



Guardian of the Future Recipients Excel in Community Networking

Irene Keim, Chair, UU Ministry for Earth Board

The 2012 UUMFE Guardian of the Future awards were presented to two Unitarian Universalist leaders at the UUA General Assembly in Phoenix. Award winners Judy Moores, UU Church of Davis (CA) and Tom Gibson, First Unitarian Church of Cleveland were announced and recognized during the UUMFE Annual Meeting. Both of these Guardians give praises to the network of people who contributed to the community successes that were celebrated by these awards, but they both also show the leadership in their congregations and communities that are inspiring and educational for others.

Judy Moores formed the Green Sanctuary committee at Davis in 2005 at a time that few members understood the coming impacts of Climate Change. The congregation grew in understanding, connection to Earth, and actions to support the Green Sanctuary program, achieving both accreditation and re-accreditation with Judy's leadership. She helped establish a new congregational tradition of celebrating Earth Day with Earthfest, an old-fashioned picnic on the church grounds with a veggie cook-off, local entertainment, tables with exhibits, information, crafts, and more – combining fun, education and creativity for the event. Her list of connections and accomplishments include incorporating legislative action with UU Legislative Ministry of California (UULMC) – especially the Human Right to Water, insuring that a church renovation program resulted in a LEED-certified building that included "The Corral" for reuse and recycling materials, incorporating Green Sanctuary standards in the church rental policies, and using her

training as a biologist to help others celebrate with, as she observes, "The quotidian miracles of nature ..., and give thanks for all the blessings of our planet home."

Judy's vision reaches out into the community also with leadership in the Cool Davis Initiative. The Initiative is a group of volunteers who assist the city in the implementation of the Davis Climate Action and Adaptation Plan. To support the Initiative, she serves as president of the non-profit Cool Davis Foundation. Eight local churches are affiliated with Cool Davis and Judy brings the experience of UUC Davis

to share as all work to reduce their carbon footprints. Cool Davis events have incorporated the 'Human Right to Water' campaign in cooperation with UULMC and UU Service Committee, and connections with 350.org. Bill McKibben, founder of 350.org, has been a presenter at Cool Davis and has joined her congregation and community in praising Judy's accomplishments.



Irene Keim (L), UUMFE Board Chair, with award recipient Judy Moores at the UUMFE GA booth.

cont'd on page 3

Inside This Issue

- | | |
|---|---|
| 2 How Do We Make Change Together? | 6 Ethical Eating Website Launch |
| 3 Guardian of the Future Recipients (cont'd) | Fracking Concerns Mobilize UUs |
| 4 Program Ideas for Church Year | 7 Moral Challenge: Math, Evil, and Blood |
| Earth Day 2013 Theme – Sustainable Communities | 8 Driving Social Change: <i>The Activist Handbook</i> |
| Food Days 2012 Present Justice Opportunities | 9 East Oakland Bus Rapid Transit Project |
| 5 Canary Community: Sentinel of Climate Injustice | 10 Words of Inspiration; Empower UUs |



Unitarian Universalist
Ministry for Earth

Unitarian Universalist
Ministry for Earth
NEWSLETTER

is published three times
per year by
UU Ministry for Earth
1034 SW 13th Ave.
Portland, OR 97205

The points of view
expressed by contributors
are their own and not neces-
sarily those of UU Ministry
for Earth (UUMFE).
Subscriptions are available
through membership in the
organization. The printed
version of this newsletter
uses 100 percent postcon-
sumer content recycled
paper.

ABOUT UUMFE

Unitarian Universalist
Ministry for Earth is a non-
profit organization whose
supporters envision a world
in which reverence, grati-
tude, and care for the living
Earth is central to the lives
of all people. As a 501(c)3
organization, contributions
are tax deductible to the full
extent of the law.

UUMFE BOARD

Chair

Irene Keim

Treasurer

Ellen McClaran

Directors

Sarah Caine

Cynthia Davidson

Amy Petré Hill

Rev. Earl Koteen

Vince Pawlowski

Rev. Frances Sink

Nancy King Smith

From the Board

How Do We Make Change Together?

Questions are popping all around me lately as I watch the number of acres of forest scorched by fires set a new annual record, drought reach 90 percent of the U.S., and flooding in states in the path of the tropical system named Isaac. And, that is just the start of the news I'd rather not hear. How do we find our balance of hope and frustration, inspiration and despair, action and withdrawal? As I pondered how we can connect to, take action with, and care for people as we do our Earth ministry, I found that the inspirations started coming at me from many directions.

