



UULMNJ BULLETIN

JUNE 2013

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

I would like to begin by dedicating this bulletin and the work we do to the late Senator Frank Lautenberg. Sen. Lautenberg was a New Jersey son from humble beginnings who understood what it meant to govern. He understood the responsibilities of a government responsive to the pressing needs of its people and dedicated his life to addressing those needs. He set an exemplary model for every senator who will follow him. His presence in New Jersey will be missed, but as we continue to benefit from his legacy, he will live on in our hearts. Rest in peace Sen. Lautenberg and thank you.



There was a time not too long ago when summertime was a time for rest and relaxation, a time for reflection and renewal. Rest, relaxation, reflection and renewal are all imperative to being a truly grounded social advocate. What we do is important, and how we are able to be present as we stand for our beliefs is equally important. Our work is not a microwaveable process. We are long haul people and to sustain that effort, there needs to be time for rest and reflection.

This fall will be a busy one. Immigration reform, minimum wage, marriage equality, fracking, just to name a few. You will see the beginnings of organizing this summer for many of these issues and it is all very compelling. Please take time to take care of yourself and rest. May you have a peaceful and relaxing summer.

Faithfully,
Rev. Craig Hirshberg
Executive Director

IN MEMORIAL TO ARTHUR PERKINS

Arthur Perkins passed away June 10. Art was a staunch supporter of social justice who helped UULMNJ and our Economic Justice Task Force for several years. He had a sharp, critical social policy mind that helped us research and shape our positions. He will be missed. Our hearts go out to his family at this time of loss. Thank you Art.

SAVE THE DATES

Mark your calendars now and please plan on joining us:

- Issues Workshop - October 19, 2013
- Annual Plenary - April 26, 2014

More information on the Issues Workshop will be forwarded soon.

NEW BOARD MEMBERS ELECTED AT UULMNJ ANNUAL MEETING

About 70 UUs gathered in Titusville at the UU Church at Washington Crossing to carry out the business of the UULMNJ and the UULMNJ Public Policy Network. New board members were elected, the 2013 – 2014 budget was adopted, and the past year’s highlights and accomplishments were reviewed. Annual reports from Rev. Craig and the task forces, as well as other materials included in the participants’ packets, are posted on the UULMNJ website.

Rev. Bob Moore, Executive Director of the Coalition for Peace Action, gave an energizing keynote address. He reminded us of the importance of putting our faith into action for to bring about a halt in gun violence, and for other issues that speak to us.

New members were elected to serve on the UULMNJ Board of Trustees, effective July 1, 2013:

- Nick Lewis (Montclair)
- Lorraine (Missy) Staples (Somerset Hills)
- Doug Cocuzza (Sussex Co)
- Rev. Allison Miller, (Morristown)
- Judy Strackan (Montclair)

Continuing to serve on the board will be Rev. Virginia Jarocha-Ernst (Monmouth Co), Rev. Kathleen Green (Ridgewood), Frances Prestianni (Princeton), Gail Marsh Saxer (Ocean Co), and our youth representative Adam Green (Ridgewood).

Rohn Hein, Elaine Nigam, and Lynne Quinto, and Rev. Charles Ortman, four of our founding members, are ending their terms on the board. Their contributions to UULMNJ and ULMNJPPN have been monumental in establishing and guiding our organization. We will miss their board participation, but are heartened to know that they will continue helping in many ways.

UULMNJ HIRES NEW ADMINISTRATOR – TARA WILDHAGEN

UULMNJ bid farewell to our first administrator, Leanne McGowan, at the end of April, following her decision to pursue other interests.

We are pleased to announce the recent hiring of our new administrator Tara Wildhagen. We received applications from several well-qualified individuals, but Tara’s technical skills and enthusiasm and commitment to what we are doing set her apart from the rest. Tara was most recently a research analyst at the City University of New York, and came to us as she was looking for part-time work in conjunction with starting her own business. Welcome Tara!

UULMNJ PRESENCE IS SPREADING IN STATE

Through the work of our Executive Director and task forces, UULMNJ’s presence in the state is growing. Here is just a sampling of some of some of Rev. Craig’s activities this spring:

- Spoke at a Gun Violence Vigil in Flemington
- Along with members from six congregations, testified at the NJ Senate Public Safety Hearing

- Spoke at a Fighting Poverty With Faith – North New Jersey meeting in Hackensack
- Participated in the organizational meeting of the NJ State Clergy Coalition in Newark
- Attended the Interfaith Round Table, a coalition of faith organizations, in Hamilton
- Attended a Minimum Wage Referendum Coalition meeting in Trenton
- Attended kick-off news conference for the fracking ban veto overturn
- And UULMNJ co-sponsored a marriage equality lobbying training session with Garden State Equality and the ACLU.

