

# INTERWEAVE CONNECT



UNITARIAN  
UNIVERSALIST  
ASSOCIATION

GENERAL  
ASSEMBLY

PROVIDENCE, RI  
JUNE 25-29, 2014

## Interweave At GA Camp Aranu'tiq Marriage Equality

Dear Interweave Members and Friends,

It's June, and that means time for GA again!

I love the fact that GA events are made accessible to those unable to attend in person. Did you know, for example, that the UU Church of Eugene will live-stream GA events on a screen in the sanctuary, so all members of the congregation will be able to share the experience? Who would want to miss the excitement of the opening banner parade, the Ware Lecture, and so many other great workshops and events?

As in other years at GA, Interweave Continental will host a booth in the exhibit hall. Please come visit us and learn about Interweave's latest accomplishments which you have helped to make successful! You can peruse our new Transgender Curriculum and our earlier Bisexuality Curriculum. Learn about Camp Aranu'tiq and the campers you are helping to support this summer! Meet Rev. Michelle LaGrave, one of our board members, who plans to be at the booth to greet you with her new ministry dog, Bella.

Next, be sure to come and help us honor and celebrate our LGBTQ ministers and ministerial candidates on Thursday evening, 6:00-7:30 p.m. in the Media Interview Room of the Dunk Center. Keith Kron of the UUA and Interweave Continental invite you to the third annual LGBTQ Ministers' Reception for fun, food, and a chance to dialogue! See page 2 for more details.

Finally, you are officially invited to the Annual Interweave Banquet scheduled for Friday evening, 5:30-7:30pm, in the Roger Williams Room of the Hilton Providence. Hear from the Rev. Keith Kron and Annette Marquis. Join us in celebrating the wonderful life-time contributions of Rev. Jonalu Johnstone as she receives the 2014 Mark DeWolfe Award! You can buy your tickets ahead of time via our website ([www.interweaveuu.org](http://www.interweaveuu.org)) or come to the Interweave Continental Booth in the Exhibit Hall (before Thursday noon, please.) We promise you good food and good times! See page 2 for more details.

In this newsletter, we have featured events sponsored by a number of Interweave Chapters in our congregations. Read, enjoy, and be inspired! Thank you so much to those who submitted articles. You are role models to us all.

I wish you all a wonderful summer and hope you come see us at GA in Providence, Rhode Island.

All good wishes,  
Maryka Bhattacharyya  
President, Interweave Continental

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## Interweave At GA

### Minister's Reception at GA



Come celebrate our LGBTQ ministers and ministerial students at the Third Annual LGBTQ Minister's Reception, co-sponsored by the

UUA and Interweave Continental.

LGBTQ ministers, ministerial students, and allies are invited to join in conversation. You are important role models, and you provide leadership to the LGBTQ communities both within and outside of our congregations.

We honor you! Come meet with colleagues to exchange ideas and experiences.

**Date/Time:** Thurs. June 26, from 6:00-7:30pm

**Location:** Dunkin Donut Center – Media Interview Room

**Food:** Scallops wrapped in bacon with lemon curd  
Spanakopita (spinach and feta cheese in phyllo)  
Assorted Ice Cold Soft Drinks and Bottled Water

### Interweave's Annual Banquet At GA, 2014 In Providence, Rhode Island

Interweave Continental's Annual Banquet will take place at 5:30 p.m. on Friday, June 27th at the Hilton Providence (21 Atwells Ave., Providence, RI) during the Unitarian Universalist Association's 2014 General Assembly.

The Reverend Keith Kron, the UUA's Director of Transitions and the former Director of the Office of BGLT Concerns, will speak at this year's banquet, and the Reverend Jonalu Johnstone, Program Minister at Oklahoma



Reverend Keith Kron

City's First Unitarian Church, will be honored as the recipient of the 2014 Mark DeWolfe Award for service to the LGBTQ community. Finally, you will get a short update on the Sharing Project from Annette Marquis, the LGBTQ and Multicultural Programs Director of the UUA Office of Multicultural Growth and Witness. Join in the camaraderie of UUs from all over the U.S. who will be gathering in support of LGBTQ persons everywhere! Come be inspired, be nourished, and have fun, fun, fun!!!



