

The Communicator

Volume 21, Issue 2

the newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation

Fall, 2003

First Clara Barton Intern Arrives in Washington

Our first intern in the Clara Barton Internship program is a well-educated, intelligent and articulate young woman. Kierstin Homblette was born in Madison, WI and grew up in Orlando, FL. Her family, which includes a younger brother, attended the First Unitarian Church of Orlando. She graduated in April, 2003 from the University of Pittsburgh with a dual degree – a Bachelor of Science in Biology and a Bachelor of Arts in Anthropology with a minor in African Studies.

While at the University of Pittsburgh, Kierstin did campus organizing and served in the student government. She originally thought about medical school, but got caught up in the intricacies of cultural anthropology. Through a study abroad program, she spent a semester in Kenya in spring 2002, learning Swahili as part of her BA program. The program in Kenya centered on biology and anthropology with a side track in Internet develop-

ment. For the first three months of the stay the group camped, spending

"I am really excited to move to DC and work as a Clara Barton intern. My interest in women's issues began as a member of my Campus Women's Organization."

— Kierstin Homblette

3-5 days in each location, and she was able to experience first-hand the differences in culture. During the last month, the group spent their time on the coast in a small hotel.

She believes that this internship will help her expand the possibilities of what she can do and she's open to the possibility that she may want to do something she's not even aware of yet! Right now she is considering several options for her future – signing up with the Peace Corps and possibly going back to Africa; getting a graduate degree; or working in public health.

Kierstin worries that it will take women's rights

disappearing for young women to realize the importance of these issues. Her internship will concentrate around women's issues as her constant priority, with economic justice and human and civil rights as additional important interests. She feels she can bring the best of the training she received as a science student – hard analytical thinking and reasoning – to her passion for social justice. While in college she started a campus ministry group between Pittsburgh and Carnegie Mellon and has always considered social justice a natural part of her life. In fact, her campus experiences tell her that women are doing the bulk of the social justice work.

Kierstin is excited and overwhelmed by the support she's received from UUWF and the members she met at



Kierstin Homblette
Legislative Assistant for Women's
Issues in the Washington Office
for Advocacy and Witness.

General Assembly. We are just as excited to have her represent UUWF and we echo the invitation she made in her first journal entry: "Witness my advocacy!"

Kierstin Homblette is the Legislative Assistant for Women's Issues in the Washington Office for Advocacy and Witness. She can be reached at khomblette@uua.org and her journal entries can be read at www.uua.org/uuawo/new/article.php?id=6#new.

Linda's Window

I had one column written a while ago and then with important news to share, I decided to do a different version... so here it is.

First, GA was an amazing success! We rolled out the UUWF/Clara Barton Internship in the Washington Office of the UUA. Our initial donation of \$200,000 needs to grow to at least \$400,000 to ensure the continuation of this very important advocate for women. We left GA with almost \$60,000 in additional donations. This legacy from the UUWF is

vital to the work of women's issues and I encourage you to make your own donation! To request more information, please contact the UUWF office at 617/742-2100 ext. 692 or send e-mail to uuwf@uua.org.

As important as the internship is, so is the board meeting that we just held. The Restructuring Task Force reported their findings and recommendations and the Board took an historical vote to move the UUWF from a service organization to a foundation model organization.

What does this mean for you? **This means that your dues and additional contributions will actually go to projects that are engaging women in transformational work.** The discussions were challenging and the decision was difficult to make, but it is time the UUWF move forward. As Phyllis Rickter gently reminded us, the UUWF and its predecessor organizations changed their structure and focus every ten years or so and we have been a little behind in our efforts!

Within the pages of the next three issues of *The Communicator*, through special mailings and by participating in a professional survey, you are going to have opportunities to learn more about our organizational changes, give voice to your concerns and show your support. Over the next several months, please challenge yourself to look toward the future and help strengthen both of these promises to our daughters.

In faith,
Linda



The Booth at General Assembly

It is at the UUWF Booth in the Exhibit Hall where members and friends gather each year at General Assembly – a gathering space where women can find old friends, renew acquaintances and catch up on what's happening in the world of women.