“There is no better way to grow a soul in my view than to work for change that benefits the lives of others.” - Rev. Dr. William R. Murry

ISSUES UPDATE – GET INVOLVED

Thanks to the efforts of many people, especially Nick Lewis (Maplewood) and Frances Prestianni (Princeton), UULMNJ now has attractive and professional-looking issues folders and materials to use when visiting legislators or networking with coalition allies. Talk to Rev. Craig to get packets for your visits. Samples of the materials are posted on the UULMNJ website.

Rev. Craig conducted a **Social Action congregational training** at Cherry Hill, geared towards revitalizing congregational social responsibility efforts. This was based on the extensive UUA Advocacy training materials and could easily be duplicated in other congregations. Let us know if you are interested in bringing something like this to your congregation.

Marriage Equality: Marty Rothfelder (Summit) and Toby Tyler (Morristown), and Rev. Alison Miller, along with Rev. Craig, coordinated a Marriage Equality Rally, held on Morristown Green on May 3 in conjunction with the UU Metro District Annual Meeting. Under the initiative of several NJ UU congregations, delegates also approved a resolution supporting marriage equality. Watch a YouTube video of the rally: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NTktrLtFL1Y>. Efforts are underway now to begin contacting key legislators concerning the overturn of the Marriage Equality veto. A Lobby Day is planned for Monday, June 24 in Trenton. Contact Garden State Equality for more information at <http://www.GSEquality.org/SCOTUSalert>

Immigration Reform: Princeton hosted a very educational and informative forum on the proposed immigration reform legislation, chaired by Ted Fetter. Watch it at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OpAj1iK5z08&feature=youtu.be>. Also, all are encouraged to contact our newly appointed senator, Senator Chiesa at 202/224-3224. His email address is Senator_Chiesa@Chiesa.senate.gov. His mailing address is Senator Jeffrey S. Chiesa, Russell Senate Office Building, Washington, DC 20510. The message is simple -- support S. 744 for fair and comprehensive immigration reform. A bill supporting **instate tuition fees for dreamers** was recently passed by the Assembly Budget Committee.

Environmental Justice: A premier of Gasland II, an HBO documentary about the environmental destruction caused by fracking and the real life tragedy it has caused to residents living in fracking areas, was just unveiled in Trenton on June 17. If you saw it, you were changed by it. If not, it will be aired on HBO on Monday, July 8 at 7 PM. If you have HBO,

join people across the country who are hosting Gasland II house parties. Invite family, neighbors and friends to an in-home screening. This is a very important film to see.

Economic Justice: UULMNJ has signed on as a member of a coalition working toward voter registration to get out the vote for the upcoming Minimum Wage referendum. In collaboration with the League of Women Voters, UULMNJ will host two voter registration trainings: July 9 in Lincroft (rsvp to Bill Nordahl, bill.nordahl@gmail.com) and July 15 in Summit (rsvp to Lorraine Wearley, lorrainewearley@gmail.com). Vito Gallo and Kate Simmons attended the Housing and Community Development Network of New Jersey's Lobby Day on behalf of the Economic Justice Task Force.

Health Care: The task force continues to work on its priority issues – to support, publicize and explain the next steps of the Affordable Care Act in New Jersey, and to work on reinstating state budget money for women's health and family planning centers.

Do you want to get involved in UULMNJ and help make our voices heard? Join a task force:

- **Economic Justice:** Lorraine Wearley, lorrainewearley@gmail.com or Lew Maltby, lmaltby@workrights.org
- **Environment:** Rohn Hein, rohn@netzero.net
- **Health Care:** Carolyn Baldacchini, cal6balda@yahoo.com
- **Immigration:** Ted Fetter, fetter4@verizon.net
- **Marriage Equality Task Force:** Marty Rothfelder, mrothfelder@verizon.net
- **Gun Violence Prevention:** Diane Finn finnflynn@verizon.net or Lew Maltby lmaltby@workrights.org
- See www.uulmnj.org for more task force/issue information.

