



Voice of Women

Winter 1999

Central Midwest District Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation

PRESIDENT'S NOTES

It's always challenging to get through the winter holidays and get into gear for the New Year. Imagine how much fun it's going to be next year trying to remember to write 2000 on your checks, millennium or not! Kurt Vonnegut (UU Humanist), whose characters often flit through time, recently responded to "How do you think the millennium will impact us?" Kurt said that he wasn't worried, especially since scholarship had shown that Jesus was actually born 4-5 years earlier than formerly believed. So it's really all over, and we're still here.

And so is the UUWF, even though we still have things to work out, and lingering confusion over the difference between UUWF and W&R remains. UUWF is an independent membership-based organization stemming from the historical union of the Association of Universalist Women and the Alliance of Unitarian Women after the Unitarians and the Universalists merged in 1963 to form the UUA. W&R (Women & Religion Committee) evolved as a UUA committee, implementing the 1977 GA resolution. Although the continental W&R committee is no longer supported, our CMwD W&R is strong and alive, providing the winter WomanSpirit conference and the summer Camp Renora gatherings. Our history, primary focus and base may be different, but both groups are about serving UU and/or

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CONTINENTAL UUWF NOTES

Two of the Continental board members living within our district, responding to a request for Continental UUWF news, sent the following notes via e-mail after their board's January 16-18 meeting.

From Patsy Sherrill Madden:

Well, the big news for this district is that the September board meeting will be in St. Louis, and we are hoping that some of the CMwD women can drop in and say Hi. Also, there will probably be a reception of some sort for UU women during the weekend (September 16-19). More details will follow. We are also preparing for pre-GA day.

More big news is that we have a healthy balanced budget that funds 4 issues of the *Communicator* - look for one in February, one in April (with details about pre-GA and GA events), one in September and the last one before the end of the year.

We feel we are beginning to get a handle on restructuring — both how the board works and what the UUWF will look like as we move forward into the future. The Feminist Theology visioning is rapidly taking place with an ad hoc FT Restructuring Committee about to be formed. A report is expected from them by GA. All in all it is very exciting and fulfilling to be in on the future of the UUWF.

From Melinda Perrin: Before the UUA GA officially gets underway in

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CLARA BARTON REMEMBERED

As many of you know, a camp for girls with diabetes was established to honor Clara Barton in New Oxford, Massachusetts, on the land on which the 18th-century farmhouse in which she was born stands. The Federation inherited this service project of the Association of Universalist Women when the latter group merged with The Alliance of Unitarian Women in 1963 to form the UUWF. In 1987, a separate corporation was created to operate the camp, with the understanding that it would continue to operate the Birthplace Museum. Since the Clara Barton Museum has few visitors due to its out-of-the-way location, and since its small endowment is not enough to maintain the house and its collection of artifacts, both are deteriorating and the camp corporation no longer wants to operate the museum. These background facts mobilized one of CMwD-UUWF's women to action. Ruth Davis, a long time Universalist, now a member of the Avon Federated Church, is determined that Clara Barton shall not be forgotten. Here's an excerpt from her letter to the Continental Board:

REMEMBER CLARA BARTON!

Born to a Universalist family on Christmas Day 1821, she was a school teacher for 18 years, and when replaced by a man at the school she founded, she went to Washington, D.C., and secured a job at the

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Don't Miss Allerton '99

CMwD-UUWF's Annual Conference, June 5-7



There's more than one way to take a **WALK** there!

And . . . there are many **PATHS** from which to choose.

Come spend a pampered weekend (Saturday noon through Monday noon) in the company of vital and interesting women at Robert Allerton's former country estate. The conference center, approximately thirty miles southwest of Champaign-Urbana, is now operated by the University of Illinois. The 1,500-acre wooded grounds along the Sangamon River provide a magnificent setting for the forty-room Georgian mansion, in which we'll be housed and hold our meetings. Among the pleasures to be experienced are more than seventy outdoor sculptures, acres of formal gardens, miles of hiking trails and the food.

In the past few years labyrinths, or at least talk of them, seem to be everywhere.

