



# Interweave Connect

[www.interweaveuu.org](http://www.interweaveuu.org)

June 2011

Don Hoppe, editor

## 50th Anniversary of the Unitarian Universalist Association

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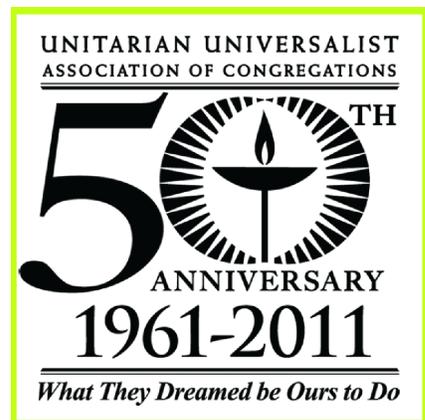
General Assembly (GA) 2011 in Charlotte, North Carolina, will mark the 50th anniversary of the merger of the American Unitarian Association and the Universalist Church of America.

On May 15, 1961, Universalism and Unitarianism in America combined to form the Unitarian Universalist Association. This "milestone moment," as one leader of the time put it, envisioned a religious family of congregations and people dedicated to a faith that would be "history-making rather than history-bound." Over the last fifty years Unitarian Universalists have indeed made religious history – at Selma, in courageous interfaith action for justice; in the Women and Religion movement; in pioneering efforts on behalf of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender rights; in environmental activism; and more.

In his sermon at the service in Symphony Hall, Boston, celebrating the formation of the UUA, the Rev. Dr. Donald Szantho Harrington said, "seeing that we are compassed round by so great a cloud of wittnesses, the great of past and present and all the humble heroes who worked and sacrificed beside them, who, indeed, held up their hands and made strong their voices, let us now, in our own day, lay aside every weight of selfishness and fear and take up with faith and joy the urgent tasks

to which this historic hour has summoned us. Let us together build the free and universal church of tomorrow." (<http://generalassembly.blogs.uua.org/>)

Join with Interweave and thousands of fellow Unitarian Universalists from across the country at General Assembly 2011 June 22 through 26, as we mark this historic occasion. Interweave will present a timely workshop "Countering Spiritual Bullying Aimed at BGLT Youth" At the annual Interweave Banquet, the annual Mark DeWolfe Award will be presented, and the winner of the Sermon Contest will preach this year's winning sermon. An as always, the Interweave booth in the exhibit hall will be offering fabulous queer gear along with information about Interweave and other BGLT resources. Hope to see you there!



### Changes on the Interweave Board

Allyson Diane Hamm has resigned as President of the Interweave Board (see page 5). Maryka Bhattacharyya will assume the role of President for the remainder of the term, as provided for in the Bylaws. The Board has chosen Sun Principe to fill the role of Vice-president. The Board is deeply grateful to Allyson for her years of hard work and dedication to Interweave, and wishes her much success in her future endeavors.



<http://www.facebook.com/#!/pages/Interweave-Continental/329134670710>

# Immigration Justice

On Sunday May 1st I had the pleasure of travelling to Colorado Springs to Preach on Immigration Justice. I was welcomed and hosted by the amazing Chair of the All Souls UU Interweave Group, Christine Seremini.

On Saturday night I attended a reception to welcome me. This was such a nice gesture and one that made me want to travel all over the country meeting our groups.

We had some time to talk about the various interests of group members and what hot topics are being addressed in their community. With such close proximity to "Focus on the Family" in Co Springs I was interested in hearing what this group is up to. One member coordinates the Lavendar Film Festival in September. The event sounds like so much fun! Another member is monitoring the statewide non discrimination laws and making sure that businesses post the appropriate document, informing the public of their rights.

I brought materials from The Trevor Project with me so that the group could distribute them locally. I suggested that the small business cards that are "suicide hotline" calling cards could be placed in library books

that young people might seek out. In a conservative area like Colorado Springs with a notorious anti gay group such as "Focus on the Family" right next door, a ministry of compassion that helps to reach out to vulnerable youth could be life transforming.

We are happy to provide anti bullying & suicide prevention materials to all of you. Just email me: sunprincipe@gmail.com with "Interweave" in the subject line and I will contact you.

Colorado Springs is fortunate to have ASUU. Rev. Nori Rost is the Minister who is dynamic and magnetic. From the pulpit Rev. Nori announced " here at All Souls, we like to say that we flaunt our diversity!"

That is by far one of the best expressions that I have heard in my 26 years of doing BGLTQ civil rights work. Thank you Rev. Nori for such an awesome phrase...perhaps we can borrow that for a future t-shirt!