This year, in celebration of the 40th Anniversary of the UUWF and the exciting changes under consideration for the organization, we decorated the booth in purple and gold, our new colors, and displayed the new Federation banner with

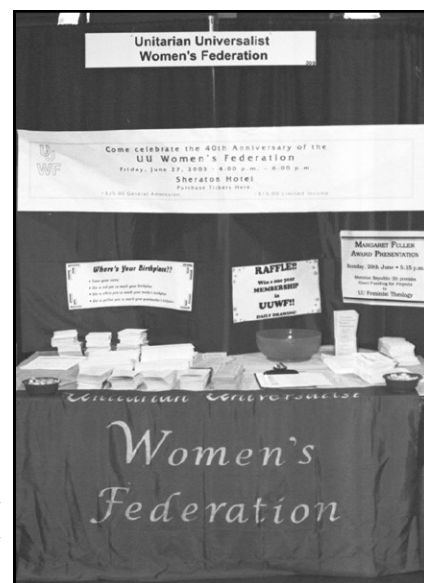
the phoenix rising from the flaming chalice. We were especially proud to introduce to the world of UUs, our newest project, the establishment of the Clara Barton Internship at the UU Washington Office. Kirsten Homblatt, the first Clara Barton Intern, visited the booth several times so that people might have time to meet and talk with her. Information about Kirsten, the internship itself, and the on-going fundraising program to assure the continuance of a UU voice for women in Washington D.C. was on display there.

Materials highlighting other UUWF projects and programs, such as the Margaret Fuller Awards, the Lanning Fund, the women of Canada and the new Transylvanian Women's Alliance were also on display. And, of course, UUWF memberships, new and renewal, are always available at the booth. For the third consecutive year, there was a daily drawing for a free, one-year membership to the UUWF and a record number of women who

renewed or began membership this year.

One popular feature of this year's booth were maps on which visitors were invited to trace

(Continued on page 3)



Margaret Fuller Awards Given for Outstanding Projects

UUWF's 2003 Margaret Fuller Awards for Religious Feminism were presented at the annual UUA General Assembly in June. This program provides grant funds to UUs working on projects focusing on any strand of UU feminist theology and seeks to fund accessible projects that can be used by local congregations or other groups.

The Margaret Fuller Selection Committee reviewed a number of excellent applications and chose the following awardees:

Judith Christianson, Marlboro, MA, for her

play, *Ida Hultin and the Sudbury Women's Alliance*. Ms. Christianson will honor this pioneering UU minister with a play suitable for congregational use, special events, District meetings or women's groups. Stories of real people struggling with actual events are ever intriguing, Ms. Christianson asserts, and dramatic presentations of such stories of women can deepen our appreciation of the lives and contributions of feminists.

The Rev. Dorothy May Emerson, Medford, MA, for her anthology, *Women and PeaceMaking*. Ms. Emerson's anthology will include philosophical un-

derpinnings for a world without war (Mary Wollstonecraft); the horrors of war through the eyes of women involved in the American Civil War (Clara Barton, Dorothea Dix, Mary Livermore); women who opposed war and promoted peace (Julie Ward Howe, Lucia Ames Mead); international women's organizations of the early 20th century (Mary Wright Sewall, Emily Green Balch, Jane Addams); mid and late 20th century peace movements (Voices of Women and US and English peace camps); and current women's peace work (Women's Peace Congress, PeaceLand). Rev. Emerson welcomes volunteer assistance in this project – research, writing introductions to sections, editing, etc.

Ms. Simons anticipates distributing the video to UU congregations here and abroad, to give UU women the opportunity to get to know one another across the world. The production may also be submitted for potential television broadcast to audiences of people interested in world issues and humanitarian outreach."

This award presentation also included updates from last year's grant recipients. Bev Forbes (bforbes@seanet.com) spoke about her popular series of seminars about May Sarton; Barbara Schonborn (Barbara.schonborn@aolmuni.stanford.org) and Rosemary Matson about their curriculum for UU adults and youth, *Unraveling the Gender Knot*; and Cathleen McCarroll (ccoxmcc@mac.com) about her workshop, *Archetypes of Feminisms; Claiming Our Whole Selves*. Please contact the awardees directly for more information about their projects.