The Elgin, Illinois UU Church is home to a 40-foot Chartres Cathedral design. The Theosophical Society in Wheaton has a seven-circuit Trojan stone path, similar to the pattern found in many ancient sites all over the world. Native Americans have another variant called the man-in-the-maze. And, at GA in Indianapolis, one saw purple labyrinth-emblazoned T-shirts and flyers offering a chance to walk a Delaware UU Fellowship's labyrinth. (Several East Coast UU societies have and use them.)

An entire movement has flowed from the work of Dr. Lauren Artress, Canon for Special Ministries at San Francisco's Grace Cathedral. Her book *Walking a Sacred Path: Rediscovering the Labyrinth as a Spiritual Tool* delves into the ori-

gin, history and uses made of the labyrinth imbedded in the floor of Chartres Cathedral. Searching deeper, many other such ancient symbols or designs were "discovered" and came to light. Many people believe that walking the labyrinth, seen as a metaphor for one's life path, can be used as a centering activity, a form of meditation. Some see it as a sort of body prayer and report deep mystical illumination or healing.

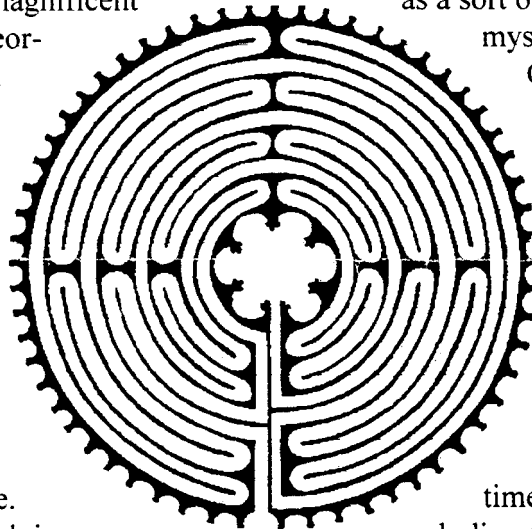
Others find it useful for stress reduction. At minimum, it's a pleasant, relaxing experience worth trying.

Our keynote speaker, Rev. Leonetta Bugleisi, of the Beverly Unitarian Church in Chicago, will help us explore this subject both mentally and physically. She's been interested in labyrinth work for some time and has engaged in its study, including training as a facilitator through

the Veriditas organization, based at Grace Cathedral. Leonetta's even gone so far as to create her own 30+ foot diameter portable canvas labyrinth (with the help of friends) and will bring it along for us to try. Labyrinths of other designs will be on hand, too. And, those with sight or mobility problems won't be left out; they can participate by following the pattern with a finger on wooden plaques on which the design is embedded.

Additional Allerton workshops will explore the many different paths we may take in our lives. Program details will follow in the spring.

For more info, contact Jeanne Fitch at 309.692.6923 or Jeannefitch@aol.com.



**THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CENTRAL
MIDWEST DISTRICT
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST WOMEN'S
FEDERATION...**

... will be held June 6th during the Allerton Conference to hear reports, adopt a budget and to elect a president, treasurer, two directors and a nominating committee. This year's nominating committee encourages your ac-tive participation in this process. We'd especially like to get **representation from Wisconsin**. Interested? Any suggestions for the above named offices?

Contact the Nominating Committee: Jeanne Fitch, Peoria (309.692.6923), Jet Jacobs, Bloomington (309.828.6685) or Theresa Parrish, Rockford (815.967.0461). Thanks.

Look Ahead To Fall

HOLD the dates of November 5-7, 1999 for this year's UUWF FALL RETREAT. Yes! This is a week later than previous years, but it will be at Aurora University, George Williams Lake Geneva Campus as before.

Any suggestions not included in last year's evaluation may be sent to this year's Planning Committee of the Deerfield Church, via Emily Meter, 1175 Elmwood Place, Deerfield IL 60015-1209.



SCHOLARSHIP GRANT APPLICATION

(Please apply by May 15.)

So that as many women as possible can attend the Allerton conference, CMwD-UUWF makes available five scholarships of up to \$85 each. Home churches may also provide financial assistance. All requests will be kept confidential. To apply for a CMwD-UUWF scholarship, complete the following:

My financial need is _____

My home church will provide _____

I would like the CMwD-UUWF to provide _____

An additional scholarship is available for ministerial students.

I am a student at _____

Mail this form to Jeanne Fitch 4620 W. Hetherwood Dr., Peoria IL 61615

CMwD-UUWF ANNUAL DUES ARE \$5!

