



## General Assembly in Sustainable Minneapolis Provides Ample Opportunity for Environment and Justice Engagement

### Environment & Justice Workshops and Events at General Assembly

by Rowan Van Ness, UUMFE Program Associate for Environmental Justice, Washington Office of Advocacy, and Ellen McClaran, UUMFE Board Member

This year's GA offers an abundance of workshops related to environment and justice that may be of interest to UUMFE members and supporters. This is particularly true for congregations looking for EJ projects for the Green Sanctuary certification process. In addition, the 2010 Ware Lecture will be delivered by environmental activist Winona LaDuke. The UUMFE Annual meeting, co-sponsored by Minnesota EcoMinds, will feature a climate change conversation and screening of the film *No Impact Man* (see article on page 4).

Programming is scheduled during five time slots on Thursday and three slots Friday afternoon. Plenary sessions will be held Friday morning and most of Saturday and Sunday, with follow-up workshop discussions scheduled for non-delegates. Check your program for location and times of all the workshops described below. For those not attending General Assembly, be sure to check the UUA website later this summer for synopses of these workshops. Hope to see you at GA!

The Thursday, June 24, programming starts off with UUMFE's own workshop, **Environmental Justice In Our Congregations**, at 9 a.m. This workshop will help you bring environmental justice alive in your congregation through learning about congregational

success stories as well as UUA and UUMFE educational and advocacy tools. You will experience and take home an activity designed to help your congregation put justice into its climate change actions. Presenters include Steve Maier, Dr. Mark A. Hicks, and Rowan Van Ness.

Join a follow-up discussion Saturday morning.

During the same program slot, Richard Burkhart, of UUs for a Just Economic Community, will present a workshop on **Global Economic Justice**. He says about the workshop, "Our congregations have found few ways to engage in creating a global economy that is workable, sustainable, and just. Instead economic hurricanes threaten all. In this dialogue-based workshop we will help each other



grapple with the basics of global economic justice – for finance, trade, resources, environment, governance, and culture." Join a follow-up discussion Saturday afternoon.

Thursday afternoon at 1 p.m., the Commission on Social Witness will host a forum for advocates of the **Proposed Congregational Study/Action Issues for 2010-2014** to present to their *cont'd on page 3*

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**ABOUT UUMFE**

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## From the Board

### Letter From the Co-Chairs

The flurry of the activities surrounding the 40th Anniversary of Earth Day is behind us. There were more than 150 congregations who registered their events on the UUMFE registry with an exciting range of Earth Sunday services, ethical eating events, environmental justice projects, green fairs, garden-planting, and more. Take some time to look at the activities and you'll be inspired by the breadth of UU engagement. We're pleased that many of you found the materials in the Earth Day packet to be helpful.

The publication of the first three Environment and Justice Green Papers is a long-awaited milestone for UUMFE. We decided that, rather than trying to create an EJ guide as originally planned, we would try to stimulate ongoing conversation that will hopefully deepen the theological grounding of our Earth Justice work with a format that can be added to and revised. We hope that you will take a look at the first three Green Papers and add your comments. We have received a grant to pilot a curriculum using the papers and you'll hear more about that as it proceeds through the testing phase. We also know that people are eager to know more about the environmental justice projects that congregations have done as part of their Green Sanctuary action plans. A list of many of those accreditation projects will soon be available on our website.

This has been a year of continuing transition for UUMFE after transferring the administration of the Green Sanctuary program to the UUA. Much has been accomplished despite the fact that we no longer have a paid leader. We were grateful for the leadership of Steve Maier as Interim Executive Director the last half of 2009. The seven-person Board has stepped up to keep various projects going, including the development of a new website, the publication of the Green Papers, the start of the grant to work with Districts, and the ongoing communications via e-news, newsletters, and list-serves.