UUWF is currently accepting applications for the 2004 Margaret Fuller Awards; February 1 is the deadline. Contact the UUWF Office at uufw@uua.org or our web site at www.uua.org/UUWF for application deadlines.

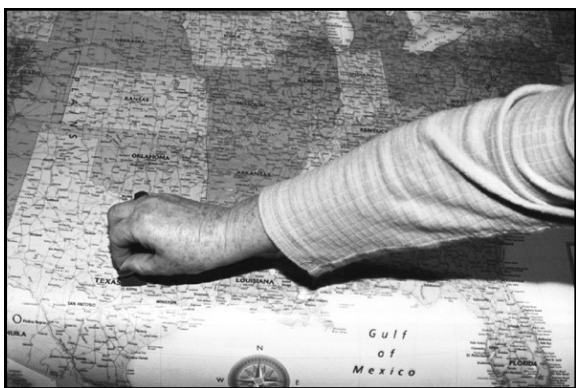


The Booth, cont. from p. 2

their matriarchal roots by placing pins on the maps to indicate their birthplace

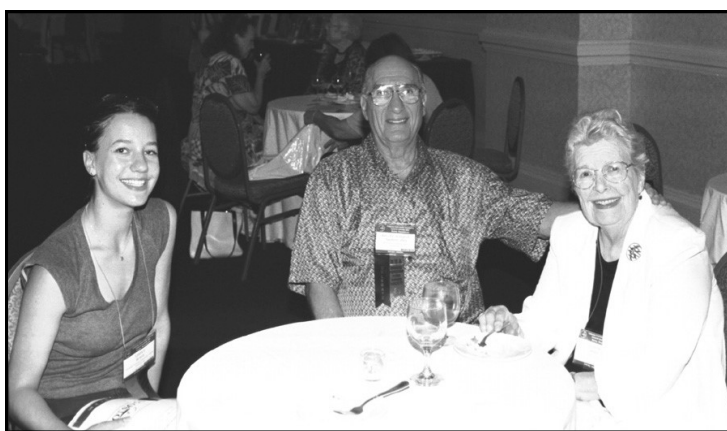
and the birthplaces of their mothers and grandmothers. Although most of the pins were in the Northeast portion of the United States and in the countries of Western Europe, there was a satisfying scattering of markers in almost every state

and a surprising number of foreign countries around the world. The UUWF booth is an integral part of the UU women's network. We hope you will join us under the rising phoenix banner at GA '04 in Long Beach, California!



Laurie Simons, Bellvue, WA, for *Challenges and Opportunities – Women in Transylvania: A Video of Hope*. Ms. Simons' home congregation is the partner church of the Unitarian church in the small Transylvanian village of Torockoszentgyorgy. On a recent visit there, she gathered material for a 25-30 minute video documentary featuring the village's Unitarian women and children which will explore their daily lives, their needs, and the experience of being part of a minority population (Hungarian in Romania).

UUWF at General Assembly 2003



Action of Immediate Witness on Women's Rights Passed in GA

Actions of Immediate Witness are proposed and voted on at the same General Assembly. As the name suggests, they deal with particularly time-sensitive issues. Since they are not subject to congregational review, they are not considered policy of the Association – just the viewpoint of the General Assembly itself. They must be passed by a two-thirds vote.

In celebration of the establishment of the Clara Barton Internship for Women's Rights, the UUWF Board proposed an Action of Immediate Witness on Women's Rights at GA 2003.

Board member Barbara Gardner agreed to take on the drafting job. She was ably assisted by Board member Patsy Madden; Rev. Meg Riley, UUA Washington Office; Denny Davidoff, past president and UUA Moderator; and member Clarice Turney, all of whom offered research suggestions. The research began prior to GA and a very rough and long draft was presented to the UUWF Board. During GA, editing was done and Ellen Spencer, UUWF Office Administrator, bravely sliced it down to the 500 words allowed. After submitting a copy to the Commission on Social Witness, UUWF was able to start collecting delegate signatures.