They may be paid through your local unit or at registration at the Allerton Conference or the Lake Geneva Fall Retreat. Another option is to join as an individual member. Note that the date at the upper right hand corner of your mailing label indicates when your next dues payment is expected. FYI, if you pay via your unit, the date entered is based on when we received the membership list from your local treasurer or membership coordinator.

WILL YOU/HAVE YOU MOVED?

Don't miss a single issue of *VOW* or notice of women's programming. Also, please let us know if someone's name should be removed from our mailing list due to death, discontinued membership, or relocation. Thanks!

MEMBERSHIP/MAILING LIST UPDATE

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CHURCH _____

GROUP _____

INDIVIDUAL DUES PAYMENT Y ___ N ___

(Send \$5 check, made payable to CMwD-UUWF, to treasurer Mary Lou Steadman, 5 Ardith Drive, Normal, IL 61761)

ADDRESS CHANGE Y ___ N ___

(Send updates to Betty Jachim, 6341 Blackhawk Trail, Indian Head Park, IL 60525)

*(Continued from page 1)***President's Notes**

other women of a liberal, open-minded religious point of view. Neither group is better or worse; they're simply different. It's not an either/or proposition. For some of us, it's both; for some, it's a just a matter of emphasis.

Another confusing fact is that CMwD is completely independent from, though strongly linked by ties and interests, to the Continental UUWF. Membership in one does not automatically confer membership in the other. You may be surprised to hear that in some local units the dues collected cover membership in both "levels" of UUWF, while in others it's purely optional. So some of you may not have received the *Communicator* in which the special donations we authorized at our last two years' CMwD-UUWF annual meetings were graciously acknowledged with thanks. If you are not a current member of Continental UUWF, please consider supporting it via personal or group membership. (There's a reduced rate for a group of five or more.) Contact UUWF at 25 Beacon St., Boston, MA 02108, e-mail: espencer@uua.org.

In 1855, Unitarian Lucy Stone said, "Has a woman a right to herself? It is very little to me to have the right to vote, to own property, etc., if I may not keep my body and it's uses in my absolute right." Safeguarding that right is why CMwD-UUWF is a supporting member of RCRC (Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice). It's only been 26 years since *Roe v. Wade* gave us safer, wider options. But we know they and the choice providers are under constant attack. Complacency is dangerous. Please heed the call for support from RCRC.

And finally, e-mail has made it easier to quickly collect and disseminate info (articles, happenings, book list suggestions, news) these days – and a bit more painlessly too. Board members welcome your comments and suggestions. The editor welcomes articles by, for and about what's going on in your units, circles, support and/or spirituality groups. We encourage you to make practical use of the board directory we include in each issue of VOW.

One last thing, the Nominating Committee needs a few good women. Can you help????

*(Continued from page 1)***Continental**

Salt Lake City this June, Continental UUWF will hold events designed to appeal to women of all ages and philosophies.

On Wednesday, June 23rd, there will be a special reception for Judy Norsigian, on behalf of this year's Ministry to Women Award winner, the 1998 Update Revision Committee of the Boston Women's Health Book Collective. The collective has come out with three new books: *Our Bodies, Ourselves for the New Century*; an updated *Changing Bodies, Changing Lives*; and *The New Ourselves Growing Older*.

On Thursday, June 24th, one hundred fifty women are expected to attend a one-day Pre-GA conference with Judy Norsigian as keynote speaker. She will also answer questions from the audience. Lunch tables will be grouped by geographic area, allowing women to get to know the Continental

UUWF Board members responsible for their region. The afternoon breakout working groups will revolve around issues pertaining to different age groups as addressed in the collective's books.

During General Assembly, the Continental UUWF will be presenting five different programs: one called "I Win! You Win! Non-Competitive Games"; one called "Healing Our Sacred Mother Earth," a panel discussion of eco-feminism; a worship service on healing (possibly with Task Force One); the UUWF Ministry to Women Award; and a program on Feminist Theology.

For more information, please check the May issue of the UUWF's publication, *The Communicator*, or contact Ellen Spencer in Boston, 617-742-2100 x692, e-mail espencer@uua.org.