Rowan Van Ness, Environmental Justice intern in the Office of Advocacy and Witness, has been instrumental in leading climate change and ethical eating advocacy and information, including the 350.org Day of International Climate Change and the Earth Day packet. We are also grateful for the significant contributions of many volunteers including past UUMF Board chair Claudia Kern in writing the green papers and helping with the District support grant, along with the Reverend Karen Brammer from the NNE District office. Vicky Talbert has served as the UUMFE liaison to the Ethical Eating Team. We have contracted with Pamela Sparr and Mark Hicks to work on the Environment and Justice curriculum development.

We're grateful for the work that so many of you are doing within your congregations and communities to strengthen our UU voice on Earth ministry. We hope you'll let us know how you think UUMFE can be helpful to you in that work and we invite you to join our cadre of volunteers. Thank you for your support of UUMFE.

*Irene Keim and Nancy King Smith*  
*UU Ministry for Earth Board Co-Chairs* ♦

## More General Assembly News

### Environment & Justice at GA. . . cont'd from page 1

issues and respond to questions. Friday morning's plenary will determine which of the proposed CSAIs is selected for four years of congregational focus and potential formation and adoption as a UUA Statement of Conscience. Of the five worthy proposals, UU Ministry for Earth has chosen to support "Energy, Peace, and Justice" – see article on page 4. Friday afternoon at 2:45 p.m., there will be a **Hearing on Newly Selected Congregational Study/Action Issue** with facilitators Rob Keithan, Dr. David May, and Rev. Heather Starr, who will give a brief overview of the CSAI process and some general tips on how to engage effectively. Participants will be invited to share their recommendations, including examples of best practices. This hearing will help the UUA staff create a CSAI resource guide.

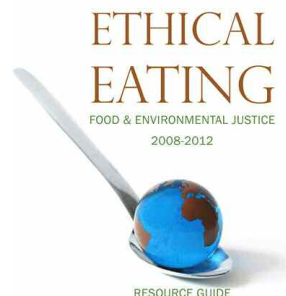
In **Using Sustainable Solutions to Impact Climate Change**, presented by the UU United Nations Office at 1 p.m. on Thursday, several participants at the UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen will discuss sustainable energy, agricultural policy, and the urgent need for UUs to join in long-term cooperative action to demonstrate respect for the interdependent web of all existence and the goal of world community. The panelists are Jennifer Jewell Thomas, Jim Harkness, Michael Noble, and Will Steger.

**Environmental Justice: The Green Revolution in Religion** is sponsored by Ballou Channing District at 2:45 p.m. Panel moderator Rev. Robert Murphy invites UUs to "join the revolution!" He further states, "Environmental justice advocates are challenging traditional ways of thinking about the environment and religious practice. Our speakers will review the proposed business resolution called 'The Green Revolution in Religion.' Can Unitarian Universalists develop a shared vision for environmental justice?" The panelists are Rev. Jose Ballester, Rev. Paul Rasor, Rev. Dr. Fred Muir, and Rev. Lucy Hitchcock Seck. Join a follow-up discussion Saturday morning.

In **Environmental Stewardship: Green Sanctuary** at 4:30 p.m., Robin Nelson of the UUA will call on participants to explore environmental stewardship – individually and collectively – as UUs are called to be stewards of the Earth for ourselves and for future generations. Using the Green Sanctuary Program as

a springboard for this topic, the workshop will explore various environmental justice and Ethical Eating projects. Join a follow-up discussion Saturday afternoon.

Friday afternoon at 1 p.m., the Commission on Social Witness and The UU Animal Ministry are sponsoring **Saving the World One Fork at a Time**, with panelists Howard Lyman, Rev. Dr. Paul Johnson, Rev. John Gibb Millspaugh. The workshop will explore the standard American diet as the root cause of the top four causes of death in the US and as the leading cause of the environmental meltdown on the Earth today – saving ourselves may save the earth.



Friday at 4:30 p.m. is the best time to provide input to the Commission on Social Witness during the workshop, **Ethical Eating: Moving Toward a Statement of Conscience**. The panelists – Rev. Dr. Paul Johnson, Rev. John Gibb

Millspaugh, Rev. Robert Murphy, and Rev. Dr. Lucy Hitchcock Seck – have been intimately involved with this CSAI and will provide insight and gather content for the development of the Ethical Eating: Food and Environmental Justice Statement of Conscience. This is an opportunity for congregations to identify actions that bring our food choices into alignment with our principles.