Annette Marquis



**Date/Time:** Friday, June 27, 5:30-7:30pm

**Location:** Roger Williams Room, Hilton Providence

**Menu:** Spinach Salad, Chicken or Vegetarian Entrée, Chefs Selected Starch, Seasonal Vegetable, Freshly Baked Dinner Rolls & Butter, Dark Chocolate Cake, Coffee, Decaffeinated Coffee and Tea

**Regular ticket: \$35/person (~break-even amount)**

**Student ticket: \$25/person**

**NOTE:** Get tickets ahead of time at our website ([www.interweaveuu.org](http://www.interweaveuu.org)), or in person at our Exhibit Hall Booth at GA.

## 2014 Mark DeWolfe Award Winner: The Rev. Jonalu Johnstone

The Rev. Jonalu Johnstone, Program Minister at Oklahoma City's First Unitarian Church, has been selected as the recipient of the 2014 Mark DeWolfe Award. This award recognizes a Unitarian Universalist who has contributed substantially to improving the lives of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals both within Unitarian Universalist congregations and in the wider community. The award was established in memory of the Rev. Mark Moser DeWolfe, one of the first openly gay ministers in the Unitarian Universalist Association to serve a congregation. Rev. Johnstone will receive the award at the Interweave Banquet, which will take place during Interweave's annual banquet at General Assembly in Providence, R.I.

Rev. Johnstone joined the staff at the First Unitarian Church of Oklahoma City in 2002. She previously served as Growth Consultant to the Southwestern Unitarian Universalist Conference (SWUUC); as Consulting Minister to the Channing Unitarian Universalist Church in Edmond, Okla.; and, for six years, as the minister of the James Reeb Unitarian Universalist Congregation in Madison, Wisc., where she helped to found "Coming Out, Coming Together," an interfaith religious group that supports bisexual, gay, lesbian and transgender people and causes. While in Madison, she also co-hosted, with the Rev. Charles Wolfe, a monthly program on WORT community radio addressing religious issues in the queer community. Rev. Johnstone was a founding member both of the James Reeb Congregation and of the Bull Run Unitarian Universalists in Manassas, Va.

As one of the few openly BGLT clergypersons in Oklahoma City, Rev. Johnstone has been a consistent advocate for Oklahoma's BGLT community and is a frequent speaker at rallies and hearings, where she campaigns tirelessly for BGLT Civil Rights, and at interfaith worship services celebrating BGLT Pride. She has organized and facilitated workshops for members of her congregation and of the wider community on a variety of topics related to BGLT history, identity, and spirituality, including programs on transgender issues, queer spirituality, and the history of the BGLT Civil Rights movement. Rev. Johnstone

also played a crucial role in the establishment both of the Oklahoma City chapter of Interweave and of Oklahoma City Youth United, a citywide social and support group for BGLT and allied youth.

Rev. Johnstone has been actively involved in the Living the Welcoming Congregation program, has testified eloquently before Oklahoma City's Board of Education on behalf of BGLT-inclusive anti-bullying and anti-harassment policies, and has served as a liaison between the First Unitarian Church and community-based BGLT organizations including Oklahoma City Pride, the Cimarron Alliance, Herland Sister Resources, and the citywide task force created to address the needs of Oklahoma City's homeless BGLT youth.

Rev. Johnstone has served Interweave since the 1980s by working with anti-racism programs, leading the organization as its national president, and serving on the nominating committee. During Rev. Johnstone's presidency, Interweave focused its energies on a national level on outreach to youth; on building connections to the larger community, including bisexual and transgender people; and on expanding the organization by establishing new chapters. Rev. Johnston has also been involved with Lambda Ministers since the 1980s.

