



Interweave Connect

www.interweaveuu.org
interweave.connect@gmail.com

September 2011

Don Hoppe, editor

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North Augusta, SC

marykahb@gmail.com



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Roseville, CA

sunprincipe@gmail.com



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valerie@valeriewhite.org



Don Hoppe

-Secretary-

Baton Rouge, LA

dhoppe2433@aol.com



Dawn Fortune

Newton Centre, MA

Dawn.c.fortune@gmail.com



Steve Hollingsworth

Chattanooga, TN

sbhollingsworth@gmail.com



Eric Morrow

Lexington, KY

etmorr0@email.uky.edu



Nisco Junkins

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niscohappy@comcast.net

A BRIEF HISTORY OF INTERWEAVE CONTINENTAL

The Unitarian Universalist Association first went on record as supporting the rights of gays and lesbians in 1970. In one form or another, *Interweave Continental* has existed almost since the beginning of the UUA's commitment to and activism in LGBTQ issues. In 1971, **Reverends Richard Nash** and **Elgin Blair** co-founded the *UU Gay Caucus (UUGC)* to lobby the UUA to create an "Office of Gay Affairs." (In 1993, the "Office of Gay Affairs" expanded to become the "Office of Lesbian, Bisexual

people within the UUA. In 1993, recognizing a shared commitment to inclusion of all sexual orientation and gender identity groups, UUGC and UUBN merged to become *Interweave Continental: Unitarian Universalists for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Concerns*. In 1994, *Interweave* resolved to address institutional racism by outreach to people of color, and in 1999 became the first UUA affiliate organization to begin the "Journey Toward Wholeness" program. In 2004, *Interweave* began re-examining and expanding services to chapters, and in 2006 officially changed its bylaws to give chapters voting delegates to the annual business meeting and the right to nominate members of chapters to the *Interweave* Board of Directors. Since 2005, *Interweave* has been a stakeholder in the "Consultation on Ministry To and With Youth," and continues to work with youth and young adults to improve connection with younger generations.



Rev. Elgin Blair

For 40 years, through its various incarnations, and under several different names, *Interweave Continental* has actively worked to end oppression based on sexual orientation and gender identity, recognizing that no one will be free until all oppression is a thing of the past. *Interweave* values and affirms the lives and experience of Queer people of faith, regardless of their age, race, ethnicity, income level, and ability. By providing and supporting leadership and working in collaboration with other organizations of similar vision, the organization strives to connect and nurture all Queer individuals, communities, and groups and their allies.

and Gay Concerns," and in 1996, the "Office of Bisexual, Gay, Lesbian, and Transgender Concerns" (OBGLTC). In 2006, the OBGLTC was subsumed into "Identity-Based Ministries," which then became known as "Multicultural Growth and Witness" in 2010.)

Since 2010, the Annual *Interweave Continental* Convocation has been held in conjunction with the National Gay and Lesbian Taskforce's "Creating Change" conference during late winter. "Convo 2012/ Creating Change" is scheduled January 25-29, 2012, in Baltimore, Maryland. **Mark your calendars!**

In 1983, the *UU Gay Caucus* held its first Convocation, now an annual event, with speakers and workshops designed to raise awareness of gay and lesbian issues. In 1990, the *UU Bisexual Network (UUBN)* was formed to create a safe place for bi



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“Coming Out in Faith: Voices of LGBTQ UUs”

What does it mean to live in a society with deeply embedded expectations about heterosexuality and gender identity, knowing they don't fit you in some important way? How do you navigate the assumption that you cannot be lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and/or queer—and spiritual or a person of faith?

Coming Out in Faith was Keith Kron's and my leap into filling the void. And what an adventure it was!

Interweave deserves credit for setting things in motion, BTW. In January 2010, Rev. Eric Wikstrom posted a query on Interweave-d. UU-affiliated Skinner House Books had recently published *Christian Voices*. Was anyone interested in doing something similar for LGBTQ UUs? [Note to **Interweave** members: Never underestimate the power of asking questions.]

But why a book on LGBTQ UUs? Unitarian Universalists rightly pride ourselves in standing as a beacon of faith-based progressivism and hope for people who are LGBTQ, their families and friends. In 1970, the UUA General Assembly approved the first of several resolutions affirming our “the inherent worth and dignity.” Over 60% of all UU congregations are now Welcoming, and 85% of UU members belong to Welcoming Congregations. We are integrated at every level of congregational participation and governance.

I LOVED the book...I read at least one piece each night at bedtime, and hated to see it come to the end.

Maryka Bhattacharyya
Interweave President

How often have you met with incredulity or scorn from another lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or queer person at the notion of there being a “place” for faith in your life? Unawareness of our stories lingers within UU congregations, too: Why do we need to “separate” ourselves? The fear of being perceived as a “gay” congregation by calling openly lesbian or gay ministers or from taking a stand for equality in the larger community remains a barrier to realizing our stated ideals. Bisexuality and transgender identity are still largely unrecognized, even within our “liberal religious tradition.”