Sorry to say, though the Rockford group treated us to a well-planned and executed program, we had a couple of problems at our fall retreat in Lake Geneva. The worst of it was that the "dorm" rooms in Hansel and Terrace, though expected to be basic, were found to be substandard. In fact the committee actually refunded part of the room charge to affected registrants. Board members looked over the two buildings and complained about the maintenance deficits to the George Williams management.

There's a new mix of rooms reserved for next year, and the Hansel plumbing problems are to be fixed. In any case, we'll reinspect next fall **before** assigning rooms. Over the past several years, more and more registrants have shifted their preference to double and triple shared rooms, even before the shared bathrooms became a problem. That's one of the reasons we stopped using Meyer Lodge, which includes some common lounge areas we enjoyed. In order to qualify for the lowest dorm rates, a minimum occupancy quota must be filled. That's easier to accomplish in the smaller units such as Hansel.

And finally, due to a typo and a misunderstanding, the base registration fee was raised from \$35 to \$40. Rather than trying to hand out \$5 refunds at registration, the extra amount was applied toward membership, wherever due until after the retreat books are closed. We're sorry about the snafu. For details on the registration and dues issue, see the "Stamp Out Confusion" article elsewhere in this issue.

WHO ARE WE ANYWAY?

Who was the first ordained female Unitarian minister?* It's not Olympia Brown; she was a Universalist. This fact is included on a wall calendar featuring 12 UU women in pictures and words, along with birth-dates of hundreds of notable UU women and inspirational quotes. The 1999 edition is available for \$13 plus \$2.50 s/h from the UUWHS (Unitarian Universalist Women's Heritage Society), a non-profit affiliate of the UUA, whose mission is to collect, recover, preserve and share the heritage of liberal religious women. Their publications and products include papers on historical women, worship services, guidelines for collecting oral histories, pins and note pads.

Annual membership in UUWHS is \$10 for students and seniors, \$25 for all others. Members receive a semiannual newsletter, *The Flame*, and are entitled to a 10% discount on purchases. Another way to support this work is to join the UUWHS Major Donor Campaign. This is an especially good time to do so. Why? All contributions will be increased by half again thanks to a generous grant from the fund for Unitarian Universalism. Contributions are tax deductible. Contact UUWHS at 2 Elm Street, Malden, MA 02148, phone 781.321.3979, or e-mail: uuwhs@aol.com.

* Cecelia Burr Burleigh, 1826-75

A Few Book List Suggestions:

Poisonwood Bible by Barbara Kingsolver
A 20th-century American family's experiences in the Congo, where the father has taken the family because he feels called as a missionary.

Waterlily by Ella Cara Deloria
A novel of Dakota (Sioux) life from a woman's point of view. Written in 1948 by an ethnologist, herself a Sioux, but not published until 1988, and now reissued in paperback.

24 Years of Housework and the House Is Still a Mess by Pat Schroeder
Yes, it's that House, situated in the Washington D.C. Capitol.

Walking a Sacred Path: Rediscovering the Labyrinth as a Spiritual Tool by Dr. Lauren Artress
The historical origins of labyrinths and their potential as a tool for everything from stress reduction, meditation, spiritual renewal and growth, and even mystical experiences. (Think Allerton '99!)

The Women We Become by Ann G. Thomas
Ancient storytellers knew that growing into an older woman with a meaningful life depends on focusing on our inner worlds. Wonderful stories and wise connections.

RCRC Event

The Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice of Illinois INVITES YOU to a "TRIBUTE TO RESPONSIBLE LOVE," our celebration of the 26th Anniversary of the Roe v. Wade Decision - an Interfaith Service and Dessert Buffet to be held SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 3:30 to 5:00 p.m. at UNIVERSITY CHURCH, 5655 S. University, Hyde Park, featuring BARBARA FLYNN CURRIE, Majority Leader, Illinois House of Representatives. Donation \$26. Reserve by check to R.C.R.C. Ill., P.O. Box 2198, La Grange, IL 60525 or call Voice Mail 773-509-6374.

In the wake of the brutal assassination of Dr. Slepian in October, and the November return to Congress and our Illinois State House of numerous politicians who have vowed to turn the clock back on a woman's right to choose, it's up to us to demonstrate that people of faith are PRO-CHOICE. WE URGE YOU to let your representatives and senators know that you are a woman of faith who expects them to protect reproductive freedom as they face a new legislative year.