The book *Reason for Hope* by Jane Goodall was the starting point. Dr. Goodall shared frustrations, crisis, and sadness, but she also shared the peace of a sunset over water, the renewing spirit of mountains, the sustaining connections to others and the inspiration gained in even the smallest of successes of growing love and sustainable living. Dr. Goodall sees one problem – many do not get involved in creating solutions to problems, so we do not have the opportunity to feel the power of positive change. Hmmmm.

Then, I ventured back to the myriad of publications that come at us daily – newsletters, facebook postings, magazines, and online news sources – and began to see hopeful and constructive lessons. For example, the Editor's Letter in *onearth* magazine, published by the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), introduces us to two scientists who describe respectful relationships as the beginning of the journey to work on issues together. One encourages us to develop relationships before talking about issues, and the other admonishes that we have to be willing to find respect for those who don't share our point of view, our way of knowing. Okay, so how do we move in these directions?

I opened the UUMFE curriculum *Our Place in the Web of Life* to see if the authors had any wise words for us – I offer this quote from the Introduction.

"The purpose of this module is not ecological information per se. The purpose is to start a new conversation – one that takes you into your community and beyond the physical borders of your building. The purpose is to prompt you to ask new kinds of questions, to see new connections, and to start to build or to strengthen relationships beyond your congregation – to create ever-wider circles of love and mutual support . . . We know how we got here. Now is the time to be part of building a movement and shifting our approach from critique to hope-filled action."

We can do this! This is one way to move forward. We can start or renew our "hope-filled action" by facilitating the 5-part curriculum in our congregations. Then, we can make plans and go out into the world. Jane Goodall imagined, ". . . thousands and millions and billions of people all knowing that what they do does make a difference."

A first step could be to join UUMFE for one of the introductory webinars for the curriculum. Pam Sparr, co-creator of the curriculum, will be the featured speaker. The webinars are scheduled for Monday, Sept. 17, 7:15 p.m. Eastern and Tuesday, Oct. 2, 7:15 p.m. Eastern. Visit the website for registration information: uuministryforearth.org.

We can do this together – Irene Keim, Chair, UU Ministry for Earth Board ♦

News From UU Ministry For Earth

Guardian of the Future . . . from page 1

When asked what sustains her, Judy cites the beauty of Earth and in the connections those around her, plus family. *"I give thanks for a supportive husband. I think of my children and grandchildren and the kind of world I want them to have, and I go forth ready to work."*

Tom Gibson was awarded the local Eco-Hero in 2012 by his congregation and afterwards, one of the church members remarked, *"It's amazing what one person can inspire."* Tom and his wife Carol have been vegetarians for decades and have quietly led people



Award recipient Tom Gibson (R) with Laurie Albright, First Unitarian Church of Cleveland Board President

to try a variety of delicious dishes both at their home and at the church. Tom created a wonderful Permaculture garden at his own home and, as they say, one thing led to another.

Tom took a Permaculture course – after starting the garden at home – and got the class to take on the grounds of his church as the class project. The resulting plan was for the entire property, so Tom prioritized the features and selected a manageable and visible chunk of land between the parking lot and the back driveway to start the transformation. In low-key and steady fashion, Tom hosted workdays for members to help transform the area between the church and a parking lot and raised significant funds for the project – all the while teaching people about the way in which Permaculture pays attention to the interdependent web, to the long-term view, to building community, and to no waste in the system. In the midst of the Permaculture project, the opportunity to put up a large solar array in the parking lot came along. Tom wrote a successful proposal to the Sewer District that will add gutters and rain gardens to improve water use and aesthetics.

to try a variety of delicious dishes both at their home and at the church. Tom created a wonderful Permaculture garden at his own home and, as they say, one thing led to another.

Tom took a Permaculture course – after starting the garden at home – and got the class to take on the

Tom and the congregation were already involved in an environmental justice project to help support the Blaine community garden in Hough, the poorest area of Cleveland. The garden development leader was in Tom's Permaculture class. Building on those connections, Tom helped with the garden, worked on an afterschool program with children on learning about fruits and vegetables, and under his leadership, planted a "three sisters" garden. In return, some of the Blaine gardeners came to help with workdays at First Unitarian. Tom also steered a project in a Hough middle school for fifth and sixth graders to learn about vermiculture and ultimately to take their finished compost tea to the Blaine garden. Tom has also been active with the newly developing Greater Cleveland Congregations Food Access Committee. He has helped people understand that environmental justice, just like Permaculture, means dealing with all of the interconnected systems.