These growing edges were more than enough reason to commit to giving voice to the experiences of LGBTQ UUs – and, besides, the acronym, *COIF*, was just so right!

Each contributor to *COIF* was asked to respond to three questions:

- *How has Unitarian Universalism affected your life as an LGBTQ person?*
- *How do Unitarian Universalist churches still struggle with understanding the lives of their LGBTQ members and LGBTQ issues beyond the sanctuary or minister's office?*
- *How do you take your faith into the wider world as an LGBTQ person?*

The essays we received are filled with joy in response to the first question. “Coming home,” “feeling whole” and similar metaphors appear in every one. The same stories also illustrate, sometimes with painful clarity, how far we still have to go.

Our authors provided some special moments, too. In an early book announcement I mistakenly identified our oldest contributor, Al Usack, as 85 years young. How perfectly UU for him to call me out with an email declaring “I'm only 80 years old!” Another author suggested the inclusion of “early” and “current”



Keith Kron

Susan Gore

authors' pictures. Thanks, Kate Griffin; they add an incredible level of depth and connection to each story. Mary Benard, the Skinner House editor who toiled with us throughout deserves an award for showing me and Keith a book can only be as good as its editors allow authors to be. And so it was that *Coming Out in Faith* debuted at the 2011 General Assembly.

Robert Frost wrote that in a book containing twenty-four poems, the book itself is the twenty-fifth. *Coming Out in Faith* proves him right. Each essay allows insight into the uniqueness of 16 very different lives that are connected through UU identity. Taken together, the essays offer a people's history of the awakening of LGBTQ consciousness into a civil rights movement that defies either/or categorization. Both send important messages that are too rarely heard.

Stay tuned to **Interweave Connect** for excerpts from some of the stories contained in *COIF*. Or order it online at www.uua.org/skinner or through Amazon for your Kindle. Buy a copy for your congregation. Take a leap and spread the word about *Coming Out in Faith*.

submitted by Susan Gore

Letter to the Editor

I read the article entitled "UU Historian Seeks Same-Sex Marriage Stories" in the August Interweave newsletter. I would like to ask you if you would consider saying "same-gender" marriage in order to exclude reference to sex, which is behavior relating to sexual activity and is unnecessary to include. General society goes right to the sexual act in their mind, and the word sex, (that they so disapprove of) where it need not be; in the terminology, "same-sex" only perpetuates thoughts in that direction. I am convinced that same-gender is not only a more appropriate term but would take the sexual references out of it. I think it has been a mistake to use sex all along when

referring to gender, like on questionnaires where one is asked what their "sex" is, male or female, when they really mean what is your gender.

In the article entitled, "Pioneering Gay Pakistani Muslim Poet Dies at 64" article, "sexual orientation" was mentioned. I would like to suggest you say "gender orientation" because it is more accurate. Sex, which is a behavior related to sex, need not be mentioned. Whether or not and individual has sex or not with someone is no one's business. Using the term, sexual orientation suggests that sexual behavior takes place which we know it usually does, but for the general public, they use the sexual act AGAINST us.

Why give them more fuel? I think it better not to even use sex in our terminology because it would not only help deter the general public's minds away from their hatred of sexual behavior between same gender folks but is irrelevant anyway; whether sexual activity takes place or not, (which is what the terms sexual orientation suggests).

My gender orientation is to a person who is the same gender as I am. I am also romantically attracted to this same-gender person. We may or may not engage in sexual behavior. We believe emotionally intimacy is first and foremost.

Karen Fenton
Springfield, Oregon

Happening at the UUA

UUA PRESIDENT CONVICTED IN CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE CASE

On the one-year anniversary of his civil disobedience action in Phoenix, Arizona, protesting Arizona's crackdown on undocumented immigrants, Unitarian Universalist Association President Peter Morales stood trial in the Maricopa County Justice Court. With him in the July 29 trial, which concluded August 1, were Salvador Reza, a lead organizer with the immigrant rights group Puente Arizona, and two others.

On Friday, August 5, all four defendants were found guilty on misdemeanor charges of failing to comply with a police officer. One year earlier, 29 Unitarian Universalists, including eight ministers, were arrested in Phoenix along with other immigrant rights activists while protesting Arizona's strict anti-illegal immigration law Senate Bill 1070. They were among 150 UUs, many from out of state, who came to Phoenix for actions in support of immigrant families on July 29, 2010, the day SB 1070 went into effect. Opponents of SB 1070 say it encourages racial profiling by police, although a federal judge issued an injunction that blocked several controversial provisions of the law.