CLARA BARTON *(Continued from page 1)*

Patent Office. The work was long and hard but she persevered, and when Massachusetts troops lost their baggage in Baltimore, she placed an ad in the *Worcester Spy* asking for replacement material. It came in great quantities and she distributed the supply and visited with the troops.

When the Civil War broke out, the army went to the Battle of Bull Run like a bunch of Boy Scouts out for an all-night camp-out. Of course they, as you know, lost the battle, and the field was littered with the dead and dying. Clara secured a wagon, filled it with dressings and food and distributed them without anyone's approval. She treated all alike, Yank, Rebel and black. It was a first in American history. The newspapers noticed and publicized her care and she became a warehouse manager as well as a helper for the rest of the war. She was called the "Angel of the Battlefield," and everywhere she went the soldiers worshipped her.

Army medical care consisted of a few ambulance wagons, a few helpers, a few surgeons with few tents and a meager supply of candles for the surgery (which consisted mainly of amputations). Wounded men were left without food and shelter for many hours. Clara Barton made her famous "gruel" and fed as many as she could before they were transferred by rough wagon ride to hospitals. At one time she helped use axes to loosen bloody soldiers from the frozen ground. She later served as a nurse in the hospitals.

After the war she gave speeches and proceeded to try to take care of "Americans in Crisis" in the Carolinas, at the Johnstown Flood, and in floods along the Ohio and the Mississippi. She took trainloads of supplies to the Galveston Flood, in which a tidal wave killed 6,000 people. She worked for many years to get the United States to adopt the Geneva Convention so that the United States could join the International Red Cross Society. After working on five presidents, the Geneva Treaty was approved on March 16, 1882 and the United States became eligible to join the Red Cross.

SPREAD THE WORD! For more about Clara, read *Angel of the Battlefield* by Ishbel Ross.

STAMP OUT CONFUSION!!

DO IT RIGHT NOW! Take a look at your mailing label. Top right. If you'll remember to check this date before filling in a registration form for either Allerton or the Fall Lake Geneva retreat, you'll help save our registrars' sanity and help keep our records straight. Each year, no matter how carefully we try to phrase things, people either fail to pay the proper registration and/or dues called for. Then the registrar has to go through the extra hassle of collecting more or refunding overpayment of dues. *Our guidelines state that, if the mailing label date is earlier than or equal to the event date, it's time to renew your dues or pay the higher non-member registration fee.*

Although our conferences and retreats are open to all, it makes sense for non-members to pay a higher fee than those whose dues help sponsor the events. Please note that "member" means *member of UUWF*, NOT simply a UU. Membership may be paid through your local unit or at registration at the Allerton Conference or the Lake Geneva Fall Retreat. You may also join as an individual member. The date at the upper right of your mailing label indicates when your next dues payment is expected. FYI, if you pay via your unit, the date entered is based on *when we received the membership list from your local treasurer or membership coordinator*. The expected renewal date entered is one year later. Since most units collect dues over a period of time but wait to send in the consolidated list, it may or may not correspond to the date you wrote your individual check.

When a non-member pays the higher registration fee, she is added to our database with an "expected renewal date" one year from the event she attended. After that year, she will no longer receive ALL regular VOW mailings, but *will* receive brochures for future UUWF events for the following two years. After that point we assume she's either moved or is no longer interested in our programming. Hope this helps clear things up for you and relieves some of our registrars' frustrations.

CMwD-UUWF 1998 ALLERTON CONFERENCE REPORT

INCOME			
Registrations	=	\$2395.00	
Silent Auction		<u>576.70</u>	
TOTAL INCOME			\$2971.70
EXPENSE			
Pre-conference/Planning		\$ 585.25	
Conference/Supplies/Equipment		151.84	
Keynote Expense		300.00	
Refreshments		<u>30.00</u>	
TOTAL EXPENSE			<u>\$1067.09</u>
	NET GAIN		\$1904.61

OTHER DATA

Participants: 88
 Scholarship Expense: 277.50
 Scholarship Contributions: \$81.45

