

Denominational & Community Action

Denominational Service

UUA Electronic Communications Committee



In the Spring of 1994, the UUA Board of Trustees appointed a Task Force to explore advances in technology looking for ways to enhance communications between congregations and the Association. The committee met in October and I was selected to co-chair the committee with George Brandenburg. 1994 was right before the Internet revolution and before email was widely used by the UUA Staff. The committee quickly saw the potential of the World Wide Web and Internet electronic mail.

We encouraged the UUA to host a web site and begin hooking up the UUA staff's personal computers to the Internet. Beyond riding herd on the activities of the committee, I worked on selecting the software for managing our electronic mailing list and bringing up the first ones for the UU Ministers Association. The UUMA-CHAT list is one of the most heavily used of all the UUA lists.

When the task force sunset, the Electronics Communication Committee was formed. George bowed out and I took over as chair. I led the effort to come up with a charter for the Committee (available on the web). The ECC was then and remains today a committed group of volunteers who save the UUA 100's of thousands of dollars by offering their professional services for free. I'm honored to have led this group for four years.



Florida District & Cluster Activities



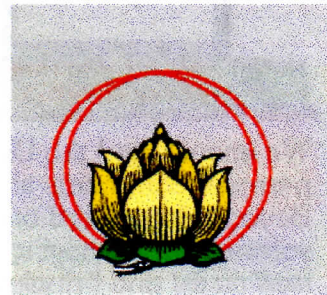
I accepted the nomination to be Secretary of the Florida District at a time when our new District Executive, Rev. Mary Chulak Higgins, was being selected. I thought it would be an opportune time to step up to serve on the Board and make a positive difference for the District. My thorough Board minutes distributed electronically within days of the meeting and my contributions of time and energy assisted the District in making a positive new start. I also initiated an electronic mailing list for the District and got the District a web page. I've been a regular attendee at District events and meetings.

For a year I served as the secretary for the Florida District Religious Education Committee and participated in some of their functions. This was particularly useful for me (since we do not have a DRE in Port Charlotte) giving me some good contacts and help in the Fellowship's religious education program.

Since arriving in Port Charlotte, I have been active in the Southwest Cluster of the Florida District (which includes Bradenton, Sarasota, Port Charlotte, Fort Myers, and Naples) serving as Secretary and now as President. In 1995, I was the theme speaker for one of our cluster meetings in Sarasota speaking on the title, "Varieties of UU Religious Experience" (its on my web site).

Unitarian Universalist Buddhist Fellowship

A relatively new project has been to take over as editor/treasurer for the UU Buddhist Fellowship's journal. I have regularized the publication of its journal, *UU Sangha*, and put its finances in order. Using my word processing skills, I gave the journal a new look. I aspire to get 501(c)3 status for the organization, build up the dues base, and begin to invite well known speakers to come and speak at General Assembly each year.



There is a lot of growth and activity within our congregations starting meditation groups and studying the writings of the many westerners who have gone to the East and returned with a message that many UU's can hear. I'm particularly interested in the non-theistically oriented strain from Southeast Asia which is attractive to many Unitarian Universalism who want to use meditation to deepen their spiritual life.

Charlotte County, Florida Activities

HIV/AIDS Pastoral Care Committee



The discovery of AIDS happened while I was living in Berkeley. Most of my adult life has been affected by the devastation this disease has brought to many people my age. During my internship I was active in AIDS ministry working with a man dying of AIDS for whom I did a memorial service. I helped organize a 24 hour vigil inviting 18 different churches to come and take an hour or so to pray for those with this modern plague.

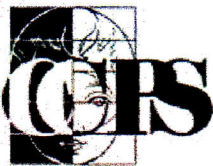
When I arrived in Charlotte County, I became involved with a Catholic led interfaith pastoral group organizing community outreach. As part of my involvement, I led an interfaith healing service every month for several years at a chapel in our Catholic hospital. It was a wonderful stretch for my ministerial skills to try to cross the bridge between the Unitarian Universalists and the Catholics who were very appreciative of my liberal style.

Charlotte County Minister's Association

The other community organization in town in which I have regularly participated is the Charlotte County Minister's Association. From September through June, the organization has speakers from the community which has been very helpful to get to know the local officials. I've also found the organization a helpful way to do Interfaith networking around shared concerns. The Fellowship was able to join in a backyard citrus collection project last spring which sent the donated fruit up to Appalachia. Unfortunately, there aren't many liberal religious congregations in Charlotte County which has limited the ability of networking around such areas as abortion rights, right-to-die issues and other favorite liberal causes.



Student Advisory Committee Liberty & Kingsway Elementary



From my son's first day at school, I looked for a way to become involved in the public school system. The Student Advisory Committee was a way for parents to have input on problems in the school and the state mandated learning plan. I was particularly helpful to the committee when a parental concern was raised about LSD in tattoos being sold during a fall fair. I was able to research the concern on the Internet and discover that the LSD tattoo story was an "urban legend." This defused the parent's fear much to the relief of the principal. I will again be getting involved this fall at my son's new elementary school, Kingsway. This will be the first year of the school's existence so I expect the committee will be interesting and useful as the school gets organized.

Charlotte County Hemlock Association

Since a significant number of the aging Fellowship's membership belong to the Hemlock Society, and the Florida chapter was started by a member of the congregation, it made sense to resuscitate the Charlotte County Chapter. Because of the importance of right-to-die issues in my congregation, I felt that I would participate on its board. We have been able to put on one program a year at which we've gotten good attendance. Right now the group is reassessing how we can best advance right-to-die issues. Now that the Supreme Court in Florida and the USA have spoken negatively on the issue, it is time for political action in the legislature which Hemlock cannot do because of its educational, non-profit status.