CONGREGATIONAL NEWS

The **First Unitarian Society of Plainfield** joined forces with the Plainfield United Church of Christ and the Rahway Plainfield Society of Friends to pass a marriage equality resolution for New Jersey. The resolution states the three churches, as institutions that "affirm and promote the inherent worth and dignity of all people," have an imperative to call "for the rights of all people to love those whom they love, with full rights to marry and enjoy the benefits of life-time commitment to their loved ones without restriction."

The **UU Congregation of Monmouth County's** Social Action Film Series next film will be shown on June 25. *Living Downstream* follows scientist, professor, author, and cancer survivor Sandra Steingraber as she travels across North America, working to break the silence about cancer, its environmental links - and the urgent human rights issue therein. Both personal journey and scientific-social exploration, this film is a powerful reminder of the intimate connection between the health of our bodies and the health of our air, land, and water.

40 Lives Changed by MUF Sponsored KIVA Micro-loans: In May 2011, the **Morristown Unitarian Fellowship** initiated a series of micro-loans with \$1,165 raised through a dedicated collection. This allowed them to provide loans to 14 individuals in 8 countries. Once the first round of loans was repaid, 20 additional people in 17 countries were provided loans in 2012.

Then timely repayment of these loans has enabled them to extend loans to six additional individuals in five countries.

On November 2 and 3, SisterSong (www.sistersong.net), a women of color cooperative and the group that coined the term reproductive justice, will be leading a training session at the **Unitarian Society of Ridgewood** focused on educating participants on reproductive justice. Their goal is to welcome local groups and congregations interested in the RJ movement with the hopes that they will spread their knowledge to the public and support RJ programs in their regions.

The **UU Church at Washington Crossing** is screening a 45-minute version of the *Half the Sky* PBS series (www.pbs.org/independentlens/half-the-sky/), inspired by the widely acclaimed book of the same name by Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn on June 25. *Half the Sky* touches on different issues women face globally including death related to pregnancy, human trafficking, limited access to education, domestic abuse, and lack of financial opportunity in six locations around the world.

CONNECT WITH UULMNJ ON FACEBOOK

UULMNJ has a Facebook page! Like us at <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Unitarian-Universalist-Legislative-Ministry-of-New-Jersey-UULMNJ/84778023198>.

And then let us know what you are thinking. Share how your congregation is working for social justice – others want to know, and may even be inspired by your actions.

OUR DENOMINATION

Mia Morse (Unitarian Church in Summit), was elected NY Metro District President at the 2013 District's Annual Meeting, succeeding Ted Fetter (UU Congregation of Princeton). Rev. Kathleen Green (Unitarian Society of Ridgewood and a UULMNJ board member) was elected to serve on the Board of Trustees. UULMNJ had a display table and materials at the annual meeting.

Rev. Craig is attending General Assembly, representing UULMNJ and Somerset Hills (minister emeritus) and she will be offering a workshop on involving local congregations in legislative work. She has also been working with our other State Advocacy Networks (SANS) to develop a greater presence at GA. They will have a 5-minute video (with some UULMNJ footage) during the plenary Saturday morning, and a double booth to conduct workshops.

At GA there will also be a meeting of New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Virginia reproductive justice leaders to start planning state-wide advocacy efforts, led by Jessica Halperin, UUA Witness Ministries Program Associate. What is reproductive justice? What are differences between it, reproductive health and reproductive rights?
<http://www.uua.org/reproductive/index.shtml>

See all of the news about GA at <http://www.uua.org/ga/2013/index.shtml>.

The **Unitarian Universalist United Nations Office (UU-UNO) Climate Change Initiative** is announcing the development of Climate Action Teams (CATs). CATs are groups dedicated to raising awareness about and acting against climate change within your congregation and community. They are encouraging congregations to form a team and join a growing UU network to help tackle one of the most pressing issues of our time. CATs will stay connected to each other through online tools and periodic phone conferences. For further information about CATs and how you can incorporate one into your congregation: <http://climate.uu-uno.org/>

NY Metro District: www.uumetrony.org

Joseph Priestley District: www.jpduua.org

Central East Regional Group: www.cerguua.org/.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

Do you have an event or announcement that you would like included in our bulletin? We would especially like to include news about the many social justice events and initiatives that New Jersey's UU congregations are involved with. Send an email to director@uulmnj.org and let us know what you are up to so that we can share it with others across our state.

Please forward this e-bulletin to others in your congregation who might be interested.
If you would like to be added to our mailing list, please drop us an email at director@uulmnj.org.