Thank you Christine for making me feel so welcome and for doing such an outstanding job with Interweave. I thoroughly enjoyed speaking at ASUU and would encourage everyone to visit the Welcoming Congregation at some point in the future.

Submitted by Sun Principe

## In the Right Place at the Right Time

Sometimes it helps to be in the right place at the right time. Last Saturday I attended the annual meeting of my congregation's district, Ballou Channing, which is located south of Boston and takes in some of Massachusetts and all of Rhode Island. I've attended lots of district events over the years so it wasn't really surprising that I'd go to this one, especially when it was hosted by my home congregation. I signed up to help at registration and was thrilled to welcome folks to our now handicapped-accessible space--by virtue of a new addition with an elevator.

I attended a facilitated discussion on the big questions in UU culture, ably led by Peter Bowden, who is a consultant to the district, had a great Panera box lunch, and dutifully wore my delegate ribbon to the annual business meeting.

At the business meeting, I distinguished myself by moving the adop-

tion of the minutes as presented and seconding a few other odds and ends and duly voting aye. When it came time for the elections for district board, nominating committee, and UUA trustee, I noticed that there was a slot vacant on the district board for which no nominee was listed.

I raised my hand, was recognized by the chair, and asked the nominating committee representative whether the report meant they had no nominee for that slot. She said yes. I asked whether in that case they would take nominations from the floor. The President said yes. There was a pause.

I said, "Well, I'd be willing to throw my hat in the ring." Instantly, a voice from the back of the room spoke up: "I nominate Valerie White." (I learned later that it was my minister, the Rev. Jim Robinson.) Another voice said, "Second!" And then the President asked for a voice vote on the new slate and voila! I was a new member

of the Ballou Channing District board.

I plan to bring a sex-positive, humanist, queer-friendly, polyamorous voice to the Ballou Channing Board. I've been a UU for almost fifty years and I'm not shy. Sometimes it pays to be in the right place at the right time.

Submitted by Valerie White

### CLF Prison Ministry

### PEN PALS

As part of their Prison Ministry, the Church of the Larger Fellowship is looking for UUs to exchange friendly letters on topics of mutual interest with BGLTQ prisoners.

For more information, contact

[PrisMin@clfuu.org](mailto:PrisMin@clfuu.org)

# Rainbow Sunday:

## An Annual Tradition at the Unitarian Church of Sharon, MA

My congregation became a Welcoming Congregation a decade ago. We celebrated by organizing what has become an annual tradition: Rainbow Sunday. On the Sunday of Boston Pride weekend, everybody comes to church in a rainbow-hued solid color shirt, and after church we all arrange ourselves by color in a human rainbow up and down the two flights of stairs and across the balcony. We fly a rainbow flag. Our desire for inclusiveness has been rewarded: out of 144 members, we have 11 lesbians. One gay man sings in the choir but hasn't joined yet. Last year 27 people from our congregation took the train into Boston, attended the Pride Service at Arlington St. Church, and marched in the Pride Parade carrying our banner.

This past week I received an email from the co-chair of the Social Justice committee. She's one of the first lesbian couple to join, and a dear friend. The email listed several local events of BGLT interest. I responded, "Thanks for all this great info. Wouldn't you like to start an Interweave Chapter at UCS? After all, with me on the Interweave board, my home congregation ought to have one, don't you think?" And she replied, "What is Interweave? I have not heard of it." This from the lesbian, long time Social Justice chair of a Welcoming Congregation!

Let this be a wake-up call to me and to all of us. We must make sure people know we exist as a voice and a ministry for BGLT UU's.

Submitted by Valerie White



photo courtesy of Unitarian Church of Sharon

## Happening at the UUA

### UUA President Denounces Ugandan Legislation

Rev. Peter Morales, president of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA), has issued the following statement:

"Fear and hatred are once again fueling homophobia in Uganda. Recent news reports indicate that the Ugandan Parliament might soon pass the draconian Anti-Homosexuality Bill (AHB) that will endanger the lives of LGBT citizens of that country. We must not allow this violation of basic human rights to go unopposed. It is clear that AHB is an attack not only on LGBT Ugandans but on the basic principles of inclusivity and human rights.

"We at the UUA are coordinating our response to

the developing situation with our Unitarian Universalist minister in Kampala, as well as our partner LGBT human rights organizations in Uganda and the United States. In the face of this inhumanity, the UUA has extended its continuing commitment and support to our congregants and partners. The Unitarian Universalist United Nations Office also is pursuing opportunities for coalition work opposing the bill.