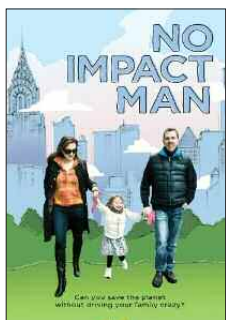
Saturday evening at 8 p.m., **Ware Lecturer Winona LaDuke** will address the Assembly. Winona is a Native American activist, environmentalist, economist, and writer. An Anishinaabekwe (Ojibwe) enrolled member of the Mississippi Band Anishinaabeg, she lives and works on the White Earth Reservations in northwestern Minnesota. In 1994, Winona was nominated by Time magazine as one of America's fifty most promising leaders under forty years of age and has received many awards. As Program Director of the Honor the Earth Fund, she works on a national level to advocate, raise public support, and create funding for frontline native environmental groups. She also works as Founding Director for White Earth Land Recovery Project. A graduate of Harvard and Antioch Universities, Winona has written extensively on Native American and environmental issues. ♦

## More General Assembly News

### UUMFE Annual Meeting at General Assembly

by Nancy King Smith, UUMFE Board Co-Chair

**A** lively eco-evening is planned for UUMFE's Annual Meeting in partnership with the Minnesota UU Social Justice Alliance EcoMinds. It will be held on Friday, June 25th, at the Central Lutheran Church, across Third Ave. from the Convention Center. The event will start at 6 p.m. with a light supper and networking, a brief meeting to elect UUMFE Board members, and, at 7 p.m., a conversation about climate change and Earth justice



and what might be UU's unique role in moving toward solutions. At 7:30, the film, *No Impact Man*, will be shown. The trailer for the film says, "The Adventures of a Guilty Liberal Who Attempts to Save the Planet, and the Discoveries He Makes About Himself and Our Way of Life in the Process." Reservations for the supper (\$5) can be made at the UUMFE exhibit booth. All are welcome – members only may vote, but anyone may attend the event.

The slate of Board members nominated for two-year terms includes new nominee Rev. Earl Koteen and continuing Board members Irene Keim (elected in 2008), Ann May (2004), and Karen Urbano (2004). They will join Ellen McClaran (2009), Vince Pawlowski (2009), Nancy King Smith (2007), and Terry Wiggins (2005).

Rev. Koteen is a community minister and a member of the UU Church of Berkeley. A lifelong UU, he held leadership positions in LRY and was an adult lay leader before entering the ministry. He also brings over thirty years of organizational development, leadership development, and human resources experience to UUMFE. ♦

### Energy, Peace and Justice Study Action Issue

by Nancy King Smith, UUMFE Board Co-Chair

**D**elegates at General Assembly will be selecting a new Congregational Study Action Issue (CSAI) for the next four years. The UU Ministry for Earth Board encourages your support for the Energy, Peace and Justice Study proposal that brings together the interconnected issues of our fossil fuel dependent way of life with its implications for peace and justice.

The central question, "How can UU's help all people, in all nations, to secure an adequate supply of energy that is safe, affordable and sustainable?" will be the springboard for study about the looming energy crisis and global competition for fossil fuels. Actions could include support for energy conservation, for transportation and home energy assistance for the poor, for clean energy, and for international agreements that more equitably distribute energy resources.

This CSAI was submitted by the UU Fellowship of Falmouth, MA, where the Reverend Robert Murphy, one of UU Ministry for Earth's founders, is pastor. ♦

## News From UU Ministry For Earth

### Member Profile

by Terry Wiggins, UUMFE Board Member

**M**meet Vicky Talbert: she's steady, sincere, and joyful. Vicky has been a Unitarian Universalist since 1993 and a long-time supporter of UU Ministry for Earth, since she heard about a congregation in Vermont becoming a Green Sanctuary. You may recognize her name, as she's on the Core Team for the

current Congregational Study Action Issue, "Ethical Eating: Food and Environmental Justice," and serves as its liaison with UUMFE.