The national UUMFE Guardian of the Future award recognizes individuals who have helped engage UU congregations in Earth ministry and have taken the work out into the larger community. The contributions of Guardians reflect their personal practices and their transformative effect on their congregations and communities. In the nomination process we also get a glimpse of what sustains the Guardians as they provide change-making leadership. The award nomination applications are included in the annual Earth Day materials published by UU Ministry for Earth. All congregations are encouraged to honor local leaders with an Eco-Hero award and to go on to nominate them for Guardian of the Future. ♦



The UUMFE Board was in Cleveland for its 2011 Fall meeting and had the privilege of meeting Tom and touring the wonderful Permaculture garden.

News From UU Ministry For Earth

Program Ideas for Church Year and District Assemblies

Ellen McClaran, UUMFE Board



Active Hope – Gaia Workshops, Barbara Ford, Facilitator

For those congregations or districts that have experienced trauma or burnout doing justice work, this is an excellent way to begin to develop answers to your questions and concerns.

You will learn ways to hold to clarity of intention and joy shared in a loving, mutually supportive community. This is an experiential workshop for groups, with great learning opportunity for individuals.

Barbara Ford, an artist, singer, facilitator, activist, and a colleague of Joanna Macy, is a former member of the Board of UU Ministry for Earth and served as president for three years. A portion of the workshop proceeds will go to support the important work of UU Ministry for Earth. For more information contact UUMFE at office@uuministryforearth.org or call the UUMFE office at 503-595-9392.



Our Place in the Web of Life by Pamela Sparr and Dr. Mark. A. Hicks

This is a lively 5-session curriculum designed as a basic introduction to environmental justice (EJ). Using highly participatory techniques, the lesson plans take you through a journey exploring your values and the

consequences of the choices you make. You'll come away with a deeper understanding of your congregation's special place in the world and the connections you have with people near and far as a result of your congregation's environmental impact.

For more details of the course and download information, visit the UUMFE website at uuministryforearth.org/EJ-Curriculum. ♦

Earth Day 2013 Theme – Sustainable Communities

Cindy Davidson, UUMFE Board and Chair of Earth Day Committee

UU Ministry for Earth announces “Sustainable Communities” as the 2013 theme for its annual collection of Earth Day materials. A variety of materials are being assembled for congregations to use to plan worship services and to support congregational and individual activities and actions around Earth Day, which falls on Monday, April 22. We will post a collection of readings, a call to action, congregational stories, and more on the UU Ministry for Earth's website (uuministryforearth.org). And, as in the past few years, we will invite and encourage



Image from Stanford Green Living Council

congregations to register their Earth Day plans and experiences online in order to share them with the larger community. Look for updates in upcoming eNews and expect the Earth Day materials to be available by January 1!

UUMFE welcomes your interest and participation in helping create a collection of materials that meets your particular needs. Please join us in conversation and share with us your specific suggestions, comments, or requests about issues or resources related to the topic of “Sustainable Communities.” I invite you to send your input directly to me at cynthiadavidson@verizon.net. ♦

Food Days 2012 Present Justice Opportunities for Food Activists

Cindy Davidson, UUMFE Board

If you're confused by the presence or messaging of more than one “Food Day” in the US, you're not alone! Recently, I listened in on a teleconference call with staff members and stakeholders from both World Food Day and Food Day initiatives, where discussion centered on ways to reduce confusion about the different campaigns and possible collaborative efforts in the future. Who knows how this will evolve? In the meantime, here's some clarification

News From UU Ministry For Earth

and resources to consider should your congregation be interested in observing either or both days.

World Food Day, October 16: Agricultural Cooperatives – Key to Feeding the World.

Founded in 1981, this program of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations is a worldwide event meant to encourage attention to world agriculture production and increase awareness, understanding, and informed year-around action to alleviate hunger. Over its 30-year history, it has served as a catalyst for long-range planning by helping encourage economic and technical cooperation among countries, by involving rural and marginalized people in decision-making and creating solutions, and by strengthening worldwide and national solidarity in the struggle against hunger, malnutrition, and poverty. The Unitarian Universalist United Nations Office (UU-UNO) is an official sponsor.