"As we continue this fight for justice, please hold all LGBT Ugandans in your thoughts and prayers. Right now they are uniquely vulnerable, and quite possibly in physical danger."

(<http://uua.org/news/newssubmissions/183297.shtml>, May 17, 2011)

## From the Religious Left

# Gay Rights and the Church's Evolving Role

Religious institutions in this country that object to homosexuality have nothing to fear from the gay-rights movement. Freedom of religion constitutionally protects them from having to perform same-sex marriages or elevate gays and lesbians to the clergy.

Yet as society opens itself to new viewpoints over time, those perspectives influence people of faith. So it was that the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) this week voted to allow the ordination of gay ministers, elders and deacons. In doing so, it joined three other main-

stream churches, including the Episcopal Church.

In the legal sphere, there is supposed to be a bright line between church and state. The relationship between the two is far more complicated, though, when it comes to the realities of social evolution. Americans' views on gay rights have been undergoing a rapid and dramatic change toward acceptance. That change is reflected in public policy shifts that have the U.S. military moving away from the troubling days of "don't ask, don't tell," that allow adoption by same-sex couples in many states and that, in a few, provide offi-

cial recognition of gay and lesbian unions. It was inevitable that religious congregants, affected by the more tolerant viewpoints in the secular world, would begin asking questions about long-held beliefs in their houses of worship.

Tuesday's stamp of approval from a venerable institution will further influence public opinion. No doubt, some people of faith will never accept homosexuality, and they have that right. But this welcome move by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) indicates that religion has a role to play in this nation's lurching progress toward gay rights.

*(McClatchy-Tribune News Service, May 13, 2011)*

## Time to Rethink the Bible on Homosexuality?

Extreme cyber-bullying, peer pressure and unrealistic body image pressures ... Being a teenager today can be tough. Add being gay to the equation and a growing number of kids, feeling they have no one to turn to, are taking their own lives. A re-

cent study shows teen suicide rates for GLBT teens are especially high in areas that are predominantly conservative, with religious arguments reinforcing the idea that being gay is wrong or an "illness" to be cured.

New Hampshire's first openly-gay Episcopal Bishop, Gene Robinson, says perhaps it's time to re-think the Bible.

"We are living at a time now when the church is asking whether or not we might have gotten it wrong about what the Bible says about homosexuality, just as we got it wrong about race, that is to say, Holy Scripture was used for countless centuries to justify slavery."

Robinson says times have changed since he was growing up in the '50s, and there are more places and people for youth to turn to if they need support. He recommends GLSEN Education Network, with clubs in schools designed to help gay teens in New Hampshire and around the country

deal with bullying and other issues.

Robinson says it's a misconception that being gay is a "lifestyle choice" or is somehow influenced by outside cultural forces. He says that's not the case, and even if it were, shouldn't we all have equal rights?

"This is the way they were born and they have come to accept themselves, and now they just need the society to accept them as well. We're offered the life, liberty and pursuit of happiness and if that happiness involves being partnered to someone of the same gender, why shouldn't we as Americans be entitled to those rights just as much as anyone else?"

Robinson has been involved with a national campaign called "It Gets Better," which uses high-profile people in videos aimed at helping young GLBT kids understand that while life may seem difficult right now, it will in fact, get better.

<http://www.publicnewsservice.org/index.php?content/article/20045-1>, May 16, 2011)

### Interweave at General Assembly 2011

#### JOIN US AT OUR:

**WORKSHOP:** "Countering Spiritual Bullying Aimed at BGLT Youth"  
(date and time at booth)

**BANQUET:** featuring our sermon contest winner and the presentation of the Mark DeWolfe Award (date and time at booth)



**BOOTH:** visit us in the exhibit hall for queer gear, fabulous resources, and friendly folks of all kinds

[interweaveuu.org](http://interweaveuu.org)