UUs were among hundreds of people who swarmed into downtown streets on the law's first day, blocking traffic at midday in the vicinity of the Fourth Avenue Jail and the offices of Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio. Arpaio, who calls himself "America's toughest sheriff," planned a sweep of illegal immigrants and criminals for July 29, but had to delay the sweep when protesters blocked the jail's entrance. In January, the Phoenix Municipal Court dropped charges against 17 UUs and acquitted three other UUs who had been arrested for obstructing a public thoroughfare.

Morales and the Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray, minister of the UU Congregation of Phoenix and leader of the Arizona Immigration Ministry, were arrested with twelve others at the entrance of a county jail, where many of them had formed a human chain. Frederick-Gray stood trial on June 17. On August 2, Judge David Seyer found her and nine others guilty of willfully failing to comply with a police order.

In his trial, Morales took the witness stand in his own defense. He told the court that he came to Phoenix at the invitation of Arizona UU congregations and

their partner groups, Puente and the National Day Laborers Organizing Network (NDLON), according to Sandy Weir, organizer of the Arizona Immigration Ministry, who attended the trial. Morales told the court that, although he originally had not planned to join the protest, he changed his mind when he found out that an appeals court had imposed a partial injunction against SB 1070, and that Sheriff Arpaio had announced his plans to conduct a sweep on immigrant neighborhoods on July 29, 2010.

During the protest, Morales and Reza stood near the north entrance to the Maricopa County Fourth Avenue Jail. They were charged with failure to obey a lawful order to disperse. During his testimony, Morales likened his action to people who gave shelter to runaway slaves in the 1850s.

On the day of the trial, Morales also sent a letter calling for the U.S. Department of Justice and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to intervene in the actions of Arpaio. In the letter, addressed to Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano and Attorney General Eric Holder, Morales requested "that the Department of Homeland Security immediately sever Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio's access to immigration programs like 287(g) and Secure Communities. I also request that the Department of Justice conclude its ongoing investigation into abuses by the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office and bring Sheriff Arpaio to justice."

Morales also wrote that he engaged in the protest in front of the jail to impede, "if only for one day[,] the Sheriff's dehumanization of migrants, his raids on the barrios, and his campaign of terror."

In an op-ed published in The Huffington Post the day before the trial, Morales wrote about his visit to the Arizona-Mexico border last year: "I think of . . . the children at a detention center there whose father had been taken away. I think of the thousands who have died in the desert. I think of the young undocumented adults I have met who came here as infants and now live in constant fear of being deported from the only country they have ever known. I can still see their faces. They haunt me." "When I think of the people who are suffering

and dying as a result of our broken immigration system," he continued, "I know I did the right thing a year ago."

Following his conviction, Morales released the following statement on the UUA website:

My decision to engage in civil disobedience last July was rooted in my profound opposition to Arizona's SB 1070 and to the inhumane practices of Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio. My conviction as a result of that civil disobedience in no way alters my commitment to opposing this legislation that targets and dehumanizes some of the most vulnerable among us. We Unitarian Universalists will continue to stand on the side of love against this draconian legislation and the racism and anti-immigrant sentiment it represents, and we look forward to bringing our public witness to Phoenix in 2012 at our Justice General Assembly.

Michelle Bates Deakin (<http://www.uuworld.org/news/articles/186294.shtml>, 8/8/11)

[EDITORS NOTE: On August 23, Morales and the other defendants were sentenced to one day in jail for their acts of nonviolent civil disobedience. Because all had been jailed for a number of hours at the time of their arrest, they were given credit for time served and no additional jail time was required.]



PEN PALS

CLF Prison Ministry

As part of its Prison Ministry, Church of the Larger Fellowship is looking for UUs to exchange friendly letters on topics of mutual interest with CLF prison-members.

For more information, contact

PrisMin@cfuu.org

Remembering a Forgotten Gay Rights Pioneer

It was 1968, and Los Angeles police had arrested two of Glaze's male patrons when a plainclothes officer saw one slap the other playfully on the rear. Glaze, affectionately known as "Lee the Blond Darling," was furious. He took to the bar's stage, rallied the crowd and asked if a florist was among them. When someone raised a hand, Glaze told him, "Honey, go get every flower in your shop."

The ensuing "flower vigil," which lasted until police released the men on bail, would become a footnote in the gay rights struggle, overshadowed by the Stonewall Inn riots in New York a year later. (The Rev. Troy Perry, whose date was arrested that August night, credits the petal protest for inspiring him to found the first gay church in Los Angeles, the Metropolitan Community Church.)

At age 73, Glaze now lives in Hollywood's Triangle Square Apartments, an affordable-housing complex for aging lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender individuals. Although he suffers from cataracts and a back injury, Glaze excitedly recalls his early activism. "These kids today have no idea what it was like back then," Glaze said. "It was an adventure when you went out. You had to be careful."