This year's theme highlights the role of cooperatives in improving food security and contributing to the eradication of hunger, topics which certainly cross



borders and are central to current focuses on sustainability and ethical eating issues in our

denomination. Background and educational materials are nicely detailed in World Food Day's issues paper for this year, an eight-page leaflet available at www.worldfoodday.org.

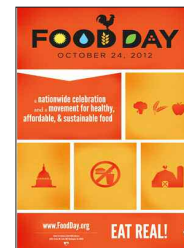
This year, UUMFE is partnering with Church World Service on free, downloadable World Food Day action materials and our name will appear on their annual "Hunger Placemat." Go to www.churchworldservice.org, type "wfd" in the search box, and click the page link to see a list of all the materials.

Food Day, October 24: Healthy + Sustainable + Affordable + Fair

First sponsored in 1975, this program of the Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI) is meant to be a nationwide celebration of real food and support the movement for healthy, affordable and sustainable food in the US. CSPI, a national non-profit education and advocacy organization addressing food safety and nutrition issues, has set these five core priorities to encourage a large number and

broad range of groups and organizations to participate: (1) to promote safer, healthier diets; (2) to support sustainable and organic farms; (3) to reduce hunger; (4) to reform factory farms to protect the environment and animals; and (5) to support fair working conditions for food and farm workers.

Visit the Food Day website at www.foodday.org for more information, to host or find an event, and to download a range of resource materials, including a guide for organizers and "recipe cards" to print to promote the day.



The excellent school curriculum, with its modifications for younger elementary students and also teens, would be appropriate for use or adaptation for religious education classes, youth groups, or intergenerational food-focused activities. And, last but not least, for the reference and reading-minded, there's also a suggested reading list available, covering a wide range of subject areas.

Among the suggestions on that teleconference call was to embrace the concept of a "Food Week" that would "sandwich" a variety of activities and issues between World Food Day on October 16 and Food Day on October 24. With plenty of food for thought, a collection of good ingredients, and a liberal dose of creativity and motivation, the recipe that works for your congregation is sure to crystallize. ♦

Canary Community: Sentinel of Climate Injustice

Irene Keim, Chair, UUMFE Board

Like the canary in a coal mine, some individuals become aware of changes in the environment earlier than others...are you one of those? Are you a canary? Is your community an early warning indicator of environmental changes? Is your community more susceptible to environmental changes or less able to respond and rebound after an environmental disaster?

These were the questions posed to General Assembly attendees this year in Phoenix. As wildfires burned on three sides of the city, the attendees examined a map of social vulnerabilities at the

News From UU Ministry For Earth

UUMFE booth in the Exhibit Hall. The University of South Carolina, in partnership with Oxfam, evaluated



31 different factors for every county in the United States and produced a color-coded map for the levels of resiliency after an environmental disaster. Also displayed prominently in the booth was the national Drought Monitor map of the

United States, which is updated weekly.

For your information and use in presentation, UUMFE volunteers have compiled an extensive list of online climate change impact sources. Check them out on the UUMFE website at uuministryforearth.org/Global_Warming_Climate_Change. ♦

Ethical Eating Website Launch

Nancy King Smith, UUMFE Board

PACE, the President's Advisory Committee on Ethical Eating, has been established to advise the President of the Unitarian Universalist Association, the Reverend Dr. Peter Morales, about

ways congregations can implement the Statement of Conscience (SOC). This is the first time that there has been an official group to follow up on an approved SOC and, as such, is exploring a model for how future SOC's can be implemented.

All are invited to visit the website and to join the network at www.ethicaleating.uua.org. The website intends to promote:

- **Learning** best practices for food justice, or **sharing** those best practices by posting material;
- **Connecting** with individuals or groups doing the work, or **recruiting** them to your projects; and together,
- Picking up **skills** and **resources** for **action** and **inspiration**, and **contributing** what you've learned to this site.