## *A Note to the Interweave Family*

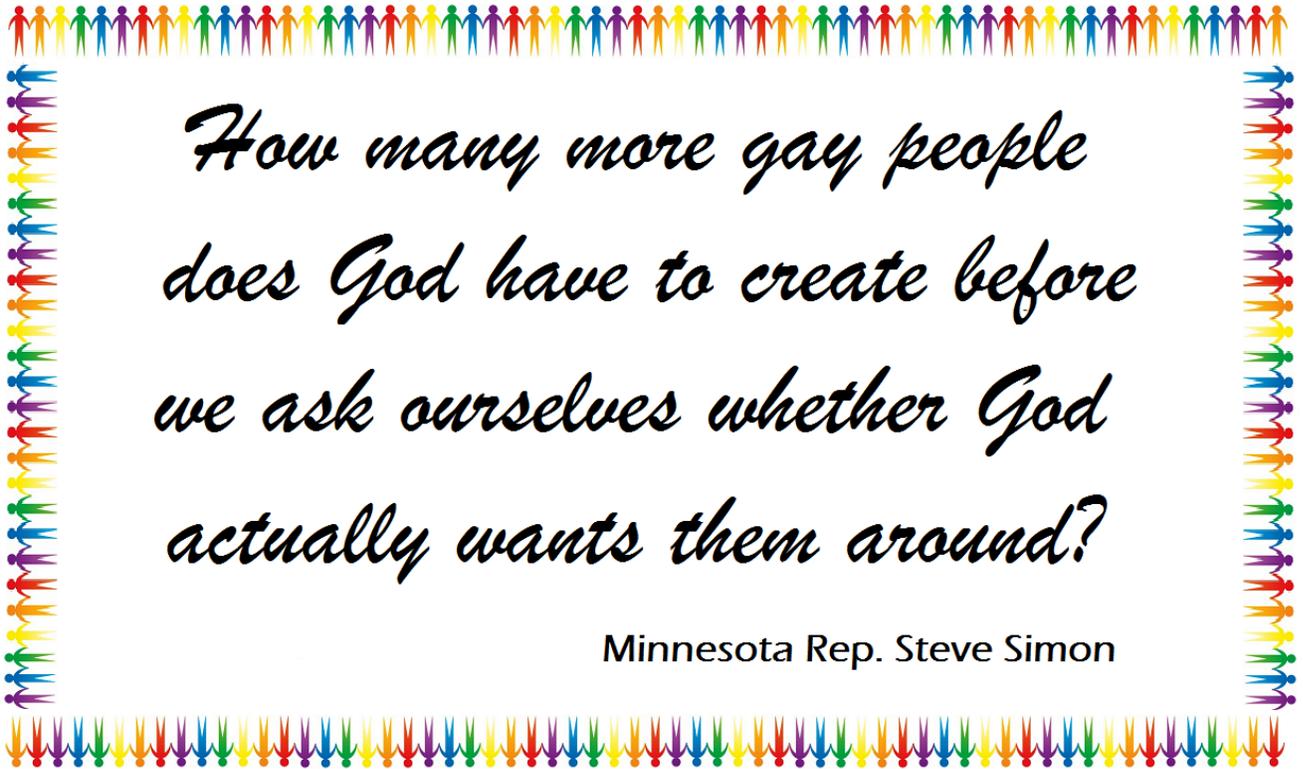
*I have spent many wonderful years involved in Interweave in some form or other. I first came to Interweave as a curious seeker of community, spirituality, & experience. I attended a J.P.D. regional Interweave Retreat & felt almost instantly as if I found a new family. I then became involved regionally & locally, which eventually led to national involvement. I have been on the national board for over 6 years & recently was elected President. I have dedicated much time, effort, heart & soul to the group. I believe strongly in its continued need, purpose, mission, & the possibility for evolution. I have met amazing people with kindred spirits & purpose along this journey and worked with wonderful people both on & off the board. Unfortunately, my time to lead the group has come to pass.*

*It is time for me to acknowledge that I am fallibly human & cannot be the Queer Super Hero that I wish to be. I will still battle injustice & fight for the rights of GLTBTOQIA people. But I will be doing it as the Statewide Organizer for Equality PA. My taking on this demanding new role has not left me as much time as a President should be able to dedicate to their role. I am resigning so that the very capable, Maryka Bhattacharyya can take the helm & steer Interweave on its current & future path. The board has met & agreed that this is in the best interest for the organization to move forward.*

*I am still very hopeful for the future of Interweave & plan to continue to participate in working with & supporting Interweave. I encourage everyone else to also continue their involvement & support. I look forward to seeing you all at General Assembly & wherever our paths may cross & lead us in the future.*

*In Solidarity,*

*Allyson Diane Hamm*



*How many more gay people  
 does God have to create before  
 we ask ourselves whether God  
 actually wants them around?*

Minnesota Rep. Steve Simon



**Interweave Connect**

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 Montpelier VT 05602

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

**IMPORTANT  
 DATES!**

GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
 Charlotte, North Carolina  
 June 22-26, 2011



CONVO 2012  
 CREATING CHANGE  
 Baltimore, Maryland  
 January 25-29, 2012