Though she was already familiar with food issues and saw the interconnections between it and world hunger, degradation of the planet, human culture, and mistreatment of animals, a turning point occurred for her in 2004 when she *cont'd on page 5*

# News From UU Ministry For Earth

## Member Profile . . . cont'd from page 4

attended a Farm Sanctuary Conference and viewed *Peaceable Kingdom*. She and her husband Charlie turned to a plant-based diet and have found it to be a most joyful practice – to do the right thing for themselves and their values.

Vicky grew up in Maine and Connecticut. Even though she and her husband find themselves very close to the land and water in Wisconsin, especially when they ride their tandem bike or paddle their tandem kayak, she still finds that Maine is her spiritual home.

Now retired, Vicky spent her career as a Nurse Practitioner, specializing in pediatrics in the community, where she gained lots of experience with children with developmental disabilities. She also learned about the costs to the planet of our system for the production and distribution of food.

In the course of our interview, Vicky gave me a useful tip: when going out to a restaurant with a chef, call ahead and ask how they can meet your dietary needs, e.g., what do they have for a vegan or vegetarian option. She finds that people respect the good work she and her husband do and don't think of them as wackos.

Finally, Vicky praised the Core Team experience and her learning from its members' variety of perspectives. "The ministers helped me articulate faith issues," she said. ♦

## Northwest Earth Institute Courses

by Nancy King Smith, UUMFE Board Co-Chair



Many UU congregations have found that the study guides from the Northwest Earth Institute (NWEI) make wonderful discussion courses.

Each guide is complete with readings and questions so that the sessions can be self-organized and guided. *Menu*

*for the Future* is an excellent accompaniment to the Ethical Eating Study Action Issue, and *Global Warming: Changing CO<sub>2</sub>urse* is a good companion for the Climate Change SAI.

Other courses include *Choices in Sustainable Living*, *Voluntary Simplicity*, *Sustainable Systems At Work*, *Healthy Children, Healthy Planet*, *Discovering a Sense of Place*, and *Reconnecting with Earth*. A new course, *Health and the Environment*, will be launched in late summer 2010. The study guides can be ordered online at NWEI.org. If you select UUMFE/Green Sanctuary as your connection, NWEI will share some of the profit with UUMFE. ♦

## Workshops To Pilot Local Environmental Justice Discernment

by Irene Keim, UUMFE Board Co-Chair

UUMFE and six UU congregations are piloting two workshops about the intersections of environmental concerns and justice. The congregations range in size from very small to large and include Brooksville, FL; Orlando, FL; Milford, NH; Portland, OR; Reston, VA; and Walnut Creek, CA.

The format will include short movies, music, group discussion, and map-making. The last activity is listed with great apologies to geographers – the congregations will 'map' the intersections of the church to local relationships and services. The activity is intended to assist in developing new insights into the state of justice work and the surrounding communities.

The workshops are an extension of the principles discussed in the Environment and Justice Green Papers presented on the UUMFE website in March. The Green Papers explore the history of environmental justice action and suggest paths for growth in activity within our congregations and communities. You are invited to read and comment on the papers on the UUMFE website. We encourage you to sign in and provide insights and comments as together we work towards a greater understanding and effectiveness in living our UU Principles.

The workshop materials were developed by Dr. Mark Hicks, Professor of Religious Education at Meadville Lombard Theological School, and Pamela Sparr, member of All Souls Church Unitarian, Washington, D.C. The Green Papers were developed by UUMFE members and other volunteer collaborators. Both the workshops and the Green Papers are being funded by a grant from the UUA and *cont'd on page 6*

## News From UU Ministry For Earth

### Workshops. . . cont'd from page 5

by targeted donations from UUMFE Members and friends. If you would like to contribute to the ongoing development of the Environment and Justice resources, please visit the UUMFE Join-and-Order page on the website to make a donation or print a donation form to mail. ♦