With the website launched, PACE is now turning to a systematic look at how the SOC can be implemented. The group has been ably led by Rev. John Millsbaugh who recently turned leadership over to Rev. Nate Walker. Other members include Rev. Peggy Clarke, Rev. Beth Johnson, Rev. LoraKim Joiner, Rev. David Breeden, and myself. ♦

News & Commentary From Members and Congregations

Fracking Concerns Mobilize UUs

Nancy King Smith, UUMFE Board

Concerns about fracking continue to mobilize UU's in fracking hotspots around the nation. A number of people came to Washington on July 25 to protest against the practices that make hydro-fracking so risky for the environment and communities. Present was Rev. Terry Ellen, Executive Director of UUs for Social Justice (UUSJ), who feels that fracking is the biggest environmental threat of his lifetime. UUs also figured prominently in an anti-fracking rally in Ohio in June and in New York in August. Many UUs are working in their congregations to raise awareness and to work with anti-fracking organizations in their communities and states.

Filming at the rally in Washington was a team working on *Groundswell: Protecting Our Children's Air and Water* that includes Mark Lichty as Executive Producer. Mark is an active 20-year member of Pocono Unitarian



Rev. Terence Ellen (R) of UUs for Social Justice being interviewed by the Groundswell producers as Pam Sparr (L), UUMFE member and consultant, looks on. Photo by Katherine Lockwood

Universalist. The film aims to make palpable the magnitude of this threat through sharing the heart wrenching stories of those whose lives have been

News & Commentary From Members and Congregations

disrupted by this process. “We will capture the passion, voices and deeds of those involved in the Groundswell of resistance to this questionable and potentially dangerous extraction process, and serve as a source for inspiration and hope for those who choose to make a difference,” Mark says. He adds, “This is everybody’s issue – we all live downstream. We hope that after people see the film they will be motivated to do something.” Other members of the team include Producers Matt and Renard Cohen of Resolution Pictures whose productions include documentaries for PBS and the Food Network, and co-Executive Producer Rev. Katherine Lockwood, an ordained interfaith minister and community leader who is concerned about the moral issues surrounding fracking.

A trailer and more about the film can be found at groundswellmovie.com. In order to move the film forward, they need additional funding and would appreciate any help or suggestions of who might be interested in helping with the project. ♦

Moral Challenge: Math, Evil, and Blood

Rev. Earl W. Koteen, UUMFE Board

My father was a World War II veteran who spent most of his civilian career in the Pentagon. In the 1950s, when I was a child, he took me to the NRA chapter at Fort Belvoir, Virginia, to learn to shoot. I was very proud of my sharpshooter’s metals.

Many years later, he told me he had the fantasy of buying one of the automatic weapons that the NRA had successfully lobbied to legalize and use it to spray the lobby of their national headquarters, which was not far from our home. My father was a gentle man and a gentleman. He had not shot anyone during the war and certainly would not do so in peacetime. The fact that he was even fantasizing about doing so showed the depth of this anger.

My father was not entirely a prophet, even though he made the statement years before our current rash of mass murders. He was speaking years after the 1966 University of Texas tower killings by Charles Whitman. He knew how much worse it would have been if Whitman had had a greater arsenal.

Bill McKibben, author and cofounder of 350.org, states that his recent article for *Rolling Stone* magazine, “Global Warming’s Terrible New Math” (www.rollingstone.com/politics/news/global-warmings-terrifying-new-math-20120719) is the most important thing he’s written since he wrote *The End of Nature* in 1989.



Illustration by Edel Rodriguez for the Bill McKibben article in Rolling Stone magazine.

In that article, Bill writes the following: “So: the paths we have tried to tackle global warming have so far produced only gradual, halting shifts. A rapid, transformative change would require building a movement,

and movements require enemies. As John F. Kennedy put it, ‘The civil rights movement should thank God for Bull Connor. He’s helped it as much as Abraham Lincoln.’ And enemies are what climate change has lacked.

“But what all these climate numbers make painfully, usefully clear is that the planet does indeed have an enemy – one far more committed to action than governments or individuals. Given this hard math, we need to view the fossil-fuel industry in a new light. It has become a rogue industry, reckless like no other force on Earth. It is Public Enemy Number One to the survival of our planetary civilization. ‘Lots of companies do rotten things in the course of their business – pay terrible wages, make people work in sweatshops – and we pressure them to change those practices,’ says veteran anti-corporate leader Naomi Klein, who is at work on a book about the climate crisis. ‘But these numbers make clear that with the fossil-fuel industry, wrecking the planet is their business model. It’s what they do.’ ”

As I was considering writing this piece, I was lucky enough to come upon this sermon (www.350.org/en/node/28715) by Rev. Fred Small, another hero of the climate justice movement and minister of First Parish in Cambridge, Unitarian Universalist. Fred argues that we should “ground our activism in moral and spiritual integrity.” He says that we should learn from “the Civil Rights Movement never demonized

