (St. Paul, MN), led us in a spiritual, relational exercise out of which we clarified values and wrote a hypothetical mission statement. The process was intended to serve as an example of how to approach values, mission and ends work, and energized us enormously, reminding us why we are dedicated to working in this great faith tradition of ours. We feel enthusiastic about a spiritual element coming into the governance work and are confident that arriving at full policy governance will enhance our ability to promote spiritual, prophetic, transformative congregations.

In October, 2008, the UUA Board will meet with the District Presidents and very probably members of the UU Ministers' Association (UUMA) Executive Board ("Exec"), to go through a similar exercise "for real." From this session and from the values and priorities that emerge from the Appreciative

Inquiry process at General Assembly (GA) in June, we will craft ends policies.

### General Assembly in Ft. Lauderdale

As most of you know, there has been controversy about the June '08 GA in Ft. Lauderdale. The convention center is located on a federal port facility, so government-issued identification is required. Various people have made very public, very strong statements expressing many objections to the site, primarily around civil liberties, safety and inclusion issues.

The General Assembly Planning Committee (GAPC), the UUA staff, and the UUA Board have taken the concerns seriously, and the Board had a long, somewhat difficult conversation about it in our meeting. We understand that the issues raised are serious ones, and we understand that people are in pain over them. At the same time, there is more to the controversy than has emerged publicly, and the Board has charged the Moderator, the President and the chair of the GAPC to write a letter outlining some of this. We voted to re-affirm the Ft. Lauderdale site.

The steering committee of DRUUMM (Diverse Revolutionary UU Multi-Cultural Ministries, made up of UUs of color) wrote the following to the Board:

We realize that contractual decisions were made quite some time ago that constrain the Association in some financially very difficult ways regarding Ft. Lauderdale. It's equally true that it is very unfortunate that we are in an access-related situation like this at all, one which will likely impact members of our DRUUMM community.

But, the reality is what the reality is, there is only so much that can be done at this late stage. We are aware that the UUA Board, the Administration, and the GA Planning Committee have been working to address as many issues as possible before GA, in an attempt to ensure maximum, as hassle-free as possible, access. We expect those efforts to be imperfect, that problems will occur.

We will work with you to handle this as best as we all can, and hope/trust that this type of accessibility problem won't be re-created.

Rob Eller-Isaacs, president of the UUMA Exec wrote the following:

I write as President of the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association and in the name of the UUMA Executive Committee to express our sadness and to share our plans regarding the General Assembly. We are deeply disappointed that those attending the General Assembly will have to pass through security checkpoints in order to attend. We believe such requirements violate the high value our religion places upon inclusion and full accessibility. We are torn between a deep commitment to those values, and a like commitment to face-to-face engagement and deliberation. Some respected colleagues tell us that as a matter of conscience they will not cross through security. For them it violates a core commitment to the civil liberties of our neighbors. Others, regretting the situation and insistent that steps be taken to ensure full and open access at all future meetings plan to attend. The UUMA is responding to the situation in the following ways:

- We are moving Ministry Days, our pre-GA gathering, to a fully accessible location outside the security zone.
- We are designing Ministry Days programming to include opportunities for thoughtful consideration of civil liberties, immigration, and profiling issues arising from the situation.
- We are presenting a workshop at the General Assembly itself devoted to effective ministry in a time of fear.

Most members of the UUMA Executive Committee plan to attend the General Assembly. We have deep respect for those colleagues whose conscience calls them not to attend. They will be missed. We affirm that showing up is a promise we make to one another. We decry the cultivated culture of fear that divides and weakens us. By coming together in Fort Lauderdale to deepen our understanding and demonstrate our concern we will make a powerful statement about what matters most to Unitarian

Universalists.

### Independent Affiliates

Although the UUA Board went through a four-year process of education about changing the criteria for Independent Affiliates, the transition is not proving easy. Many groups are feeling unfairly rejected. We on the Board may not have communicated the rationale as well as we might have, and are still struggling a bit to articulate it comprehensively.

The underlying reason for making Independent Affiliate criteria much more stringent is a vision of what kinds of relationships the Board should be actively pursuing. Instead of extremely loose affiliation with primarily single-focus organizations—often insular, often with little congregational connection—we want dynamic relationships with broad-based, congregationally-connected groups.

One of the outrages we hear most frequently expressed is that disaffiliated groups no longer have automatic GA workshop slots. The Board's reply to this, in *my* (possibly less than tactful) words is that we are not in the business of ensuring that single-issue organizations all get their say at GA (although they are certainly welcome to submit workshop applications to the GAPC); we are not convinced that groups identifying themselves as [fill in the blank] before they identify as UUs are entitled to an automatic voice at GA. We are in the business of encouraging Unitarian Universalism as a whole, bringing together diverse voices in the unity of our faith.

While I support whole-heartedly the move to limit Independent Affiliates, and to move into deeper, more active relationship between them and the Board, I am also aware that we need to continue improving our communication. I believe that we can improve the application process, to speak more clearly about the importance of connection with congregations, and I think there may be room for improvement in our explanation of criteria.

Having said that, let me say again that I believe very much that changing the Board's relationship with Independent Affiliates is a move in the direction

we all want to go: embodying our faith as one not made up of a bunch of fractured beliefs, but one of sharing common values and hope among diverse people.

### Actions taken

1. Accepted the Prairie Circle Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Grayslake IL and the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Rocky Mount, NC, as new congregations.
2. Affirmed Phoenix, AZ at the 2012 GA site.
3. Accepted Ministry For Earth as an Independent Affiliate.
4. Approved proposed changes to Religious Education Credentialing Committee Rules 7 and 18.
5. Voted, in a straw vote, to continue to the next steps in the Board's transition to policy governance.
6. Kept "on the table" the proposal that the UUA Board meet elsewhere than Boston, pending more information about cost and benefit.
7. Approved new version of Ministerial Fellowship Committee rules
8. Sent proposed bylaw changes involving Ministerial Fellowship Committee to GA '08 for vote.
9. Reaffirmed Ft. Lauderdale as GA '08 site, charging Moderator, President and GAPC chair to write a letter detailing the situation.
10. Approved the new Investment Policy (now 5 pages, replacing one of 35+ pages)
11. Approved the new loan-guarantee policy, outlining limitations.  
(Necessary because Congregational Properties and Loans Committee has been changed from a Board committee to a staff committee.)

12. Approved: "In any fiscal year from 2009 through 2013, if Beacon Press is charged for the use of space in UUA buildings, then the Press shall receive an equal, offsetting support payment from the UUA current operations budget." This is part of larger proposal to charge department budgets rent for the space they occupy—this could be hugely significant for Beacon Press, which occupies about three stories.
13. Approved adding employees of the UU World of Children to the UUA Health Plan.
14. Send to General Assembly the proposal to consolidate the Northeast and the New Hampshire/Vermont Districts, into the Northern New England District.