### Three Districts Approved for UUMFE Challenge Grant

by Nancy King Smith, UUMFE Board Co-Chair

Three UUA Districts have started working with the UUMFE to support and connect congregations and individuals working on environmental issues within their Districts. Northern New England (NNE), St. Lawrence and Ohio Meadville Districts are taking advantage of a challenge grant that UU Ministry for Earth has been awarded from the UU Funding Program. They are all planning fall conferences that will gather activists to share stories of their work, deepen their theological grounding, and strengthen the network of people working on Earth justice. NNE District has already gathered information from a congregational survey that the other two Districts will also use to help complete needs assessments. UUMFE will work with a leadership team from each District on tailoring the conference to meet the identified needs and build the ongoing structure to support the work. All are excited about the opportunities to work cross-District and engage others as well.

UUMFE will need to raise \$3,000 within the Districts and our larger membership to match an additional

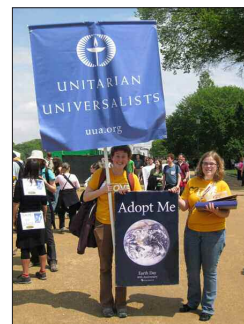
\$3,000 from the Funding Program. A fourth District will be added over the next few months, and there is the possibility for additional funding for more Districts in 2011. More information can be found on the UUMFE website under Support for Districts. ♦

### Earth Day Excitement

by Ellen McClaran, UUMFE Board Member

With the help of Rowan Van Ness, our Legislative Assistant for Environmental Justice, UUMFE developed a comprehensive set of resources revolving around food and environmental justice for congregations to use for their Earth Day activities this year. Then in March, the Ethical Eating Core Team launched the 40/40/40 Project – in honor of the 40th anniversary of Earth Day, 40 people in a congregation pledge to make one or more Earth-friendly lifestyle changes for 40 days.

More than 150 congregations registered on the UUMFE website, with over half reporting activities related to ethical eating and/or 40-40-40. How exciting – so many fresh, creative ideas! Now your post-Earth Day stories and photos are starting to come in (send to Rowan at rvanness@uua.org) and will be included in a blog on our website as well as our Facebook pages. On page 8, see how one of our newest UU congregations celebrated Earth Day. ♦



Rowan (left) and friend at the Earth Day Climate Rally in Washington, DC

## News From Congregations

### Reconciliation Ecology

by Vincent Pawlowski, UUMFE Board Member

In October 2009, Prof. Michael Rosenzweig, from the Ecology and Evolutionary Biology Department at the University of Arizona, presented a public lecture on what he calls "Reconciliation Ecology" (based on concepts presented in his book, *Win-Win Ecology*) at my church, the UU Congregation of NW Tucson (UUCNWT). There was such a high level of interest in

the topic in relation to plans for the future development of our church site that we took up the challenge and added Reconciliation Ecology to our list of Green Collective Ministry projects.

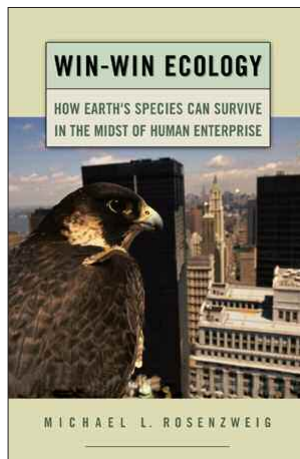
This is how Dr. Rosenzweig describes his concepts: "Reconciliation Ecology says we still have time to save most of the world's species. We can do it by reviving the overwhelming bulk of the land – the places we humans use. *cont'd on page 7*

## News From Congregations

### Reconciliation Ecology . . . *cont'd from page 6*

"We can make them over so that they can support both us and other species. It won't be simple and it won't happen overnight. But it is practical, it is positive and it is backed by science.

"To do it, we can be more effective if we don't sound like we want to put an end to civilization and the human enterprise. Most people tune out the screaming Chicken Little talk that demeans the impact of well-meaning humans. Who wants to hear that the sky is falling? Especially when it will fall only if we get discouraged and run away.



establishing, and maintaining new habitats to conserve species diversity in places where people live, work, or play. Reconciliation Ecology seeks environmentally sound ways for us to continue to use the land for our own benefit.