ACTION OF IMMEDIATE WITNESS
Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation

SUPPORT WOMEN'S RIGHTS
UUA General Assembly, Boston
June 2003

Because our Unitarian Universalist principles call upon us to affirm and promote the inherent worth and dignity of every person and to seek justice, equity, and compassion in human relations; and

Because in the past four decades the Association and its member congregations have consistently spoken and acted in support of the broad spectrum of women's rights, including women's right to control their own bodies, receive equal pay for comparable work, and be safe from domestic violence;

Whereas early this month the House passed a federal ban on so-called "partial-birth abortion;" the Senate has approved a similar ban; and President Bush has promised to sign the new version of the bill; and

Whereas this is only the latest effort in the Bush Administration's attempts to erode gains women have made in recent decades, which include:

- Appointing people hostile to feminism to federal courts and other key positions affecting women's lives;
- Using federal dollars to promote marriage rather than job training for poor women;
- Tacking abstinence-only-until-marriage sexuality education onto obscure bills;
- Defunding women's offices in federal agencies in the name of budget cutting;
- Attempting to circumvent existing legislation, such as the proposal to amend guidelines to Title IX (which mandates equity for women in all educational programs, not just sports) to allow "a reasonable variance" from the standard of true equity for women.

Therefore be it resolved that congregations of the UUA be encouraged to:

- Hold public forums about federal court appointments to better inform us about the federal judicial appointment process and what those appointments may mean for women;
- Contribute to the UUWF Clara Barton Internship for Women's Rights, which will help keep UUs informed on these issues;
- Participate in the August 23, 2003, 40th Anniversary March on Washington to commemorate the march at which Dr. Martin Luther King's delivered his "I Have a Dream" speech, and to emphasize that the "Dream" remains unfulfilled; and,
- Participate in the historic March for Reproductive Freedom in Washington on April 25, 2004.

Collecting the signatures was great fun – going around and talking to delegates about the issue of women's rights and the serious attacks being made against them. Even though much of the research detail was not included in the text, it helped in the discussions

with delegates. We were able to present facts and respond to questions about the right wing attack against women's rights based on our current research. After turning in more than the required number of signatures, the proposed Action of Immediate

Witness was accepted by the Commission and admitted to the agenda. Then the required mini-assembly was held so that interested delegates could discuss the AIW and offer amendments. Lin Hinds, another UUWF

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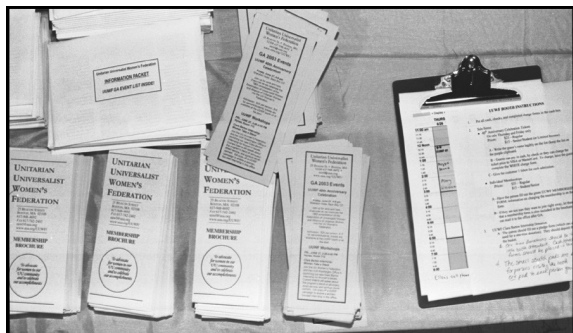
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More from GA 2003



AIW, *cont. from page 5*

Board member, helped a few delegates submit amendments, one of which was added.

Finally, the AIW was returned for action by the delegates in a plenary session. Patsy Madden presented it and Board member Justice Waidner spoke for it, along with several other delegates. One proposed amendment was accepted, one was voted down and our AIW passed with a huge majority!

This Action of Immediate Witness, which accompanies this article (on page 5), can be used by your

congregation and in your women's and social action groups. Spread the word about the attack on women's rights and the importance of the federal judiciary. Additional resources can be found on the Web site for the UUA Washington Office for Advocacy at www.uua.org/uuawo. If you would like to receive alerts from the Washington Office on a variety of social justice issues you can sign up at www.uua.org/mailman/listinfo/advocacy-news. Write and call your legislators and tell them what you think! Women need your activ-