CMwD-UUWF 1998 LAKE GENEVA RETREAT REPORT

INCOME			
Registrations		\$3600.00	
Vendor Fees		155.00	
Tote Bags		<u>376.00</u>	
TOTAL INCOME			\$4131.00
EXPENSE			
Pre-conference/Planning		\$ 516.00	
Conference/Supplies/Equipment		479.78	
Keynote Expense		1656.80	
Refreshments		214.50	
Tote Bags		290.00	
Committee *		1190.00	
Hansel Rebates *		<u>360.00</u>	
TOTAL EXPENSE			<u>\$4707.08</u>
	NET LOSS		\$ 576.08

OTHER DATA

Participants: 92
 Scholarship Expense: \$340.00
 Scholarship Contributions: \$198.00

* Committee decision



Racine UUWF Celebrates Spring with WomanSpirit Faire & Bizarre

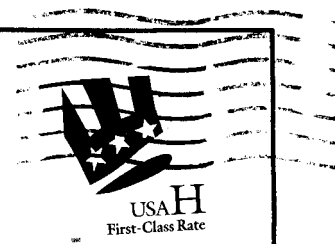
Alternatives in natural healing practices will be featured in Racine's UUWF WomanSpirit Faire and Bizarre (spelling intentional), and all will celebrate springtime and Beltane on Sunday, May 3, with exciting Goddess and earth-centered activities. Women artists and crafters, musicians and storytellers, coffeehouse, book and bake

sale participants, maypole dancers, drummers, tarot card readers and workshops leaders will honor woman spirituality and earth-centered beliefs.

Sponsored by the Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation (UUWF) of the Olympia Brown Unitarian Universalist Church in Racine, the event will not only feature local artists, healers and performers but women from around the Central Midwestern District. Festivities will be from noon to 5 p.m. at the Flatiron Mall at 1661 Douglas Avenue, off Hwys. 32 and 38 on Racine's near northside. Ample parking is available in the rear lot off High Street. All are welcome. Admission is \$1. Door prizes will be awarded.

Voice of Women

Central Midwest District
Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation
6341 Blackhawk Trail
Indian Head Park, IL 60525



Check the date on your label.
Why?
See the article on page 6.

2/99

BETTY JACHIM
6341 BLACKHAWK TRAIL
INDIAN HEAD PARK, IL 60525

60525X4315 44



CMwD-UUWF 1998-99 Directory

- President** Betty Jachim (708.784.0742; *email* jachim@msn.com), 6341 Blackhawk Trail, Indian Head Park, IL 60525
Vice President Jeanne Fitch (309.692.6923; *email* jeanfitch@aol.com), 4620 W. Hetherwood Dr., Peoria, IL 61615
Secretary Pat Baker (314.434.3314; *email* tellinguu@aol.com), 1528 Fontana, St. Louis, MO 63146
Treasurer Mary Lou Steadman (309.452.9008), 5 Ardith Dr., Normal, IL 61761
Director Joyce Becker (847.608.9457), 651 Lancaster Circle, Elgin, IL 60123
Director Barbara Crowley (847.816.6231), 672 Dunham Road, Gurnee, IL 60031
Director Anne Reeser (217.875.5716), 2651 Twin Oaks Court #65, Decatur, IL 62525
Director Sheila Young (630.759.0224), 15-S Fernwood Dr., Bolingbrook, IL 60440
VOW Editor Sabine Vorkoeper (630.513.7828; *email* cropper@concentric.net), 907 S. 4th St., St. Charles, IL 60174
Allerton 1999 Contact Jeanne Fitch (309.692.6923; *email*: jeanfitch@aol.com), 4620 W. Hetherwood Dr., Peoria, IL 61615
Lake Geneva 1999 Contact Emily Meter (847.948.7147; *email*: ecmeter@earthlink.net), 1175 Elmwood Place, Deerfield, IL 60015-1209
Women & Religion Chair Peg Saintcross (630.941.3752), 258 S. Myrtle Ave., Villa Park, IL 60181
CMwD-UUA Congregational Services Director Helen Bishop (708.343.3478; *email* hbishop@uua.org), 1701 S. 1st Ave., Suite 310, Maywood, IL 60153
Continental UUWF Staff Ellen Spencer (617.724.2100; *email* espencer@uua.org), 25 Beacon Street, Boston, MA 02108
Continental UUWF Board Liaison Patsy Sherrill Madden (314.664.3218; *email* patsysherrillmadden@maddenenterprises.com), 4131 Castleman Ave., St. Louis, MO 63110