Rev. Johnstone was active in the lesbian feminist community in West Virginia during the 1980s, supporting a teacher forced to resign because of her perceived sexual orientation and of her testing of gender expectations. She also helped to develop a network of support for rural lesbians. Most visibly, she reviewed books, particularly on religious topics, for The Washington Blade, the D.C. gay newspaper.

Rev. Johnstone performed her first same-sex union in June of 1992 in Elkins, W.Va., and she has performed many more since that time, although she has not yet had the privilege of officiating a legal marriage for people of the same sex.

**Come join us at the Interweave Banquet to Celebrate Rev. Johnstone's Achievements!**

J. David Macey  
Oklahoma City's First Unitarian Church



## Exciting News From Camp Aranú'tiq



2) With the beginning of Harbor Camps comes our very first Director of Development, Tori Gabriel. Tori is mom to 17-year-old Damien, a current Aranú'tiq leadership camper and past alum of our summer camp. Tori has served on the Aranú'tiq board of directors (now the Harbor Camps board of directors) since 2011. She comes to us with 25 years of experience in nonprofit work. She lives in South Florida with her husband, Tom, and, in addition to Damien, has an 18-year-old son named John. We are thrilled to have Tori on our team, and she is excited to work with all of you in helping to give our kids and families the best camp experience possible.

**D**ear Friends,  
We have some very exciting news to share! Our news is two-fold:

1) The leadership of Camp Aranú'tiq announces the creation of a new umbrella organization called Harbor Camps, Inc.

Because Camp Aranú'tiq has seen tremendous growth since its founding in 2009, we have decided to open the doors on a smaller scale to other often-marginalized populations via the new umbrella organization that we have created, Harbor Camps. The first of these new populations is families with LGBTQ parents.

Our inaugural LGBTQ Family Camp weekend will take place this September 19-21 in Massachusetts.

Camp Aranú'tiq is now a branch of our newly created organization, Harbor Camps. Nothing will change about the way Camp Aranú'tiq runs; the difference is that Harbor Camps is now the parent organization (it still has the same governing board and administration). Aranú'tiq will always be the founding camp of Harbor Camps; our first "baby," so to speak, and the model for all that we do to help children and families in the future. While Aranú'tiq continues to grow more than ever with our first West Coast family camp weekend on the horizon -- dates soon to be announced -- we hope you will join us in welcoming our expansion.



Aranú'tiq continues to be the anchor of Harbor Camps. You will soon hear more about our future plans, which include extending our New England Aranú'tiq programs to serve more youth and families. If you are interested in getting involved in Harbor Camps' and Camp Aranú'tiq's plans for expansion, please email Tori Gabriel at [tori@camparanutiq.org](mailto:tori@camparanutiq.org). We'd love to have your help and excitement!



With gratitude,

Nick M. Teich, Founder & CEO, Harbor Camps  
Camp Aranú'tiq: [camparanutiq.org](http://camparanutiq.org)  
LGBTQ Family Camp: [harborcamps.org/lgbtq-family-camp](http://harborcamps.org/lgbtq-family-camp)

## Love & Marriage Blessings Brings Joy for LGBTQ Couples & UUCA Congregants

**M**arriage matters in Georgia and LGBTQ couples seek the same rights and respect that other married Georgians receive. To celebrate loving committed LGBTQ couples in Georgia who have married out of state or who are planning to marry, a special interdenominational Love and Marriage Blessing Ceremony took place at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Atlanta on Sunday April 6, 2014. Rev. Makar and Rev. Thickstun were joined by 11 ministers from other Atlanta-area congregations as UUCA demonstrated that in Georgia we are “Standing on the Side of Love” in support of marriage equality for LGBTQ Couples. The love and commitment of LGBTQ couples of all faiths was honored, with 26 couples participating in the event.