News & Commentary From Members and Congregations

Connor, because it would have demeaned itself.” Recently, John Fish Kurmann wrote to me: “The only significant disagreement I have with him is his depiction of the fossil fuel industry as ‘enemies.’ While we need to understand that their business models are inherently world-destroying, that’s not because they’re villains, it’s because that’s what our economy and the current structure of corporate governance demands of them. They cannot voluntarily change their ways, so we have to change the rules to change them. Most especially, we have to incorporate the true pollution costs of fossil fuels into the prices we pay through a fee-and-dividend system, as McKibben advocates.”

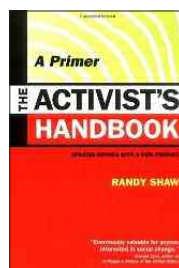
As Christian Parenti documented in *Tropic of Chaos: Climate Change and the New Geography of Violence* and Rob Nixon in *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*, our addiction to fossil fuels is already causing suffering, illnesses, premature death, murder, and warfare. I am all for taking the moral high ground and for a nonviolent movement to address this predicament.

However, we have gone beyond genocide to ecocide. Whitman is back in his tower with much more deadly weapons than he had in 1966 and the lobbyists and their paymasters are doing everything they can to interfere with police. There is and there will be blood. Each of us needs to ask ourselves what we are doing and what we will be willing to do as we face the greatest moral challenge of our time. How we characterize the principal offenders and their allies and how we define their actions is secondary to stopping the killing. ♦

Driving Social Change: *The Activist’s Handbook*

Bob Keim, former UUMFE Board

There are so many books out on Climate Change and how we might respond to it, that every now and then we forget that no matter what the future, there are both issues that must be waged here and now as well as matters that the future will bring to front and center – and that standing up to these issues calls us to act. So, what to do?



The Activist’s Handbook is a great place to begin. Author Randy Shaw is a California native, educated at UC Berkeley and UC Hastings College of Law, who very early became involved in politics, particularly around tenant rights. He – with eight UC Hastings classmates – formed the Tenderloin Housing Clinic, a non-profit organization in San Francisco that has grown to over 250 full-time employees in the last 32 years and operates the city’s “largest permanent housing program for single homeless adults and is a leading provider of legal services to low-income tenants.” As Shaw put it, he “wrote this book to assist those actively engaged in trying to improve their neighborhood, their nation, and the world,” and he tells the stories of his organization’s accomplishments against larger government and developer organizations because “activists lack the confidence that they too could succeed against similar odds.”

In chronicling some of this work, *The Activist’s Handbook* details a five-part agenda for meeting challenges groups face. That the book understands this process and walks us through it in some detail confirms Howard Zinn’s reaction to the work: “Enormously valuable for anyone interested in social change.”

- (1) Activists must create a proactive agenda, and not just protest government action. We need agendas/solutions of our own, and well-crafted programs to achieve what we seek to accomplish.
- (2) We should be ready and committed to establish “fear-and-loathing relationships” with elected officials. If they promise something good during the election, we need to carefully and vigilantly hold them to delivery – to remind them at every opportunity that we are watching what they do, and that we will not be satisfied until they deliver.
- (3) We should seek coalitions with ideologically diverse constituencies whenever necessary, working always to maintain the breadth and strength of voting base, and letting politicians know that we’re both real and to-be-reckoned-with.
- (4) We must strive to align the media with our cause. “By using the media not for coverage alone but rather to achieve a specific, implementable result, tactical activists can gain support for their goals.” Or, as he writes in one case involving low-rent hotel residents with no heat in winter: “Finding sympathetic subjects can be an essential part of an activist’s media strategy.”

News & Commentary From Members and Congregations

(5) And then there's understanding how to use direct action and the courts. "Public protests are important, but they are no substitute for developing a proactive program for social change. Direct actions, however, are often central to such a purpose. Confronting an adversary on his or her own turf creates a rush of excitement often missing from political activity."