"To practice Reconciliation Ecology, we must pay close attention to our treatment of the land. We must back off a bit – not on the amount of land we take for ourselves – but on how we transform it for our use. Right now, our footprint is too big. Going barefoot is not the answer but the time has come to trade in our jackboots for the grace and elegance of ballet slippers – the careful foot can walk anywhere."

So, my question is, why "reconciliation"? Why not preservation, conservation, or restoration ecology? As I understand it, Reconciliation Ecology is not an alternative to these other worthy efforts at saving what is left of nature or a particular untouched natural area, or for restoring special places we have previously altered. Those efforts should and will continue. Reconciliation Ecology only is a supplement to these efforts at keeping or re-creating native environments in those places we decide to occupy. It is focused on the places we already occupy and, in many cases, cannot leave or readily return to any semblance of

their native splendor. This is true of our church property. Although the landscape is beautiful, it is not natural. The paucity of tall native trees and grasses is suggestive of over-grazing by cattle. The abundant prickly pear was introduced to the area as an ornamental. However, if we are concerned with adopting Reconciliation rather than Restoration Ecology, the absence of a natural landscape does not pose a major concern. Our goal is to develop a functional ecosystem taking into account our human needs while encouraging the development of stable natural habitats. It would create the conditions suitable for growth of a variety of plants. Because of the varied topography of our church site it may be possible to plan quite a large number of habitats in a relatively small area.

"What is Reconciliation Ecology? It is the science of inventing,

During his presentation, Dr. Rosenzweig outlined the theological basis for his ideas. He described something very similar to the Unitarian Universalist seventh principle, but in a Hebrew scriptural context. He talked at length about the origins of the split between ancient ideas of our inseparable interconnectedness to the web of life, and the newer idea of our separation from and mastery or stewardship of the earth.

He also justified the need for bringing nature into the human environment. The reasons to have other species in abundance around us include not only ideas like E.O. Wilson's biophilia concept, but also species-area relationships. Briefly, without the math, the stability of life is dependent upon the number of species an area can support.

Since Dr. Rosenzweig introduced us to this new way of looking at our church landscape, the congregation has been discussing goals for the use of our property including the types of habitats we would like to try to develop. We are in the process of surveying the plant species present on the site over a twelve-month period. Evidence of the recent presence of the following species was observed: coyotes, kit fox, bobcat, javelina, cactus wren, Anna's hummingbird. We have realized that the needs of people and other species often overlap, as in the desire for shade and water. As we implement our landscape plans over the coming years, we hope to create an ecosystem that will encourage a diversity of plants and animals to share this special place with our congregation and insure that "the careful foot can walk anywhere." ♦

UU Ministry for Earth • 7



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### Harmony Celebrates Earth Day

by Karen Dunsmore, Co-President, Harmony UU Church

**H**armony Unitarian Universalist Church is the newest UU congregation in the Cincinnati area, with services starting in January 2010. Earth Day was



Harmony's first social action event. The children made displays about new recycling rules in the Cincinnati area and also about local food resources. Several families started seeds for our seed giveaway at the

Arbor Day Celebration and Earth Walk in Mason, Ohio, a northeast suburb of Cincinnati. While it was too windy for the display boards to stay upright, the

seedling giveaway was a hit. We gave out almost 200 seedlings, which included heirloom tomatoes, broccoli, peppers, cucumbers, basil, and a few mystery plants. Everyone had fun and luckily the rain held off until the end of the event. ♦

*Photos by Harmony members Amy Robinson and Justin Sodano*



#### Your Support Is Needed and Appreciated

This issue of the UUMFE newsletter highlights exciting projects that depend on you. Your donations and your new or renewed membership make possible the work towards Earth ministry as an integral part of our UU experience. Go to [www.uuministryforearth.org](http://www.uuministryforearth.org) for donation and membership options, as well as many UUMFE resources. Thank you for your support.