The couples ranged in age from their 20s to 70s. The average length of the relationships being celebrated was 10.5 years; one couple had been together 39 years and there were several couples who had been together for 1 or 2 years. Twelve of the couples had already gone out of state to be legally married, while the remaining couples are waiting impatiently for marriage equality in Georgia or planning to travel out of state in the near future. Three of the couples had school-age children present while others were joined by adult children.

The afternoon included a special ceremony to bless the LGBTQ couples, accompanied by music, readings and inspirational speakers. Tears of joy were shed during the emotional ceremony; the diverse group of couples filled the floor of UUCA's sanctuary, while over 200 family, friends and allies surrounded



the couples with love. At the closing of the blessing, congregants blew bubbles that drifted down upon the couples and represented the joy that was present throughout UUCA. A reception complete with wedding cake and a diverse assortment of cupcakes followed the ceremony.

Some couples created video testimonials about why marriage matters for them; these videos will be used by co-sponsor Georgia Equality with their initiative. Why Marriage Matters. This event was held in conjunction with the Southerners in Support of Marriage Equality campaign, which was launched recently in Atlanta. Plans are underway to host this wonderful event again... while we wait for marriage equality to become the law of the land. Yes, it will happen, even in Georgia!

Joetta Prost  
Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Atlanta

photos were by Cindy Brown Photo



## Love: Simple as 1, 2, 3 right?

**Y**ou've seen it before and may not have thought twice about it. You've watched marriage services on television and probably felt joy for those couples affirming their love. It's simple right? You meet someone. You fall in love. Someone proposes. You make all the preparations for the wedding. You get your marriage license. You kiss the bride or groom, and society accepts you as a married couple. Simple as 1, 2, 3 right?

Well, for hundreds of couples in Georgia, it is far from simple. Their love for each other is real. Their commitment is real. But this state, and most churches, won't recognize their union as real. That's because they are same-sex couples.

On Sunday, April 6th, UUCA wanted to recognize love that has been banned, muted, and shunned for decades. During the first LGBTQ Love and Marriage Blessing, eleven faith leaders throughout Atlanta joined UUCA Senior Minister Anthony Makar in recognizing the commitment of twenty-six same-sex couples gathered on the floor of the sanctuary. There were couples present who had been together for thirty-nine years,

*"The bubbles were like the blessing of the congregation falling on the couples."*



photos were by Cindy Brown Photo

and couples who were just beginning their journey. "It was just amazing," gushed UUCA President Joetta Prost. Prost, who married her partner in 2013 in Washington, DC, teared up while talking about the event she first started imagining while she was planning her own wedding. "It's sad," she said, "that most LGBTQ couples have to go out of state to the 'Justice of the Peace' to get married. I thought it would be nice if we could add a spiritual element to acknowledge their marriage."

When John Clum met his partner, Walter Melion, on St. Patricks Day in 1985 while they were professors at Duke University, he never thought he would ever get legally married. "I lived for years knowing being gay was something you just didn't talk about, much less being married," he said.

While Prost was overwhelmed with emotion for her and her partner of eighteen years, Clum's emotions came at the sight of watching the younger and newer couples share in this experience. "Other people being moved, moved me," he said. "There was a couple who, up until the last moment, was hesitant about the experience. They were scared. But seeing the transformation from their initial hesitancy to finally embracing their affirmation was very emotional for me."

Clum had been here before. He and his partner had a civil union ceremony seven years ago, and were legally married in June 2011. Later that fall, they joined UUCA and he felt comfortable from the beginning. He was happy to be "on the floor" when the other couples also experienced the love being shown to them. "We've always felt affirmed by this

Continued on the next page 7



## Born This Way Prom Video

**D**ear *Interweave Connect* readers,  
The Interweave Continental board highly recommends that you watch the video, “Born This Way Prom” by Carol Miller. Pam Goff from the Channing Memorial Church in Newport, RI sent us the link.