As we continue to grow and expand our Environmental/Earth Justice curricula, these skill sets will become ever more important and significant parts of the process for many participants. *The Activist's Handbook* is a great primer in work that may be called for from the congregational level to the urban or inter-region process – one that should be on all our desks. ♦

Church Helps Win East Oakland Bus Rapid Transit Project

Amy Petré Hill, UUMFE Board

On July 17, the Earth Justice Associates (EJA) of First Unitarian Church of Oakland, CA and its allies in the Oakland Climate Action Coalition (OCAC) won unanimous approval for the East Bay Bus Rapid Transit (East Bay BRT) project. East Bay BRT, ranked the nation's most cost-effective public transit project by the Federal Transportation Administration, brings low-emission buses, dedicated bus and bike lanes, and bus stops exceeding Americans with Disabilities Act accessibility requirements to East Oakland, one of the poorest communities in the Bay Area. It also marks the completion of a major milestone in the city's Energy and Climate Action Plan.

The UU Oakland church, a founding member of the OCAC, has been working for over two years to create and then implement the City's Energy and Climate Action Plan (ECAP), an aggressive plan that aims to reduce the city's greenhouse gas emissions to 36 percent of 2005 levels by 2020. Oakland's ECAP was passed in March 2011 and noted by *The New York Times* for its leadership by communities of color and its commitment to both economic equity and environmental justice. Church members currently serve on the OCAC's Renewable Energy, Land Use & Transportation, and Food Justice & Land Access steering committees.

During June and July, church members Tom Smith, Bret Andrews, and I joined people from over thirty immigrant rights, environmental justice, renewable energy, and affordable housing advocates in speaking before numerous regulatory committees and the Oakland City Council in support of the project.



Oakland Climate Action Coalition activists take a stand for the East Bay Bus Rapid Transit project.

Although some members of the Oakland City Council were initially opposed to the EB BRT, testimony by community members of economic hardship caused by unreliable bus service, a lack of access to healthy food and health services, and an inability to benefit from programs – like the after school tutoring and emergency food pantry services offered by First Unitarian – led to a unanimous vote for the project.

East Bay BRT will help clean up East Oakland's air while also bringing 300 local, high-paying construction jobs to a community of color and immigrants that has struggled without major transportation infrastructure investment for over in 35 years.

According to Anne Blackstone, of the congregation's Earth Justice Associates, East Bay BRT demonstrates how successful local climate action plans address both environmental and economic justice issues simultaneously. "There's this myth that a congregation's work protecting our earth must be done at the expense of working for immigration, racial, economic or disability access justice. In my experience, this simply isn't true," she says. "Human needs and environmental justice go hand-in-hand, and our faith's core spiritual principles reflect this: to truly respect the inherent worth and dignity of every person we must care for the interdependent web of the environment in which we live." ♦



UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST MINISTRY FOR EARTH

1034 SW 13th Ave.
Portland, OR 97205

office@uuministryforearth.org

503-595-9392

uuministryforearth.org

Return Service Requested

Words of Inspiration

Ellen McClaran, UUMFE Board

The "Sometime Quartet" at my church, First Unitarian of Portland (OR), recently presented the Credo movement from "Missa Brevis Pro Serveto," the UU Mass by composer Tobin Stokes, with text in Latin by Rev. Frances Dearman, a UU minister and Latin scholar. This work expresses our contemporary UU theology, e.g., in the Credo, instead of declaring "I believe in . . .," we begin by first asking the question "What do I know of the world?" Although the work is sung in Latin, the inspirational words appear below in English.

What do I know of the world?

What does a fish know of water?

What knows a bird of the air?

Nothing but weather, nothing but waves.

Nothing comes from nothing;

*I am born from the earth, from air and fire, from water
and stars.*

*And my life, which I owe to nature, being mortal, I
shall return to the earth.*

I believe in spirit, breathing upon the waters.

I believe in loving kindness

I believe in life.

We invite you to submit to submit your favorite inspirational writings (including your own) to share on the UUMFE website or in the newsletter – short pieces that inspire the heart, move to action, or minister to one another in some way. Please e-mail to office@uuministryforearth.org with "Words of Inspiration" in the subject line. Thank you! ♦

Empower UU's: Support Development of Additional UUMFE Services

Your donation to UU Ministry for Earth will enable further development of the services offered for you, your congregations, and districts/regions to fulfill your vision of Earth celebration and justice. UUMFE is a 501c3, non-profit organization. Our Vision is of ". . . a world in which all people make reverence, gratitude, and care for the living Earth central to their lives."

For more information, visit the UUMFE website at uuministryforearth.org and click on the blue DONATE button.