A city ordinance prohibited men from dancing with one another. At some gay night spots, skittish bar owners would buzz through only

trusted patrons, an effort to keep out undercover vice officers. Gay men dared not challenge authorities. Rumor had it that police would "out" closeted arrestees to their families and employers.

Glaze didn't set out to become an activist. "I had no idea what I was doing," he said. "I ran a ... good bar. I was just mad the cops kept coming around." In an effort to protect his customers, Glaze said, he made regular visits to the police stations in the area, committing to memory the faces of any vice cops he saw. If they came into his bar, he'd play "God Save The Queen" to warn patrons they were being watched.



Lee "The Blond Darling" Glaze

Other times he'd jump onstage and take the microphone: "Boys, I don't know what's burning, but something is burning! It's getting awfully warm in here."

Glaze's fierce support came with a price. His bar, which attracted customers from all over Southern California, closed after two years. Black-and-white photos of the era are displayed prominently in his cramped apartment, as well as murals he's painted of Greek gods. In one snapshot, he's interviewing an underwear-clad contestant for the first-ever Mr. Groovy pageant. In another, he's making a dramatic entrance to a glamorous red-carpet event in Hollywood. "I just had a ball then," he said.

Despite his physical ailments, Glaze is a live wire, whizzing around his building in an electric wheelchair and peppering fellow residents with greetings. He continues to make appearances at gay rights functions, fighting for what he calls the last hurdle: federal marriage rights for same-sex couples. He says the strides that gay civil rights activists have made in recent years have made the younger generation complacent. The struggles Glaze and his compatriots endured seem so foreign to them, he said. He also laments that some of his more able-bodied neighbors in this elderly community aren't nearly as active as he is. "These queens," he said. "They're just so old!"

Ricardo Lopez (<http://articles.latimes.com/2011/aug/15/local/la-me-lee-glaze-20110815>, 8/15/2011)

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Psychologists Support Full Marriage Equality

The world's largest organization of psychologists took its strongest stand to date supporting full marriage equity, a move that observers say will have a far-reaching impact on the national debate. The policymaking body of the American Psychological Association (APA) unanimously approved the resolution 157-0 on the eve of the group's annual convention in Washington, D.C.

The group, with more than 154,000 members, has long supported full equal rights for gays, based on social science research on sexual orientation. Now the nation's psychologists — citing an increasing body of research about same-sex marriage, as well as increased discussion at the state and federal levels — took the support to a new level.

"Now as the country has really begun to have experience with gay marriage, our position is much clearer and more straightforward — that marriage equity is the policy that the country should be moving toward," says Clinton Anderson, director of APA's Office on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Concerns.

The resolution points to numerous recent studies, including findings that "many gay men and lesbians, like their heterosexual counterparts, desire to form stable, long-lasting and committed intimate relationships and are successful in doing so."

It adds that "emerging evidence suggests that statewide campaigns to deny same-sex couples legal access to civil marriage are a significant source of stress to the lesbian, gay and bisexual residents of those states and may have negative effects on their psychological well-being."

Six states (Connecticut, Iowa, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York and Vermont) and the District of Columbia allow same-sex marriage.

"Psychologists have been very important in helping to keep the discussion at a fact-based level and not let it steer off into stereotypes," says M.V. Lee Badgett, research director at the non-profit Williams Institute on Sexual Orientation Law & Public Policy at the University of California-Los Angeles.

Sociologist W. Bradford Wilcox, director of the National Marriage Project at the University of Virginia-Charlottesville, says his board is divided on the issue and hasn't taken a stance on same-sex marriage. He says the APA resolution will likely have a broad impact. "I don't think it's very significant for the population at large, but I do think this move is significant for the ongoing public policy and legal battles in Washington and around the states," he says.

Clinical psychologist Mark Hatzenbuehler, a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Health & Society Scholar at Columbia University in New York City, whose new research is cited in the resolution, says the courts tend to look at these kinds of policy statements because "they're really looking to see what social science research says about the influence on gay marriage and marriage bans on a whole host of outcomes."

Badgett's research of gay marriage across cultures is also cited in the resolution. She says the Netherlands was the first to allow gay couples to marry, and it showed "very little change in the overall society, but it was very important to gay couples themselves."

The last APA resolution on sexual orientation and marriage was approved in 2004. The resolution notes that since that time, APA has worked on 11 amicus briefs filed in same-sex marriage cases since 2004.



<http://yourlife.usatoday.com/sex-relationships/marriage/story/2011/08/Citing-new-research-psychology-group-supports-gay-marriage/49798054/1>, 08/05/2011)



Never believe that a
few caring people can't
change the world...

For, indeed, that's all who ever have.

Margaret Mead



Interweave Connect

156 Massapoag Avenue
Sharon, MA 02067-2749

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CONVO 2012/
CREATING CHANGE
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January 25-29, 2012



GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Phoenix, Arizona
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