The video was taken at the 5th annual Born This Way Prom held at the Newport Beach rotunda and carousel in April. The film documents the LGBTQ prom that celebrated these teens and their allies and allowed them to embrace life on their own terms. As you will see in the video, it was a fun time.

<http://vimeo.com/93080555>

## Love: Simple as 1, 2, 3 right?

continued from page 6

congregation,” he said, “and it was great to see other couples get that confirmation.”

One of Prost’s most memorable moments came at the end of the service when Reverend Makar took a bottle of bubbles and blew them into the air. The congregation then followed with their own bubbles. It was a magical scene. Prost felt the moment was very symbolic. According to her, “the bubbles reigning down were like the blessings of the congregation falling on the couples. It was very touching.”

Clum, who also was on the planning committee, and Prost are looking forward to planning another LGBTQ Love and Marriage Blessing sometime in the near future. Although they both admitted that they would love to see it happen in a slightly different way. They both hope that the Supreme Court will make

same-sex marriages legal in the state of Georgia and all over the country. “As soon as this change happens, we want to be ready at UUCA to welcome

same-sex couples wanting to marry,” Prost said. And Clum agrees that anytime this subject can be made public, it is important. This service was an amazing example of that. Clum added, “our partnerships are just as important as any other partnerships. Being out, gay and proud takes some courage and it is important to do for ourselves, but also for other gay people to see.” Love is love. It’s as simple



photos were by Cindy Brown

as 1, 2, 3 right?  
Chantel Tremitiere  
Unitarian Universalist Church of Atlanta  
Atlanta, GA

## Same-sex Marriage is Legal in Oregon

**O**n May 19th, same-sex marriage became legal in Oregon. A U.S. federal district court judge ruled that Oregon's 2004 state constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriages violated the equal protection clause of the federal constitution.

In the Seattle pi Monday, May26, 2014

Michael McShane, an openly gay federal judge, spoke about the May 19th ruling that ended Oregon's voter-approved 2004 ban on same-sex marriage. He stated: "Generations of Americans, my own included, were raised in a world in which homosexuality was believed to be a moral perversion, a mental disorder, or a mortal sin." McShane also stated that one of the more popular games that children played when he was a child was "smear the queer."

During preliminary court proceedings, the question was raised as to whether McShane — as a gay man



raising a child with his partner — should recuse himself. McShane responded by saying that he had never attended a rally or spoken publicly about gay marriage.

In his ruling, McShane stated: "I believe that if we can look for a moment past gender and sexuality, we can see in these plaintiffs nothing more or less than our own families ... we see families committed to the common purpose of love, devotion, and service to the greater community."

## Just in Case You Haven't Heard: Same-sex Marriage is Legal in Oregon



**T**his means so much more than the ability to get married legally. I choose not to. However, the news brought up an old memory from childhood and the profound sorrow I felt when my mother told me that "girls who

love girls cannot get married or have children. But, not to worry, it was just a phase I was going through and I would soon love boys." I tried, so I could have children, but it didn't take. I felt doomed, and for many years I was afraid and hurt. I lived in danger and I was careful about "passing." I hated myself for being so queer . . . an "abomination." No one, not even I,

thought people like me were in any way normal.

Fortunately (for me), I still believed I had a right to live. So many of us didn't. The suicide rate among homosexual teens is twice as high as for everyone else!

This ruling along with those already in place means we are now "normal." We CAN get married and we CAN have children! All this in my life-time! It only took sixty-four years of living with shame. I NEVER thought I'd live to see the day.

When I heard the news, I didn't expect to feel so emotional. I was even more surprised when I burst into tears. (I thought I'd banished the shame, but apparently it doesn't go away, it just hides more deeply inside us.) My joy goes out to all people everywhere on this planet. May you accept yourself as whole and healthy. Blessed be.

d. maria (mariah)  
Unitarian Universalist Church of Eugene  
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